

7-31-73

15,000

L-1115

# About Eggs...



## BUYING AND STORING

The Texas A&M University System  
Texas Agricultural Extension Service  
J.E. Hutchison, Director  
College Station, Texas

## ABOUT EGGS – BUYING AND STORING

DAVID B. MELLOR AND MARSHALL M. MILLER\*

The modern homemaker has to make fewer decisions when buying eggs than almost any other food. Most supermarkets stock only one brand of eggs, limiting it to one or two grades and two or three sizes. This makes the homemaker's decision easier than if the supermarket carried all six weight classes and three possible grades, and in several brands of eggs. However, it is helpful to know something of egg size and quality to know the best buy.

Size and quality of eggs are not related. Large eggs may be of high or low quality and high-quality eggs may be large or small. Any size could be Grade A. Most retail stores carry only Grade AA, the top quality, and Grade A eggs.

The Grade AA egg covers a small area when subjected to the "breakout" test by government inspectors or by housewives at home. The thick white stands high and firmly around the upstanding yolk. Grade A eggs spread slightly more when broken out and the white is not as thick and high. Grade B eggs have whites that spread more widely and have flattened yolks. Grade AA and A eggs are ideal for all purposes, but are especially desirable for poaching, frying and cooking in the shell. Grade B are suitable for scrambling, baking and general cooking. The nutritive value is the same for all grades.

A special grade (Fresh Fancy Quality) of eggs is produced under a U.S. Department of Agriculture Quality Control Program. These eggs reach the market quickly under strictly controlled conditions. This assures the consumer that he is able to buy a top-quality product. This program is not available in all areas and, because it is a voluntary program paid for by the producer, smaller producers cannot afford to use it. Many smaller producers near a market outlet may have this same type of program, but cannot be recognized officially.

The size of eggs is based on minimum weight per dozen. A dozen large eggs must weigh 24 ounces or more. In most plants, eggs are weighed individually on scales immediately after the candling operation.

---

\*Extension poultry marketing specialists, The Texas A&M University System.

Usually dozens of eggs weigh more than the minimum. Minimum weights for eggs are:

	Oz. per doz.
Jumbo	30
Extra Large	27
Large	24
Medium	21
Small	18
Pee wee	15

## BUYING

Most stores usually carry extra large, large and medium eggs. At times, small eggs are used as specials even though they are seldom carried by most stores. Standard recipes are based on the use of large and medium eggs.

In the later summer or fall, when young chickens begin egg production, small and medium eggs usually are plentiful. To find which size is more economical, compare prices of different sizes *within the same quality grade*. For example, compare medium and large in Grade A quality. Medium eggs are as good a buy as large eggs when they cost an eighth less. Small eggs are as good a buy when they cost a sixth less than medium, or a fourth less than large eggs.

A handy way to compare medium and large egg prices is by the 7-cent rule. At about average egg price (60 cents per dozen for large) there should be a 7-cent difference between large and medium prices for eggs of the same quality grade. If there is less than a 7-cent difference, the large eggs are a better value. If there is more than a 7-cent difference, medium eggs are the better buy.

Generally if there is less than a 7-cent price spread per dozen between one size and the next smaller, *of the same grade*, your best buy will be the larger size.

Regardless of size, eggs usually are a good buy. A dozen large eggs weigh 24 ounces or 1½ pounds. One serving (two eggs) weighs ¼ pound and costs only 10 cents when eggs are 60 cents a dozen. At this price, 1 pound of eggs cost 40 cents. This is very reasonable when compared with meat, cheese and other high-quality protein foods.

Table 1. Egg prices calculated by the pound (so you can compare them with "egg substitutes")

Price	Size			
	Large	X Large	Medium	Small
c/lb.				
27	40	46	35	30
28	42	47	37	32
29	44	49	38	33
31	46	52	41	35
32	48	54	42	36
33	50	56	43	37
35	52	59	46	39
36	54	61	47	41
37	56	62	49	42
38½	58	65	50½	43½
40	60	68	53	45
41	62	69	54	46
42½	64	72	55½	47½
44	66	74	58	50
45	68	76	59	51
46½	70	78½	61	52½

Run down the column of prices for large eggs (or any of the four sizes) and find the quoted price of eggs today. The left column then shows you the price per pound for eggs. You may also use this chart to compare prices of different size eggs.

Cracked or soiled eggs may contain bacteria which could cause food poisoning. Buy only clean, graded eggs. If you find cracked eggs in a carton, use them only when they are thoroughly cooked or when the foods in which they are an ingredient are thoroughly cooked. Egg interiors are usually free of bacteria when laid. Bacteria on the shell enter only when provided entry.

## STORAGE

Shell eggs kept at room temperature (70 to 80 degrees F.) will lose more quality in one day than in one week under refrigeration. At refrigerator temperature, 45 to 55 degrees F., eggs retain their inherent high-quality for several weeks. However, even under refrigeration, eggs slowly lose carbon dioxide and water. The size of the air cell enlarges, the yolk flattens and the white spreads. The flavor may become mild or alkaline, but none of the nutrients of the egg are lost.

The Texas Egg Law requires that eggs be held at 60 degrees F. or lower and at not less than 75 percent

relative humidity. Most times, this means that eggs must be kept under refrigeration. Buy fresh, clean, sound-shelled eggs from refrigerated display cases and refrigerate them promptly at home. The carton in which eggs are purchased is an excellent refrigerator container. It keeps the eggs covered and holds them in the best position - with large ends up. This helps keep the yolks centered.

If a recipe calls for only egg whites or egg yolks, save the extra yolks or white for later use. Store extra whites in a tightly closed container in the refrigerator, and use them within a day or two. Place yolks in a jar, covered with cold water, and store in a tightly closed container in the refrigerator.

Yolks also may be hard cooked to use for a condiment for curry or a garnish for vegetables. Cooked yolks should be stored in the refrigerator in a tightly closed container or wrapped in moisture-vapor proof material.

Hard-cooked eggs also should be refrigerated promptly, in the shell or out. If the shell is removed, put the eggs in a tightly closed container or wrap them with moisture-proof, vapor-proof material. Use within a few days.

### **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

The authors gratefully acknowledge the following contributions:

This leaflet and all in a series of nine were adapted from "Eggs - Basic Information for Young Homemakers," American Egg Board, and other sources.

Extension foods and nutrition specialists reviewed this leaflet and provided helpful suggestions.

**EGGS** have a fascinating history. They are among the most versatile of all foods and are said to have a thousand uses. History reveals that eggs were a food delicacy in ancient and biblical times and a staple food wherever abundant.

Ancient people considered eggs as a sacred symbol, and they believed an egg represented the world and its elements: shell, (earth); whites, (water); yolk, (fire); and under the shell (air). The breaking of eggs was a ceremony and a means of foretelling events. Men of early times hung eggs in Egyptian temples of worship. Artists glorified them in paintings and sculpture. Today eggs are still used for decorative purposes — as in Christmas and Easter ornaments and egg shell mosaics.

This series of leaflets numbered L-1114 — L-1122, covers topics of egg quality, buying and storing, six basic methods of egg preparation and eggs in the diet. Each is available from your local Extension agents.



*Educational programs conducted by the Texas Agricultural Extension Service serve people of all ages regardless of socio-economic levels, race, color, sex, religion or national origin.*

Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics, The Texas A&M University System and the United States Department of Agriculture cooperating. Distributed in furtherance of the Acts of Congress of May 8, 1914, as amended, and June 30, 1914.

15M-5-73

PS 2-1  
F&N 5