

Common Egg Cooking Mistakes You Might be Making

By Lisa Steele

Not Using Fresh Eggs

Fresh really does matter than in comes to cooking eggs. Not only do fresh eggs just taste "fresher", it's especially [important to use fresh eggs](#) for hard-boiling, frying or poaching.

There's a big difference between a "fresh" eggs that's less than 2 or 3 weeks old - and an egg that's several months old. Still perfectly good to eat, an old egg just isn't as good.

Boiling Old Eggs

If you boil old eggs into which air has had time to seep into, you'll end up with a dip in one end which definitely doesn't make pretty hard-boiled or deviled eggs.

But if you're [having trouble peeling fresh eggs](#), you're not alone. As an egg ages, moisture escapes and air enters through the pores in the eggshell. This pushes the membrane away from the shell making peeling easier.

Fresh eggs will peel perfectly if you [steam them in a double boiler or colander](#) over simmering water for 12 minutes, then put them into a bowl of ice water until they're cool enough to handle.

Frying Old Eggs

Since egg whites thin out as an egg ages, a fried egg will spread out in the pan. The membrane holding the egg yolk together also thins as an egg ages, so you're more likely to break the yolk of your fried egg.

Another tip: if you want crispy browned edges on your fried eggs, use oil in the pan, if you want a richer, creamier texture to your egg whites, use butter.

Poaching Old Eggs

Poached eggs won't hold together nicely when they're made with old eggs since the whites are thinner and runnier and less likely to form nicely around the yolk as they're cooking.

Using the Wrong Pan

Eggs will turn out much better if the correct type or size of pan is used. For example, scrambling eggs in an [enameled skillet](#), nonstick, teflon-free frying pan (or [cast iron skillet](#) using lots of oil or butter) ensures that they won't stick.

For omelets or crepes, a fairly lightweight, [shallow skillet with sloped sides](#) is optimal.

A pot [deep enough and large enough](#) that the eggs don't touch the bottom, have plenty of room and aren't crowded is important when you're poaching eggs.

Hard-boiled eggs need [enough room in the colander](#) or double boiler that they can sit in a single layer without touching so they don't break.

Tarts and quiche are easier to remove when they're baked in [pans with removable bottoms](#).

Cheesecake should be baked in a [springform pan](#), and angel food cake needs to be baked in a special [angel food cake pan](#).

Not Whisking Scrambled Eggs

Eggs should always be whisked well in a bowl until the yolks and whites are completely combined. then poured into the hot skillet.

Eggs cook so quickly as soon as the heat touches them, and failure to properly whisk your eggs will result in weird clumps of gelatinous whites throughout which are hardly appetizing.

Salting Eggs Too Early

And never salt your eggs until they're done cooking. The salt will draw moisture out of your eggs, causing them to separate in the pan and get watery. So salt your eggs after plating them.

Cooking Eggs Too Quickly

As mentioned above, eggs cook unbelievably fast, and dry, overcooked eggs are really unappealing. So always cook your eggs slowly over low heat, moving scrambled eggs around with a wooden spoon or spatula as they cook to break up the large curds.

Fried eggs should also be cooked slowly, remembering that the whites cook faster than the yolk, so if you prefer a less runny yolk, try basting the yolk with the cooking oil or butter, or covering the pan.

When the eggs are just barely set and still wet looking, remove the pan from the heat. Plate them immediately to slow the cooking, although they will continue to set up a bit even once they're plated.

Cracking Eggs on the Edge of the Bowl or Counter

Eggs should always be cracked on a flat surface like a cutting board or counter top. This prevents eggshell shards or even bacteria from possibly being pushed into the egg.

Never crack an egg on the sharp edge of the counter or the rim of a bowl. Always use a flat surface.

Cracking Eggs Directly into Batter

Unless you're extremely confident, it's good practice to first crack each egg into a small bowl before adding it to your batter.

That way you can check that the egg hasn't gone bad and look for any pieces of eggshell that might need to be picked out - without ruining your entire bowl of batter.

Baking with Cold Eggs

Cold eggs should never be added to batters. Eggs should be allowed to come to room temperature before being added to cake or cookie batter or mayonnaise because cold eggs can cause the fats in the other ingredients to seize up and either curdle or become lumpy.

Cold egg whites are also more gelatinous and won't mix into the other ingredients as well.

Separating Cold Eggs

However, eggs will separate more easily when they're cold, so if you need to separate the yolks from the whites for a recipe, take your eggs out of the refrigerator, separate them and then let them warm to room temperature.

Usually about 30 minutes out on the counter is adequate to take the chill out of refrigerated eggs or they can be set in a bowl of warm water for about 10 minutes.

Beating Cold Egg Whites

Cold egg whites also won't beat as easily into nice peaks. So let your egg whites warm up before trying to beat them.

Not Cleaning Utensils before Beating Egg Whites

Speaking of beating egg whites, if there's even a speck of grease or oil on the bowl, beater and other utensils being used to beat egg whites, that can cause them to fail to whip.

To be sure they're sparkling clean, run half a lemon over the surface of the bowl and beater, or wet a paper towel with white vinegar and wipe off your utensils before adding your egg whites to remove any last trace of grease.

Eating Just the Whites

Egg white omelets became a fad among dieters years ago since they are a [great source of protein](#). Most of the fat and cholesterol is contained in the yolk, but so are the majority of the nutrients.

By only eating the whites, you're missing out on nutrients like calcium, choline, folate, iron, lutein, [omega 3s](#) and zinc and Vitamins A,B, D, E and K contained in an egg yolk. You're also missing out on the great, rich taste of that yolk.

Tossing out Extra Yolks or Whites

Oftentimes a recipe will call for using either just the egg white or just the yolk and too many times the rest of the egg gets thrown away.

But both whites and yolks can be [frozen for later use](#).

And some great uses for egg whites are egg wash on pie crust, meringues, macarons, [souffles](#), foam on a whiskey sour or in angel food cake, while the yolks make delicious [mayonnaise](#), tartar sauce, Caesar salad dressing or [Hollandaise sauce](#).

Limiting Yourself to Chicken Eggs

[Ducks, geese, quail and even turkeys](#) lay eggs that can be used in cooking and baking.

Substituting different eggs for chicken eggs can give dishes more richness and a more earthy, "eggier" flavor.

Substituting for Chicken Eggs

Two duck eggs or one goose egg equals three chicken eggs.

For easy substitution, whisk a couple of eggs in a bowl, then measure out 3 tablespoons (or weigh out about 2 ounces) for each egg your recipe calls for.

I hope these simple tips will elevate your egg cooking and baking game to new heights. For these and more tips, plus over 100 recipes using eggs in unexpected ways, grab a copy of my cookbook *The Fresh Eggs Daily Cookbook*.

3 Things - Fresh Eggs Daily

3 Surprising Facts About Farm Fresh Eggs (Science)

#1 Eggshell Color Doesn't Matter

The nutritional value and taste of an egg are going to be the same no matter what color the eggshell is. Egg nutrition and taste are entirely dependent on the diet of the hen and freshness of the egg, and eggshell color is dependent on the breed of chicken.

Eggs Should Always be Stored Pointy End Down

Eggs should always be stored with the pointed end facing down because thanks to thin strands of protein, called chalaza, that hold the yolk in place, this will keep the yolk centered in the egg. This makes for prettier deviled eggs but also helps to protect the yolk from bacteria that might enter the egg through the pores. The egg white is slightly alkaline and doesn't provide an environment conducive to bacteria growth like the nutrient-rich yolk does.

Eggs Shouldn't be Washed until just Before Using Them

As long as a fresh egg hasn't been washed, it can be left out at room temperature for at least a couple of weeks, however it will stay fresher longer in the refrigerator. Unwashed eggs will last 7 times longer if they are kept chilled. This is because of an invisible coating called the "bloom" that is applied to the eggshell just before the egg is laid. It prevents air and bacteria from entering the egg through the pores in the eggshell. As time goes on the bloom does deteriorate, but will prolong an egg's freshness and safety. Eggs should be rinsed in warm water just before using them.

3 Tips for Baking with Eggs

#1 Use room temperature eggs.

There's a reason why recipes call for eggs and other ingredients to be room temperature. Cold ingredients added to a batter can cause the fats in the recipe to seize up. So if the recipe calls for the eggs to be room temperature, set some out on the counter for about 30 minutes (or set the eggs in a bowl of warm water for about 10 minutes to warm up). Since farm fresh eggs that haven't been washed can sit out on the counter for a couple of weeks, no problem, I always keep a bowl of eggs out to use for baking.

Room temperature eggs will also whip up better for meringues or souffles, but separate better when chilled, so if you can, separate your eggs right out of the fridge, then let them warm to room temperature before whipping them.

#2 Use large eggs.

Most recipes call for large eggs which weigh about 2 ounces (or measure about 3 tablespoons) each. If you are using eggs from your own chickens (or duck, quail or goose eggs) and don't have an egg scale, you can always crack the eggs into a bowl and then whisk them and measure them out to equal the amount of egg your recipe calls for.

#3 Crack on a flat surface.

You should always crack an egg on a flat surface, not the edge of a bowl or countertop. That prevents shell fragments from being pushed into the egg white. And it's good practice to crack your eggs, one by one, into a small bowl first before adding each to your batter. That way you won't accidentally drop a piece of eggshell into the batter and can ensure the egg hasn't gone bad without ruining your entire recipe.

3 Tips for Perfect Scrambled Eggs

#1 Whisk well.

Whisk your eggs for at least 20 seconds to really get some air into them for nice fluffy eggs.

#2 Don't salt.

Adding salt to your eggs before you cook them can result in watery, runny eggs. So wait to add your salt until your eggs are done cooking.

#3 Cook low and slow.

Don't rush your eggs. Scrambling eggs slowly over low heat and taking them off the heat while they're still a bit wet-looking will result in soft, fluffy eggs since they're going to continue to cook a bit more on the plate.

3 Ways to Tell if an Egg is Fresh

#1 The Float Test

As an egg ages, air seeps into the egg through the pores in the eggshell, causing the egg to become bouyant when placed in a glass of water. A fresh egg will sit flat on the bottom of the glass, while an older egg will start to rise off the bottom. A very old egg will float. Doesn't mean the egg is necessarily bad - it's just old.

#2 The Shake Test

Since an egg releases moisture as the air seeps into it, reducing the volume of egg white inside, if you shake a raw egg and can feel the insides moving around, that means the egg isn't fresh. A fresh egg will completely fill the shell and there will be nothing to slosh around inside.

#3 Check the Carton Date

Every egg carton has a 3-digit code on it that signifies when the eggs were put into the carton. The codes range from 001 (January 1st) to 365 (December 31st). By looking at that code, you can tell the date the eggs were collected and therefore about how old they are.

3 Reasons Why Fresh Eggs are Best

#1 The egg white of a fresh egg is thicker than the white of an older egg.

This is especially important when you're frying or poaching eggs because a fresh egg will be more cohesive and hold together better in the pot or pan. As an egg ages, the protein strands

weaken, leading to thin, watery whites. And nobody wants a fried egg that has spread out over the entire pan.

#2 The yolk of a fresh egg is less likely to break.

There's a thin membrane encasing the yolk of an egg that helps to hold the yolk together and keep it from breaking. That membrane weakens as the egg ages, so fresh egg yolks are less likely to break when you crack the egg into a pan.

#3 Fresh eggs are better for hard-boiling or making deviled eggs because they will be perfectly egg-shaped.

Air hasn't had time to seep into a fresh egg through the pores in the shell, so you won't get that concave indentation that you often see when you use older eggs. One tip though, fresh eggs can notoriously be difficult to peel, so try steaming them instead. 12 minutes and then right into an ice bath and they should peel perfectly.

Although an egg doesn't actually lose too much of its nutrition as it ages, I do think that a fresh egg just, well, tastes "fresher".