

Benefits of Organic Eggs

Eggs can be a good source of protein, an easy last-minute or early morning meal and a key ingredient in plenty of baked goods. Eggs are also one place where buying organic can make a big difference. If you're trying to improve your diet and eat more responsibly, make the switch from commercially produced eggs and reap the benefits of organic eggs. It's an easy way to make your kitchen a healthier place in the new year.

More Nutrients

Pasture-raised organic hens produce eggs that have 2/3 more vitamin A, three times more vitamin E, seven times more beta carotene and twice the omega-3 fatty acids compared to commercially produced eggs, according to a study conducted by "Mother Earth News" and reported in the October/November 2007 issue. Make the switch to organic eggs, and you could more than double the nutritional value you get when you eat an egg.

Egg Beaters Safe To Use

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Less Cholesterol

Eggs are little protein powerhouses that tend to get a bad rap because they're high in cholesterol, but organic eggs tend to have 1/3 less cholesterol than commercially raised eggs, according to "Mother Earth News," making them a healthier choice. Even better: Organic eggs have 1/4 less saturated fat than commercially raised eggs, according to the "Mother Earth News" study. Reducing the amount of cholesterol and saturated fat in your everyday diet can decrease your risk of cardiovascular problems, including heart disease.

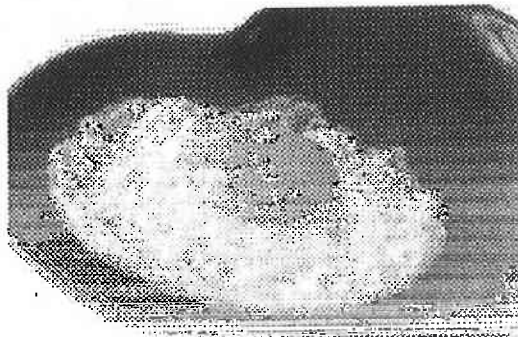
Fewer Toxins

Eggs that come from chickens who've been fed organic food are less likely to have pesticide residue than commercially produced eggs. Trace amounts of pesticides can be particularly hazardous for children and pregnant women, so if you're feeding people in those two categories, organic eggs may be a good choice. Eggs from organic chickens also come without added hormones or antibiotics, which some commercial farmers may use to treat poultry to increase their production.

Better Taste

Organic eggs may taste better—or at least "egg-ler"—than commercially produced eggs, according to a taste test done by the Cleaner Plate Club and cited in the Huffington Post. When tasters compared the flavors of organic eggs and commercially produced eggs, they noticed that organic eggs had a stronger flavor and color.

Brown Eggs Vs. White Eggs for Nutrition



Overview

Eggs have always been a staple food. The selection of eggs at most grocery stores used to be very limited, but nowadays the panoply of choices is almost overwhelming: omega-3 enriched, organic, free-range and more. The size also varies, from small to extra large. Moreover, eggs come in two different colors, white and brown. The color of the egg makes no difference nutrition-wise.

The color of eggshells ranges from white to brown, and mainly depends on the breed of the hen. White hens, with white feathers and white ear lobes, tend to lay white-shelled eggs. Red hens with red feathers and red ear lobes produce brown eggs. This difference in color does not impact the nutrition value of the eggs, nor does it influence their quality or taste.

Creating Egg Dishes - Omelets, Frittatas, Quiches, and Stratas

What's the Difference Between Them?

Egg dishes have a lot in common, and many cultures have developed egg dishes. Because eggs don't have a strong taste, they are all useful for conveying other combinations of flavors. In addition, their unique protein composition, which starts out fluid, but with heat rapidly develops a structure that supports other ingredients, is very useful in creating many different kinds of dishes. The standard egg dishes -- among them quiche, omelet, frittata, and strata -- all have differences that you can use to your advantage, depending upon what your needs are for any given meal.

Omelets

Omelets are perhaps the best known egg dishes in North America. Beaten eggs are mixed with a little liquid (no more than 1 Tablespoon per egg, and often less), and cooked until set, then folded around a filling. They are usually eaten immediately after cooking.

Tip: Make sure the filling is warm before putting it into the omelet.

For a step-by-step illustration of making a simple omelet, check out this [Illustrated Omelet Guide](#)¹ by Fiona Haynes, About's Guide to Low Fat Cooking.

Frittatas

Lesser known in the United States, this is an Italian version of an omelet. Because of the way it is cooked, I think it is more versatile, as it can be easily eaten later, and even frozen. Several portions are usually cooked at once, in only marginally more time than it takes to cook an omelet. There are several techniques, but I favor a quick one that starts on the stove and finishes in a few minutes under the broiler. Note that while "saucy" fillings can work well in omelets, you would usually want to avoid putting sauces in a frittata.

Tip: Small cubes of cheese in a frittata will melt during cooking and create yummy little cheese pockets.

Quiches

A quiche is essentially a baked custard (savory rather than sweet) in a pie shell -- although you can certainly make one without the crust, as I always do. It usually includes cheese, as well as other ingredients. Since it is a custard, it is more delicate in consistency than a frittata. This is because it is made with more liquid than eggs, traditionally 2 to 3 eggs per cup of liquid (traditionally cream, but this is less usual these days), although you see recipes with more eggs.

Tip: The trick with quiche is how to preserve the delicate texture. This is achieved by removing it from the oven while it is still a bit uncooked in the center; it will continue to cook when removed from the heat.

Stratas are egg, cheese, and bread casseroles that puff up when baking!

Bell Pepper And Cheddar Frittata

Serve with: Sourdough toast and a mixed green salad. Dessert: Oversize brownies.

Yield: Makes 4 servings

ingredients

1 Yukon Gold potato, peeled, cut into 1/4-inch cubes
2 1/2 tablespoons olive oil
1 large red bell pepper, chopped
1 large onion, coarsely chopped
4 garlic cloves, finely chopped
3 tablespoons chopped fresh oregano

8 large eggs
1 teaspoon salt
3/4 teaspoon coarsely ground pepper
1 cup grated sharp cheddar cheese

preparation

Cook potato in saucepan of boiling salted water until tender, about 8 minutes. Drain. Heat oil in large ovenproof skillet over medium-high heat. Add pepper and onion; sauté until tender, about 6 minutes. Add potato, garlic, and oregano; sauté 1 minute.

Whisk eggs, salt, and pepper in medium bowl. Pour over vegetables in skillet. Reduce heat to medium-low, cover skillet, and cook until eggs are set around edges, about 8 minutes. Sprinkle with cheese.

Meanwhile, preheat broiler. Place skillet in broiler 4 to 5 inches from heat source and cook until cheese is melted and just browned, about 2 minutes. Let frittata stand 1 minute. Cut into 8 wedges.

Zucchini Pancakes

Servings: 1

"Persuading your family to eat their veggies will be that much easier when you stir shredded zucchini into a simple batter and fry until golden brown. Serve with a dab of butter, and zucchini will disappear like hotcakes."

INGREDIENTS:

1 eggs	1/8 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup grated zucchini	2-1/4 teaspoons olive oil
3 tablespoons all-purpose flour	1 teaspoon baking powder
1/8 teaspoon white sugar	1 tablespoon butter, melted

DIRECTIONS:

You have scaled this recipe's ingredients to yield a new amount (1). The directions below still refer to the original recipe yield (4).

1. Preheat grill to 425 to 450 degrees F (220 to 225 degrees C).
2. In a large mixing bowl, beat eggs, add shredded zucchini and mix well using a fork. Add flour, sugar, salt and vegetable oil and stir to blend well. Finally, add baking powder and mix well using a large spoon. The batter's consistency should be like heavy whipping cream.
3. Spoon batter on hot grill (about 2 tablespoons) for each pancake. Cook until there are no longer bubbles forming in the pancake about 2 minutes; turn over and cook for 2 minutes longer. Rub pancakes with melted butter and serve immediately.



Salad Dressings

Dressed for Success

Getting your greens can seem like a pious mealtime

obligation. But drizzling a delicious homemade dressing over salad makes it something to savor.

VinaiGreat!

Vinaigrettes can be as basic as mixing together oil, vinegar and salt. From there, build flavor with herbs, spices, shallots and garlic. Play with oils and vinegars, too: olive, walnut, peanut or hazelnut oils; and balsamic, Champagne, and sherry vinegars or citrus juice.

Dreamy Creamy Dressings

Creamy dressings deliver a lush mouth-feel. From a base of sour cream, buttermilk, cream, yogurt or mayonnaise, creamy dressings are constructed with herbs, spices, shallots, and garlic. Cheese, pickles, chili sauce and other ingredients can add big flavor.

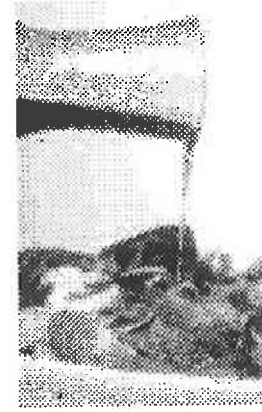
Dressing Up

Daring to range beyond what the name implies, salad dressings often make marvelous marinades and dipping sauces.

How To Make Homemade Salad Dressing

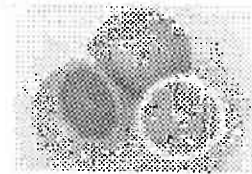
Why Make Your Own?

Visit any supermarket or specialty grocery store and you'll be sure to find at least a shelf, and more often an aisle, devoted to bottled salad dressings, with every flavor imaginable. Why then would you make your own? Well, bottled salad dressings can be high in sodium and preservatives – and if you are in the mood for more than one flavor you will need to keep your refrigerator stocked with several bottles. It's really very simple to make your own dressings once you know the basics – you can then control the ingredients and mix them up any way you want. You don't even need special equipment. If you keep your kitchen stocked with any covered container and a few staple ingredients, you will be limited only by your imagination and taste buds.



What Will You Need?

The basic ingredients in salad dressings are fat, acid and seasonings. If you have these ingredients on hand, you can easily make any dressing.



- **Fat** – this can range from oil, cheese, cream and egg. Most lighter dressings are oil based, while the heavier or creamier versions are made with a soft cheese or sour cream. Many vitamins found in salad greens and vegetables are fat-soluble, which mean that they are only absorbed by the body if a fat is present. This may explain why salads "taste" better to us when covered in dressing.
- **Acid** – lemon, lime, orange or any kind of vinegar are popular in dressings. They give a bite and sometimes a sweetness to the salad and can be used to complement the ingredients in it.
- **Seasonings** – salt, pepper, garlic powder, oregano – the list is endless.
- **A Way to Blend Ingredients** – Plastic food storage bag, bell jar, old jelly jar, old mayo jar, tupperware – you probably have any or all of these in your kitchen. They are perfect for blending dressings because of their tight lid. You can shake them well without making a mess. Some dressings, like those made with egg, are better made with an electric hand blender or food processor because the high mixing speeds make for a better dressing.

The great thing about making your own dressing is that you make it the way you want it. By keeping these staples in your kitchen, you will never buy a pre-made bottle dressing again.

Recipes - Easy to Complex

Unless otherwise stated, the following dressings can be made ahead by a day or two in any container that you can shake. If you choose to dress your salad, do so only a few minutes before serving so the lettuce does not wilt. Do not add too much dressing – a little goes a long way and you can always add more if necessary. Remember to taste your dressing before adding to your salad so you can adjust seasonings. These recipes will cover more 4 cups or more of salad – enough to serve a family or small dinner party.

Lemon Vinaigrette: Juice one lemon into container, straining the seeds. Add about 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil and salt and pepper to taste. Shake well to combine. This is good on salads, but equally good on steamed vegetables for side dishes.

Avocado Vinaigrette: Place into container – avocado (whole small one or half of a large one), 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar, 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, 1 tablespoon white wine (optional), 1 tablespoon water (or 2 if not opting for wine), 1 tablespoon lemon or lime juice, salt and pepper to taste. If you are planning to mix by shaking, use a fork first to mash the avocado, then cover and shake. Otherwise, use a hand blender or food processor to blend until smooth.

Pomegranate Vinaigrette: Add to container – 3 tablespoons pomegranate juice, 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard, 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar, 4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, salt and pepper to taste. Shake well to combine. Garnish your salad with pomegranate seeds to enhance the flavor of the dressing.

★ **Cesare Salad Dressing:** Add to food processor, blender or container wide enough for your hand blender – 1 egg yolk, 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard, 1 garlic clove (crushed), 1 sardine (optional), 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, 2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese, salt and pepper to taste and the juice of 1 lemon. Process until smooth and creamy. Cesare salad is traditionally served with romaine lettuce, croutons, shaved Parmesan cheese and fresh ground black pepper.

What Else?

These dressings are not only good for salads, but they make excellent homemade marinades for chicken or seafood as well as dressings for vegetable side dishes.

Once you get into the habit of making your own, you can flavor your dressings in a multitude of ways. Substitute orange juice for lemon juice for a sweeter, milder dressing. Use other natural fruit juices in the place of pomegranate. Whisk goat cheese into your vinaigrette for a creamy variation of a classic dressing. Even a simple oil and vinegar dressing can be altered to your taste by using a few different vinegars – for example if you like the mildness of balsamic vinegar but it is too sweet, try adding a few shakes of red wine or apple cider vinegar to balance the flavor.

You are only limited by your imagination. Impress and inspire your friends and family by adding a bit of homemade into their favorite meals.

Watermelon-Feta Salad

Directions

Whisk 1 part white wine vinegar with 3 parts olive oil, and salt and pepper. Toss with baby arugula, red onion slices, watermelon cubes, crumbled feta, nicoise olives and fresh oregano.

Grilled Peaches with Mascarpone and Honey

Recipe by E. B. Lag. 2015

Prep Time: 10 min **Level:** Easy **Serves:** 6 servings
Cook Time: 10 min

Ingredients

- 6 large ripe peaches, halved and pits removed
- 6 tablespoons honey, plus more for serving if desired
- 8 ounces mascarpone cheese, at room temperature

Directions

Preheat a grill to medium-high. *Brush the grill with oil*

Place the peaches cut-side down onto the grill and cook until lightly charred, 2 to 3 minutes, depending on the grill. Transfer the peaches, cut sides up, to a grill-proof baking dish or baking sheet and drizzle evenly with the 6 tablespoons of honey. Place the dish on the grill and cover the grill. Continue to cook until the peaches are soft, about 5 minutes, again depending on the grill. Remove the baking dish from the grill and divide the peach halves between 6 dessert plates. Divide the mascarpone evenly among the plates and drizzle with additional honey, if desired. Serve immediately.