

Just Cracked, Hard-Cooked Eggs

As Easter nears, questions about hard-cooked eggs are plentiful for University of Wyoming Extension educators. Most questions surround how to and how long you should hard boil eggs. We've got answers.

An egg's age makes a difference, but only when the eggs are super-fresh. Freshly laid eggs are more likely to stick to the shell. You may want to let farm-fresh eggs sit for two weeks before using them for hard cooking. The eggs you're getting at the supermarket are old enough that no further aging at home should be necessary.

The correct term for cooking eggs with their shells on is "hard cooking." Eggs should not rapidly boil because of the risk of overcooking them according to most sources. The perfect hard-cooked egg has a velvety yolk paired with a soft, solid white.

So, how do you cook easy-peeling eggs with relatively tender whites? You'll find umpteen different methods if you go online to find the best way to hard-cook eggs. Here are two ways to hard-cook eggs.

Electric pressure cooking is a great go-to method for perfect eggs every time. Place the eggs on the steamer rack in the pot, add a cup of water, close the lid, and set to cook on low pressure for 7 to 10 minutes. Immediately release pressure and chill the eggs in an ice bath for 15 minutes before peeling. Check your manual for instructions for your specific electric pressure cooker.

To boil, place a large pot of water on the stovetop and ensure there's enough water in the pot to cover a single layer of eggs by about an inch. Turn on the heat to high and bring the water to a rolling boil. Once the water is boiling, lower the heat to low/medium heat so that the water is at a gentle simmer. Gently lower the cold eggs into the water with a spoon or skimmer and set the timer for 12-15 minutes for large eggs. The eggs are cooked gently in the hot water to produce tender, not rubbery, eggs and minimize cracking. The green ring occurs when eggs have been cooked for too long or at too high a temperature. Take one egg out, run it under cold water, peel, and slice it to check for doneness. To stop cooking, immediately shock the eggs in ice water and leave them for 15 minutes in the water. Peel eggs or store the eggs in the refrigerator when cool.

Tips

- Always wash hands thoroughly with soap and water before handling eggs when cooking, cooling, or dyeing and after handling raw eggs.
- Hard-cook eggs cold, straight from the fridge. Additionally, when cooked cold, the yolks tend to be creamier.
- Use the same pan every time for consistent results.
- Set a timer as soon as the eggs are added to the pot so you aren't guessing at your timing.
- It may take a few tries, but experiment with cooking times. Everyone likes the yoke with a different consistency.

- The temperature at which water boils declines as elevation rises, so a longer time is required to prepare hard-cooked eggs at higher altitudes. A general rule of thumb is to increase the cooking time by about 1 minute for every 1,000 feet of elevation.
- Have a bowl of ice water ready to lower your eggs into there as soon as the timer is done. This stops the cooking process and makes them easier to peel.
- Start peeling at the wider end of the egg where the air bubble is located to get under the membrane for easy shell removal.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture says raw eggs will keep refrigerated for three to five weeks after purchase. Once cooked, eggs should be used within one week.

Once you've experimented with these methods and tips, you'll have plenty of hard-boiled eggs to use in recipes and snacks.