

the egg and i

Food Editor Janice Cole shares her suburban backyard with three chickens. Enjoy some of her favorite ways to use their generous bounty. TEXT AND RECIPES BY JANICE COLE



egg color

Eggs come in a variety of colors and hues, from brown to blue, green to pink—and white. The shell color is a reflection of the hen's breed. It doesn't change the egg's taste or nutrition; that's determined by diet.



Member tester Heide A. Invidiato says...
"These were wonderful. They're easy to make and very different from the usual deviled eggs. My friend thought they were the best stuffed eggs she'd ever tasted."

Warm Crab-Stuffed Eggs

Your guests won't be able to resist these stuffed eggs with their bubbly, cheesy crab filling. If you use a pastry bag to fill the eggs, see our pastry bag tips (pg.48).

6 hard-cooked eggs*

1 (6.5-oz.) can lump or claw crabmeat (1 cup)

½ cup mayonnaise

¼ cup thinly sliced green onions

1½ teaspoons lemon juice

¼ teaspoon seafood seasoning, such as Old Bay

¼ teaspoon dry mustard

⅛ teaspoon cayenne pepper

3 tablespoons finely shredded Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese

1 Halve eggs lengthwise; place yolks in medium bowl. With pastry blender or fork, mash yolks until consistency of coarse crumbs. Gently stir in all remaining ingredients except egg whites and cheese. (Eggs can be prepared to this point 1 day ahead. Cover and refrigerate yolk mixture and egg whites separately.)

2 Place egg whites on small foil-lined rimmed baking sheet (slice small sliver off bottom, if necessary, to help whites stand upright). With pastry bag fitted with plain tip, or tip of spoon, fill with yolk mixture. Sprinkle with cheese.

3 Heat broiler. Broil 3 to 6 minutes or until golden brown. Serve warm.

12 appetizers

PER APPETIZER: 125 calories, 10.5 g total fat (2 g saturated fat), 6 g protein, 1 g carbohydrate, 120 mg cholesterol, 165 mg sodium, 0 g fiber

tip *To hard-cook eggs, place in single layer in saucepan. Cover with water; bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat to medium-low to maintain a bare simmer; simmer 9 minutes. (Water should boil very slowly and gently, not rapidly.) Immediately place eggs in bowl of ice water; let stand until cold. Peel under running water.

Eggs Benedict Strata

Based on the famous eggs Benedict, this recipe features layers of toasted English muffins, Canadian bacon, spinach and eggs topped with a fluffy hollandaise sauce. Use an extra-smoky Canadian bacon, such as the Neuske's brand, for a noticeable flavor difference.

STRATA

4 English muffins, split (if muffins are extra-thick, use about 3)

2 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut up

1 cup chopped onion

10 oz. Canadian bacon, chopped (2½ cups)

1 (10-oz.) pkg. frozen chopped spinach, thawed, squeezed dry

2 medium garlic cloves, minced

¾ teaspoon salt, divided

½ teaspoon black pepper, divided

½ teaspoon ground nutmeg, divided

8 eggs

3 cups milk

HOLLANDAISE SAUCE

5 pasteurized eggs, separated, room temperature

2 tablespoons lemon juice

¼ teaspoon salt

¼ teaspoon black pepper

⅛ to ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper

¾ cup unsalted butter, cut up

1 Heat broiler. Spray 13x9-inch glass baking dish with cooking spray. Place English muffins on baking sheet; broil 2 to 4 minutes or until tops are golden brown. Cut into ¾-inch pieces (you should have about 4½ cups); arrange over bottom of baking dish.

2 Melt 2 tablespoons butter in large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Cook and stir onion 3 to 4 minutes or until it begins to brown. Add bacon; cook and stir 3 to

5 minutes or until lightly browned. Stir in spinach, garlic and ¼ teaspoon each of the salt, black pepper and nutmeg; reduce heat to medium to medium-low. Cook and stir 1 minute. Spoon over English muffins.

3 Whisk 8 eggs in large bowl until frothy. Whisk in milk and remaining ½ teaspoon salt, ¼ teaspoon black pepper and ¼ teaspoon nutmeg. Pour over mixture in baking dish, pressing to make sure all bread is moistened. Cover and refrigerate overnight.

4 Heat oven to 350°F. Bake, uncovered, 45 to 50 minutes or until puffed and golden brown and knife inserted in center comes out clean.

5 Meanwhile, blend 5 egg yolks, lemon juice, ¼ teaspoon salt, ¼ teaspoon black pepper and cayenne pepper in blender 1 minute or until combined.

6 Place ¾ cup butter in glass measuring cup; microwave on high 40 to 60 seconds or until melted and just starting to bubble. With blender running, slowly pour in butter in a very thin stream until sauce is thickened, 1 to 1½ minutes total. (If butter is added too quickly, egg yolks won't be able to absorb butter fast enough and sauce won't thicken.)

7 Beat egg whites in medium bowl at medium-high speed 1 to 2 minutes or until soft peaks form. Gently fold hollandaise sauce into egg whites.

8 Heat broiler. Spoon hollandaise over hot strata; broil 1 to 4 minutes or until golden brown. Let stand 5 minutes before serving.

12 servings

PER SERVING: 325 calories, 22.5 g total fat (12 g saturated fat), 16 g protein, 14.5 g carbohydrate, 280 mg cholesterol, 685 mg sodium, 1.5 g fiber

wine Pick a lighter white, the 2008 Santa Rita 120 Sauvignon Blanc from Chile (\$8). Or serve a soft, slightly spicy red, the 2007 Perrin Côtes du Rhône Réserve from France (\$10).

separating tips

When a recipe calls for separating the egg white from the yolk, you'll have an easier time if you use cold eggs rather than warm. Crack the eggs on a flat surface, not the rim of a bowl. The sharp edge of a rim is more likely to force the shell into the egg, where it has the potential to break the yolk. If you need to beat egg whites, bring them to room temperature first for maximum volume.

cook with care

Overcooking toughens eggs, so when scrambling or frying them, use medium to medium-low heat. Remember that the heat of the pan will continue to cook the eggs even after they're removed from the heat.



Scrambled Egg-Potato Baskets

Don't put all your eggs in one basket. Instead, stuff these delicious mascarpone- and herb-flavored scrambled eggs into individual baskets made with hash brown potatoes.

- 6 tablespoons unsalted butter, divided
- 1 cup finely chopped onion
- 10 eggs, divided
- 1½ teaspoons salt, divided
- ¾ teaspoon pepper, divided
- 1 (20-oz.) pkg. refrigerated hash brown potatoes
- 1½ tablespoons chopped fresh tarragon
- 1½ tablespoons sliced fresh chives
- ½ cup mascarpone cheese, softened*

- 1 Place oven rack in lowest rack position. Heat oven to 400°F. Spray 12 muffin cups generously with cooking spray. Melt 4 tablespoons of the butter in medium skillet over medium heat. Cook onion 3 minutes or just until it begins to soften, stirring occasionally.
- 2 Meanwhile, whisk 2 of the eggs, 1 teaspoon of the salt and ½ teaspoon of the pepper in large bowl until blended. Stir in hash browns until coated. Stir in onion mixture. Spoon into muffin cups (cups will be full). With back of spoon, press into bottom and up sides, making an indentation in center. (Keep hash browns from spilling over edges to avoid overbrowning.)
- 3 Bake on bottom oven rack 40 to 45 minutes or until potatoes are tender and sides are brown. Remove from oven; run thin metal spatula around outside edges to loosen. Cool in pan on wire rack 5 minutes. Carefully remove potato baskets from pan; place on foil-lined baking sheet. (Potato baskets can be made 4 hours ahead.)
- 4 Place oven rack in middle position; reduce oven temperature to 300°F. Whisk remaining 8 eggs, ½ teaspoon salt, ¼ teaspoon pepper, tarragon and chives in large bowl 45 seconds or until frothy and blended.
- 5 Melt remaining 2 tablespoons butter in large non-stick skillet over medium heat. Pour in eggs; reduce heat to medium-low. Cook slowly 2 to 3 minutes or until eggs just begin to form curds, stirring constantly with heat-resistant spatula. Stir in cheese. Cook 1 to 2 minutes or until curds form but eggs are still very creamy. Spoon eggs into potato baskets.
- 6 Immediately bake potato baskets at 300°F for 5 minutes or until hot.

6 servings

PER SERVING: 440 calories, 27.5 g total fat (14.5 g saturated fat), 18.5 g protein, 30.5 g carbohydrate, 405 mg cholesterol, 855 mg sodium, 3 g fiber

tip *Mascarpone cheese is a double- or triple-cream cheese from Italy. Look for it in the dairy section of the supermarket or in Italian markets. If unavailable, substitute an equal amount of cream cheese.

Deviled Egg Salad

Deviled egg lovers will find this salad doubly appealing. Part of the creamy filling is spooned into egg white halves that perch on top of the salad, while the remainder becomes the base for a tasty dressing.

- 6 hard-cooked eggs*
- ½ cup mayonnaise
- 3 tablespoons minced shallots
- 1½ teaspoons Dijon mustard
- ⅛ teaspoon salt
- ⅛ teaspoon pepper
- 3 tablespoons plus ¼ cup finely sliced green onions, divided
- 3 to 4 tablespoons milk
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh dill
- 16 Boston or other tender lettuce leaves (about 1 head)
- 1 (14-oz.) can quartered artichoke hearts, drained
- ¼ cup finely chopped orange or yellow bell pepper

- 1 Halve eggs lengthwise; place yolks in small bowl. With pastry blender or fork, mash yolks until finely crumbled. With fork, stir in mayonnaise. Stir in shallots, mustard, salt and pepper.
- 2 Measure ⅓ cup of the egg yolk mixture; spoon into 4 of the egg white halves. Garnish tops with ½ tablespoon of the green onions.

- 3 Stir 3 tablespoons milk and 2½ tablespoons of the green onions into remaining egg yolk mixture for dressing, adding additional milk for desired consistency.
- 4 Finely chop remaining egg whites. Combine in small bowl with remaining ¼ cup green onions and dill. (Eggs, dressing and egg white mixture can be made 8 hours ahead. Cover and refrigerate separately.)
- 5 To assemble salads, arrange 3 lettuce leaves on each plate. Tear remaining lettuce leaves; place in center. Sprinkle with egg white mixture; place deviled eggs in center of lettuce. Surround with artichoke hearts; sprinkle bell pepper over artichokes. Drizzle each salad with 2 tablespoons dressing; pass remaining dressing, if desired.

4 servings

PER SERVING: 375 calories, 30.5 g total fat (6 g saturated fat), 13.5 g protein, 14.5 g carbohydrate, 330 mg cholesterol, 570 mg sodium, 7.5 g fiber

tip *To hard-cook eggs, place in single layer in saucepan. Cover with water; bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat to medium-low to maintain a bare simmer; simmer 9 minutes. (Water should boil very slowly and gently, not rapidly.) Immediately place eggs in bowl of ice water; let stand until cold. Peel under running water.

store properly

Store eggs in the refrigerator with their pointed ends down to keep the yolk centered in the shell and to avoid breaking. Shells are porous and easily absorb odors and moisture, so keep eggs covered and away from strong-smelling foods. Eggs can usually be stored 3 weeks.

age matters

Use the freshest eggs for frying and poaching. The yolks remain high and the whites don't spread as much during cooking. Eggs more than 1 week old are best for hard-cooking. As they age, they pull away slightly from the shell, making them easier to peel.



Member tester Melissa Moore says...
*"I definitely would make this again.
It was very tasty and so easy to prepare."*

The Perfect Fried Egg Sandwich

It's no exaggeration when we say this sandwich is the best of its kind. It starts with toasted artisan bread smeared with a tart lemon mayonnaise. We add piles of crisp bacon and sliced avocado, and finish with a tender fried egg.

MAYONNAISE

- 1/3 cup mayonnaise
- 2 teaspoons minced shallots
- 1 1/2 teaspoons lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon grated lemon peel

SANDWICHES

- 8 slices artisan Italian bread (1/2 inch), toasted
- 2 tablespoons plus 2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 1 avocado, quartered, each quarter cut into 4 slices

8 slices bacon, cooked, halved
crosswise

4 eggs

1/8 teaspoon salt

Dash pepper

- 1 Combine all mayonnaise ingredients in small bowl.
- 2 Brush toasted bread with 2 tablespoons of the oil; spread with mayonnaise mixture. Top 4 of the bread slices with avocado and bacon.
- 3 Crack each egg into individual small cup. Heat remaining 2 teaspoons oil in medium nonstick skillet over medium heat until warm. Slide eggs into skillet; sprinkle with salt and pepper. Cook until eggs begin to turn white, about 1 minute. Cover and cook an additional 1 1/2 to 2 minutes or until whites are firm but tender and yolks are creamy, adjust-

ing heat if necessary. Place over bacon; top with remaining bread slices.

4 sandwiches

PER SANDWICH: 560 calories, 42.5 g total fat (8.5 g saturated fat), 20 g protein, 26.5 g carbohydrate, 235 mg cholesterol, 860 mg sodium, 6 g fiber

wine Serve with a dry sparkling wine, the nonvintage Segura Viudas Brut Reserva from Spain (\$8), or a dry rosé, the 2008 Pedroncelli Zinfandel Rosé from California (\$9). [n](#)

Janice Cole is *Cooking Club* magazine's food editor and food stylist. Her cookbook, *Chicken and Eggs* (Chronicle Books), is due out next year.

WANT CHICKENS?

Find information on raising chickens in the city in "Cook's Notebook" (pg. 48).