

COOKING SKILLS

Cooking Skills: Eggs 1

Learn to cook eggs every way, with experiments, tasting notes and troubleshooting.

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COOKING SKILLS: EGGS 1

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Cooking Skills: Eggs 1

Chapter 1 · Know Your Egg

SKILL GOAL

Choose, store, test, crack and separate an egg confidently, and cook a safe first egg in the microwave.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

An egg is the most useful ingredient in the kitchen and the easiest to spoil by being careless with it. Spend this chapter getting to know it, because every later chapter depends on four small habits: choosing a good egg, storing it properly, cracking it cleanly and knowing when it is safe.

Buying and storing

- **Look for the Lion mark** on the shell and the box. Lion eggs come from hens vaccinated against salmonella, and UK food safety advice says Lion eggs are safe to eat runny or raw, even for pregnant women, babies and older people. Eggs without the Lion mark: cook them until the white and yolk are firm for anyone vulnerable.
- **Check the best-before date** on the shell or box, and use the egg by then. A fresh egg is good for about four weeks from laying.
- **Keep eggs in the fridge** at home, in the box, pointed end down (this keeps the yolk centred). Keep them away from strong smells, because shells are porous and eggs pick up odours. Don't wash them: the shell's natural coating is a barrier.
- **Size matters for timings.** This course uses **medium eggs** straight from the fridge. Large eggs need about a minute longer when boiled, and a few seconds longer for most other methods.
- **Free range, barn or caged?** It is a welfare and taste choice, not a safety one. Try a more expensive carton once and see whether you can tell the difference in a soft-boiled egg or a

fried one: that is a good tasting-notes experiment.

Kit you need

- A small saucepan with a lid, and a non-stick frying pan about 20 cm across (good for fried, scrambled and omelettes).
- A heatproof silicone spatula and a wooden spoon (metal scratches non-stick).
- A slotted spoon, a small bowl, a fork, and a timer. Your phone is fine. A timer matters more than any other gadget in this course.
- A small sieve or tea strainer (for poaching), and a baking dish or ramekin (for baked eggs). Don't buy these yet.

> **QUICK SHOPPING RULE**
>
> Buy a box of 6 or 10 eggs to start, not a tray of 30. You will cook a lot of eggs, but a fresh box gives a more reliable result than the eggs you forgot about.

Try it

These drills take two minutes each and need only eggs and a bowl. Do them before you cook anything.

DRILL 1 · START HERE

The float test and the crack

2 minutes | no cooking | 1 egg per drill

You can tell how fresh an egg is without breaking it, and you can break it without getting shell in the bowl. Practise both.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

2	medium eggs, different ages if you have them (fridge eggs)
Tall glass	of cold water
Small bowl	and a saucer

THE FLOAT TEST

1. Fill the glass with cold water, deep enough to cover an egg.
2. Lower an egg in gently with a spoon.
3. **Lies flat on the bottom:** very fresh. **Tilts or stands on its point:** older, still fine to eat but better hard boiled (older eggs peel more easily). **Floats:** throw it away, because the air cell inside has grown large.

THE CLEAN CRACK

1. Tap the egg firmly on a **flat surface**, such as the worktop, not the edge of the bowl. A flat surface cracks the shell in one place without pushing pieces inwards.
2. Put your thumbs into the crack and pull the shell apart gently over the bowl. Let the egg slide out.
3. If shell falls in, scoop it out with a **bigger piece of shell**. The edge acts like a magnet. A finger in cold water works too. Chasing it with a spoon pushes it round and round.
4. Always crack eggs into a small bowl first, never straight into the pan. One bad egg is then a bowl problem, not a pan problem.

DRILL 2 · GET COMFORTABLE

Separating an egg

5 minutes | no cooking | 2 eggs to practise

Many recipes later in this course use whites or yolks on their own. Learn this now with two bowls and no pressure.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

2 medium eggs (practise with two, then use them in the next recipe)

METHOD 1: WITH YOUR HAND (BEST FOR BEGINNERS)

1. Hold a clean hand over a bowl and crack the egg into your palm.
2. Open your fingers slightly and let the white run through into the bowl. The yolk stays in your palm.
3. Put the yolk in a second bowl.

METHOD 2: WITH THE SHELL

1. Crack the egg and hold it upright over a bowl, so that it opens into two halves.
2. Pass the yolk from one half to the other, letting the white drip into the bowl each time.
3. This is quicker once you've practised, but a sharp shell edge can break the yolk. Use the hand method until you feel confident.

> **WHY A BROKEN YOLK MATTERS**
>
> Even a tiny bit of yolk (fat) in whites stops them whisking up. If you ever make meringues, use a bowl that is spotlessly clean and separate each egg over a small bowl, then add it to the big one. One bad egg then ruins one egg, not six.

STORING WHAT YOU DON'T USE

- **Whites:** a covered container in the fridge for up to 4 days, or freeze them.
- **Yolks:** a covered container in the fridge for up to 2 days. A little cold water on top stops a skin forming (drain it off before using).
- Use them soon: a spare white goes into an omelette or the mug recipes below, and a spare yolk goes into a scramble, mash or a carbonara.

LEVEL 1 · FIRST COOK

Cheese and chive mug omelette

3 minutes | 1 portion | microwave

A safe, almost foolproof first cooked egg, using the cracking you've just practised. It cooks in the microwave in two short bursts, so you can see the egg set.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

2	medium eggs
1 tbsp	milk
20 g	mature Cheddar, grated
1 tsp	snipped chives (or 1 chopped spring onion)
Pinch	of salt and black pepper
Butter	for greasing the mug

1. Rub the inside of a large mug (about 350 ml) with butter.
2. Crack the eggs into the mug using the flat-surface crack. Add the milk, salt and pepper and beat with a fork for 20 seconds, until no streaks of white remain.
3. Stir in the chives and half the cheese.
4. Microwave on high for 40 seconds. Take it out and stir with the fork, pulling the cooked edges into the middle.
5. Microwave for another 30 to 40 seconds, until just set on top and no longer wet. Sprinkle on the rest of the cheese and let it stand for 30 seconds. It will keep cooking.

Microwave note: cooking times vary with power (these are for 800 W). Cook in short bursts and look each time, because an overdone microwave egg turns rubbery.

> **SERVE WITH**
>
> A slice of wholemeal toast, or a handful of cherry tomatoes. That is a complete 4-minute breakfast.

LEVEL 1 · USE IT UP

Egg-white mug omelette (and what to do with the yolk)

3 minutes | 1 portion | lighter option

Put your separating skills to work. Whites cook up light and fluffy, and are lower in fat and calories than whole eggs. Keep the yolks to use in the next recipe.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

- **3** medium egg whites (about 100 g), saved from separating 3 eggs
- **1 handful** baby spinach, chopped
- **2** cherry tomatoes, quartered
- **Pinch** of salt and black pepper
- **Spray or tiny** amount of oil for greasing the mug

1. Lightly oil a large mug. Add the whites, salt and pepper and beat with a fork for 20 seconds.
2. Stir in the spinach and tomatoes.
3. Microwave for 45 seconds, stir, then microwave for another 30 to 45 seconds until set.

USING UP THE YOLKS

- Stir one into a hot bowl of porridge or mashed potato for richness.
- Add one to a scramble or an omelette in the next chapters, as an extra-rich egg.
- Mix with a little cheese and spread on toast for a quick grilled topping. Cook it all the way through.

Experiments

Do one or both, on a different day from the cooking. They only need an egg or two.

EXPERIMENT

Fresh vs old

Does the age of an egg change how it looks in a bowl? You need a very fresh egg (use-by at least two weeks away) and one that is close to its date.

1. Do the float test on both eggs and note which sinks and which tilts.
2. Crack each onto a separate saucer, side by side.
3. Compare how high the yolk stands and how much the white spreads.

Look for: A fresh egg has a tall yolk and a thick, jelly-like white that stays close to the yolk. An old egg is flatter, with a watery white that runs outwards. Fresh eggs look better fried and poached; older ones are better boiled.

EXPERIMENT

Flat surface vs bowl edge

Which crack leaves the fewest shell pieces?

1. Crack three eggs on the edge of a bowl and note how many shell pieces fall in.
2. Crack three more on the flat worktop.
3. Count again.

Look for: Shell pieces in the bowl, and how easily the egg slides out. The flat surface should win.

Tasting notes

Use this to keep your own record. The aim is to find out which methods you like best, so write a few words for each.

WHAT I TRIED	DATE	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Fresh egg (float test)				
Older egg (float test)				
Crack on the worktop				

WHAT I TRIED	DATE	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Crack on the bowl edge				
Whole-egg mug omelette				
Egg-white mug omelette				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Shell in the bowl	Cracked on a corner, or pressed too hard	Use a flat surface, and scoop the bit out with a bigger shell piece
Yolk broke when separating	Pulled too fast, or a sharp shell edge	Use the hand method, and use that egg for scrambling instead
Rubbery microwave egg	Cooked too long at once	Cook in short bursts and stir between each
Egg floats in water	The air cell has grown: the egg is old	Throw it away
Whites won't whisk later	A trace of yolk or grease in the bowl	Wash the bowl, and separate over a spare bowl in future

FOOD SAFETY: EGGS

Wash your hands after touching raw egg and before touching other food. Wash the bowl, fork and worktop in hot soapy water. Don't use cracked eggs or eggs past their date. Keep cooked egg dishes in the fridge and eat them within 2 days. Cook eggs until firm for anyone who is pregnant, elderly or ill unless the eggs have the Lion mark.

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

- ☐ I can tell whether an egg is fresh using the float test.
- ☐ I can crack an egg cleanly on a flat surface.
- ☐ I can separate an egg by hand without breaking the yolk.
- ☐ I know how long whites and yolks keep in the fridge.
- ☐ I have written my first tasting notes.

NEXT CHAPTER

Cooking Skills: Eggs 1, chapter 2 is Boiled Eggs: timing, peeling and a ladder from a soft egg with soldiers to a hard-boiled egg mayo sandwich.

Cooking Skills: Eggs 1

Chapter 2 · Boiled Eggs

SKILL GOAL

Boil an egg to the yolk you want, every time, and peel it cleanly.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

A boiled egg is really a steamed-and-simmered one: the white sets at a lower temperature than the yolk, so time decides everything. Learn the timings once and you can have any yolk you like.

TIME (MEDIUM EGG, FRIDGE TO BOILING WATER)	WHITE	YOLK	GOOD FOR
5 minutes	Just set	Runny	Soldiers, dippy eggs
6 minutes	Set	Runny in the middle, soft round the edge	Dippy eggs, salads, ramen
7 minutes	Firm	Jammy: soft but not liquid	Toast, salads, noodle bowls
9 minutes	Firm	Set but creamy and still bright yellow	Sandwiches, snacks
11 minutes	Firm	Fully set and crumbly (go longer and you get a grey ring)	Egg mayo, salad, picnic eggs

Large eggs need about 1 minute more. Straight from the fridge is assumed. Eggs that have been at room temperature cook about 30 seconds faster.

The method

1. Bring enough water to the boil in a small pan to cover the eggs by about 2 cm. Use a pan where the eggs fit snugly, so they don't bounce about and crack.
2. Turn the heat down to a steady, gentle boil. Lower the eggs in with a spoon, one at a time, and start the timer straight away.
3. When the timer goes, lift the eggs out with a slotted spoon. For hard-boiled eggs, put them straight into a bowl of cold water with a few ice cubes for 5 minutes. This **stops the cooking** (it prevents the grey-green ring) and makes peeling easier.
4. For soft-boiled eggs, serve at once in egg cups: that's the one time you can't wait.

> **PEELING**
>
> Tap the egg all over on the worktop to make a network of cracks, then roll it under your palm. Start peeling from the wide end, where the air pocket is, and peel under a trickle of cold water. Very fresh eggs peel worst: this is where older eggs win.

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

Soft-boiled egg with soldiers and beans

10 minutes | 1 portion | healthy classic

The dippy egg. Learn the timing for a runny yolk, and get a lesson in toast cutting.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

2	medium eggs, from the fridge
2 slices	wholemeal bread
Small amount	of butter or a thin spread
100 g	reduced-sugar baked beans (about a third of a tin)
Pinch	of salt and pepper

1. Start the beans warming in a small pan over low heat, or in a bowl in the microwave, stirring once.
2. Bring a pan of water to the boil. Lower in the eggs and cook for **6 minutes** for a runny yolk (5 for runnier).
3. Meanwhile, toast the bread, spread lightly, and cut each slice into **soldiers**: strips about 2 cm wide.
4. Put the eggs in egg cups (or a mug if you have none). Slice off the top with a knife, or tap the top with a spoon and peel it away. Season.
5. Dip the soldiers into the yolk, and eat the beans on the side.

> **CUTTING THE TOP OFF**
>
> A knife slices the top off cleanly; a spoon-tap is gentler. If the white is still wet at the top, put the egg back in its cup for 30 seconds.

LEVEL 2 · NEXT STEP

Jammy eggs on toast with spring onion

15 minutes | 1 portion | peeling practice

Seven minutes makes a yolk like thick jam: soft enough to spread, firm enough not to run. This is peeling practice too.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

2	medium eggs, from the fridge
2 slices	sourdough or wholemeal bread
½	ripe avocado (or 2 tbsp cottage cheese)
1	spring onion, finely sliced
Squeeze	of lemon juice
Pinch	of salt, pepper and chilli flakes

1. Boil the eggs for **7 minutes**, then put them into iced water for 3 minutes.
2. Toast the bread. Mash the avocado with the lemon juice and a pinch of salt, and spread it over the toast.
3. Peel the eggs (tap, roll, peel under water). Halve them with a sharp knife wiped between cuts.
4. Lay the egg halves on the toast, season, and scatter with spring onion and chilli.

LEVEL 2 · BATCH IT

Hard-boiled eggs for the week

20 minutes | 6 eggs | keeps 5 days

Boil a batch once and you have snacks, salad toppers and sandwich fillings ready. This is the best use of the ice-bath trick.

INGREDIENTS (6 PORTIONS)

6	medium eggs, from the fridge
Bowl	of cold water with a handful of ice

1. Lower the eggs into boiling water and cook for **10 minutes** (set but not grey).
2. Lift them straight into the ice bath and leave for 5 minutes.
3. Dry them, and either peel them now or leave them in their shells (they keep best unpeeled).
4. Store in a covered container in the fridge. Eat within 5 days. Write the date on the box.

> **FOOD SAFETY: BOILED EGGS**
>
> Once cooked, hard-boiled eggs are no longer protected by the shell's natural coating, so keep them cold. Don't leave them on the worktop for more than 2 hours, and throw out any that smell sulphurous. Shells that cracked while boiling are safe to eat the same day, but not to store.

LEVEL 3 · CONFIDENCE

Egg mayo sandwich (lighter version)

10 minutes | 1 portion | uses a hard-boiled egg

The classic, made with half yoghurt so it is lighter. A good way to use up the batch.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

2	hard-boiled eggs, peeled
1 tbsp	mayonnaise
1 tbsp	Greek yoghurt
1	spring onion, or a few chives, finely chopped
Squeeze	of lemon juice
Pinch	of salt and plenty of black pepper
2 slices	wholemeal bread
Handful	of watercress or cress

1. Mash the eggs roughly with a fork in a bowl: leave them a bit chunky.
2. Add the mayonnaise, yoghurt, spring onion, lemon and seasoning. Mix gently.
3. Taste it. Add a pinch more salt or pepper if it needs it. Mustard is also good.
4. Pile onto one slice, scatter the cress, and top with the other slice. Cut into triangles.

> **TREAT SWAP**
>
> For a richer sandwich, use 2 tbsp of mayonnaise and no yoghurt, and butter the bread. It's a treat, not an everyday thing.

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

The timing ladder

Find out exactly how you like your yolk. This is the most useful experiment in the chapter.

1. Put 5 medium eggs into a pan of boiling water together. Note the time.
2. Lift one out at 5, 6, 7, 9 and 11 minutes with a slotted spoon into cold water.
3. Cool each for a couple of minutes, then cut each in half, keeping them in order.
4. Taste and photograph each one if you like, then record it in the table.

Look for: How the yolk moves from runny to jammy to chalky, and at what minute you stopped liking it.

EXPERIMENT

Cold start vs boiling water

Does starting the eggs in cold water change the result?

1. Put 2 eggs in a pan of cold water, bring it to the boil, and start the timer once it boils; cook for 7 minutes.
2. Cook 2 more in already-boiling water for 7 minutes.
3. Cool in cold water, peel, and compare the yolk, the white and how easily each peels.

Look for: Boiling-water starts are more consistent and usually peel easier. Cold starts depend on your hob, which makes timing unpredictable.

EXPERIMENT

Peeling: fresh vs older

Settle whether egg age really changes how easily an egg peels.

1. Boil one very fresh egg and one that has been in the fridge for 2 weeks, for the same time, then ice-bath both.
2. Peel both under a trickle of cold water.

Look for: How much white comes away with the shell. The older egg is usually smoother.

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	TIME OR METHOD	YOLK AND WHITE	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
5 minutes				
6 minutes				
7 minutes				
9 minutes				
11 minutes				
Cold start vs boiling start				
Fresh vs old peeling				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Egg cracked in the pan	Dropped in, or the water was boiling too hard	Lower it in gently on a spoon, and turn to a steady simmer-boil. A little vinegar in the water helps the white set if it leaks
Grey-green ring round the yolk	Overcooked	Cook for less time and put it into the ice bath straight away
Rubbery, tough white	Cooked too long, or the water boiled violently	Use a gentler boil and a timer
Hard to peel, white tears off	The egg is very fresh, or it wasn't cooled quickly	Use older eggs for hard-boiled, and chill in an ice bath; peel under running water
Yolk off-centre	Stored on its side	Store pointed end down, or stir the water for the first minute
Runny yolk when you wanted jammy	Eggs straight from a very cold fridge, or too short a time	Add 30 seconds, and write the time in your notes

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

- ☐ I can boil an egg to a runny, jammy or set yolk on purpose.
- ☐ I use an ice bath for hard-boiled eggs.
- ☐ I can peel an egg without losing half the white.
- ☐ I know how long cooked eggs keep in the fridge.
- ☐ I know which yolk I like best, and it's in my notes.

NEXT CHAPTER

Cooking Skills: Eggs 1, chapter 3 is Fried Eggs: heat control, from a sunny-side-up egg to a crispy-edged egg on toast.

Cooking Skills: Eggs 1

Chapter 3 · Fried Eggs

SKILL GOAL

Fry an egg with a set white and the yolk you like, by controlling the heat.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

Frying an egg is all about heat. Too hot and the white goes brown and rubbery before the yolk warms; too cool and it spreads into a flat, greasy puddle. Medium-low is the answer for most styles, and a good non-stick pan does the rest.

STYLE	HOW IT'S COOKED	RESULT
Sunny side up	One side only, lid optional	Set white, runny yolk, bright yellow
Over easy	Flipped for a few seconds	Set white, runny yolk, no wobbly white on top
Over medium / hard	Flipped, cooked longer	Jammy or set yolk
Basted	Spooned with hot fat or covered with a lid	Set top without flipping
Crispy-edged	Hot oil, then lower heat	Lacy brown edges, runny yolk

Pan, fat and heat

- **Pan:** a 20 cm non-stick frying pan for one or two eggs. A pan that's too big spreads the egg thin.
- **Fat:** about 1 tsp of oil or butter per egg is plenty in a non-stick pan. Oil handles a higher heat; butter tastes richer but browns faster, so use medium-low.

- **Heat:** warm the pan over medium for about 30 seconds before the fat goes in, then keep it at **medium-low** for most styles. The fat should shimmer, not smoke, and an egg should sizzle gently on contact, not spit.
- **Crack first:** break each egg into a small cup, then slide it into the pan. It keeps the yolk whole and the white from spreading.

> **SALT**
>
> Season after cooking if you want a clean, glossy white. Salt on the yolk can leave white spots.

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

Sunny-side-up egg on toast

6 minutes | 1 portion | healthy

The simplest fried egg. Learn the heat and learn when it is done.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

1 tsp	olive or rapeseed oil
1	medium egg
1 slice	wholemeal bread
Pinch	of salt and black pepper

1. Crack the egg into a cup. Heat the oil in the pan over medium for 30 seconds, then turn down to medium-low.
2. Slide in the egg. It should sizzle softly. Let it cook for **2 to 3 minutes** without touching it, until the white is opaque and set but the yolk is still shiny and soft.
3. While it cooks, toast the bread.
4. Lift out the egg with a fish slice and put it on the toast. Season.

> **HOW TO TELL IT'S DONE**
>
> The edges are set and white right up to the yolk, with no clear, jelly-like white left. If the top of the white is still wet, put a lid on for 20 seconds. The steam sets it.

LEVEL 2 · NEXT STEP

Over-easy egg

6 minutes | 1 portion | flipping practice

Flip the egg without breaking the yolk. A bit of nerve, and a fish slice, is all you need.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

1 tsp	oil or butter
2	medium eggs
Pinch	of salt and pepper
1 slice	wholemeal toast to serve

1. Cook the eggs as for sunny-side-up for about 2 minutes, until the whites are almost set.
2. Slide a thin fish slice or palette knife right under one egg and flip it in one smooth movement. Don't lift it high: flip it close to the pan.
3. Cook for **10 to 15 seconds** for over easy (runny yolk), 30 seconds for over medium (jammy), or 1 minute for over hard (set).
4. Lift out and serve on the toast.

> **IF IT BREAKS**
>
> A broken yolk is not a failure: it's just a scrambled-fried egg, and tastes the same. Put it in a sandwich.

LEVEL 2 · BASTED

Basted egg with greens

10 minutes | 1 portion | no flipping

The restaurant method for a set top without flipping. Spooning hot fat, or steaming, cooks the white while the yolk stays soft.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

1 tsp	butter (or oil)
1	medium egg
1 large handful (about 60 g)	baby spinach
1	small garlic clove, sliced
1 slice	wholemeal toast
Squeeze	of lemon juice
Pinch	of salt and pepper

1. Wilt the spinach with the garlic and a splash of water in a small pan for 1 minute. Squeeze out the extra water, season and keep warm.
2. Heat the butter in the frying pan over medium-low. Slide in the egg.
3. Cook for 1 minute until the white starts to set. Tilt the pan slightly and spoon the melted butter over the whites (not the yolk) for about 1 minute. **Or** add a teaspoon of water and put on a lid for 1 minute.
4. Pile the greens on the toast, lay the egg on top and add a squeeze of lemon.

LEVEL 3 · CRISP

Crispy-edged egg with chilli

5 minutes | 1 portion | a taste of Thai and Spanish cooking

Hot oil makes the white blister and crisp into lace. It's quick, and it is the deliberate opposite of a gentle fried egg.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

1 tbsp	olive or rapeseed oil
1	medium egg
Pinch	of chilli flakes
Cooked rice or toast	to serve (a small bowl, about 100 g cooked rice)
1 tsp	soy sauce
Squeeze	of lime or lemon

1. Heat the oil in a small frying pan over medium-high until it shimmers (about 1 minute). Crack the egg into a cup.
2. Slide in the egg. It will spit and bubble: that's the lace forming. Spoon the hot oil over the white.
3. After **1 to 2 minutes** the edges are brown and crisp. The yolk should still be runny. Lift out with a slotted spoon so the oil drains.
4. Serve over the rice, with the soy sauce, chilli and lime.

> **HOT OIL**
>
> Hot oil spits. Stand back slightly, keep a lid nearby and don't pour water into hot oil.

LEVEL 3 · TREAT

Fried egg sandwich

10 minutes | 1 portion | an occasional treat

Egg, bread and a little something salty, built into the best quick breakfast. Treat it as one: a sensible portion, not a daily habit.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

2 slices	wholemeal bread or 1 roll
2	rashers of back bacon (optional, leave out for a vegetarian version)
1	medium egg
1 tsp	oil
1 tbsp	ketchup or brown sauce, or a slice of tomato

1. Grill or dry-fry the bacon for 4 to 5 minutes until cooked through, turning once. Keep it warm.
2. Heat the oil in a frying pan and fry the egg over medium-low. For a sandwich, cook it **over medium**: flipped, with a jammy yolk, so it won't run down your chin.
3. Toast the bread (or split the roll).
4. Build: bread, bacon, egg, sauce, bread. Press down gently and cut in half.

> LIGHTER SWAP
>
> Leave out the bacon and add a slice of tomato and a handful of rocket instead.

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

Three heats

The fastest way to learn what 'medium-low' means on your hob.

1. Fry three eggs in turn in a clean pan, using the same oil: on low, medium-low and medium-high heat.
2. Time how long each takes until the white is set, and note the underside colour.
3. Taste each one and compare the texture of the white.

Look for: At low heat the white is tender but takes ages; at medium-high the underside browns and goes crisp and rubbery. Find the setting that gives you a set white and a runny yolk in about 3 minutes.

EXPERIMENT

Oil vs butter

Does the fat matter?

1. Fry one egg in 1 tsp oil and one in 1 tsp butter, both on medium-low.
2. Taste them side by side.

Look for: Butter tastes richer and browns faster; oil is cleaner and crisper. Which do you prefer on toast?

EXPERIMENT

Lid on or off

A lid traps steam and sets the top of the white.

1. Fry two eggs: one uncovered, one with a lid on for the last minute.
2. Compare the tops of the whites and the yolks.

Look for: Is the white on the lidded egg set right to the yolk? Is the yolk still runny? Does the surface look glossier or drier?

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	HEAT OR METHOD	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Sunny side up				
Over easy				
Basted				
Crispy-edged				
Low / medium-low / medium-high				
Oil vs butter				
Lid on / off				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Egg sticks to the pan	Pan not hot enough before the fat, or it is scratched	Warm the pan first, use a bit more fat, and use a non-stick pan
White is brown and rubbery, yolk raw	Heat too high	Turn down to medium-low and be patient
White spreads thin and watery	Old egg, or pan too big, or heat too low	Use a fresher egg, a smaller pan, and a slightly higher heat. Pour the thin watery part off first
Yolk broke on flipping	Flipped too high or too early	Wait until the white is set underneath; flip low and quickly
Wet jelly on top of the white	Not enough heat on top	Put on a lid for 20 seconds, or baste with the hot fat
Pan smokes	Heat too high, or the wrong fat	Take it off the heat; use oil and a lower setting

FOOD SAFETY: RUNNY YOLKS

A runny yolk is safe with Lion-mark eggs, but if anyone eating is pregnant, elderly, or very young and the eggs have no Lion mark, cook until the yolk is firm. Wash your hands after cracking eggs and wash

the cup between eggs if you are cooking for others.

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

- ☐ I can fry an egg with a set white and a runny yolk.
- ☐ I know what medium-low heat looks like on my hob.
- ☐ I can flip an egg without breaking the yolk (most of the time).
- ☐ I can baste or lid an egg so the top sets.
- ☐ I know whether I prefer oil or butter.

NEXT CHAPTER

Cooking Skills: Eggs 1, chapter 4 is Scrambled Eggs: gentle heat, timing and creamy results.

Cooking Skills: Eggs 1

Chapter 4 · Scrambled Eggs

SKILL GOAL

Scramble eggs to the texture you like, quick or slow, and add flavours without making them watery.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

Scrambled eggs show off the whole idea of this course: nothing about them is hard, but they punish carelessness. The proteins in egg set as they heat, and the gentler the heat, the softer and creamier the curds. Take them off the heat while they still look a little wet, because they carry on cooking on the plate.

STYLE	HEAT	TIME	RESULT
Quick scramble	Medium	About 1 to 2 minutes	Larger, fluffy curds
Slow, creamy scramble	Low	About 6 to 8 minutes	Small, soft, custard-like curds
Off-heat finish	Take the pan off the heat before it looks done	Last 30 seconds	Prevents dryness

What to use

- **Pan:** a small non-stick pan (18 to 20 cm) for 2 eggs.
- **Tools:** a silicone spatula or wooden spoon, so you can scrape the whole base.
- **Eggs:** 2 medium eggs per person is a good portion. Beat them in a bowl first with a fork until no streaks of white remain.

- **Extras:** a splash of milk or cream (about 1 tbsp per 2 eggs) gives a softer result. Water or nothing is fine too. We'll test that below.
- **Fat:** about 10 g of butter for a creamy scramble, or 1 tsp of oil for a lighter one.

> **THE GOLDEN RULE**
>
> Always take scrambled eggs off the heat a little early. If they look done in the pan, they're overcooked on the plate.

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

Quick scrambled eggs on toast

5 minutes | 1 portion | healthy

The two-minute method. Good for the first time, and good when you're in a hurry.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

2	medium eggs
1 tbsp	milk
5 g	butter (or 1 tsp oil)
1 slice	wholemeal bread
Pinch	of salt and black pepper

1. Crack the eggs into a bowl, add the milk and a pinch of salt, and beat with a fork for 20 seconds.
2. Put the bread in the toaster. Melt the butter in a non-stick pan over medium heat until it foams.
3. Pour in the eggs. Wait 15 seconds, until the edges just start to set, then push the egg from the edge to the middle with a spatula. Let the liquid run into the gaps.
4. Keep folding every few seconds for about 1 minute. When the eggs are mostly set but still look slightly wet and glossy, **take the pan off the heat**.
5. Stir once more, spoon onto the toast and season with pepper.

LEVEL 2 · NEXT STEP

Slow, creamy scrambled eggs

10 minutes | 1 portion | patience practice

The soft, custardy kind that you find at good brunch places. It takes longer, but needs very little skill beyond patience.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

2	medium eggs
10 g	butter
1 tbsp	single cream or whole milk
1 slice	good bread, toasted
Pinch	of salt and pepper

1. Crack the eggs straight into a cold small pan (or beat them first if you prefer smoother curds). Add the butter, cream and salt.
2. Put the pan on a **low** heat and stir constantly with a spatula, scraping the base and sides. The eggs and butter will melt together.
3. After 3 to 4 minutes it starts to thicken. When it gets lumpy, lift the pan off the heat for 10 seconds and stir, then put it back. This stops it from going from soft to dry in a moment.
4. After 6 to 8 minutes total you have soft, small curds that hold together but are still shiny. Take the pan off the heat and stir for another 15 seconds.
5. Serve at once on the toast. Don't leave it standing in the pan.

> **COLD PAN START**
>
> Starting in a cold pan gives you the longest time to catch the eggs at their best. If it starts setting too fast, lift the pan off the hob and keep stirring.

LEVEL 3 · FLAVOUR

Chive and smoked salmon scramble

8 minutes | 1 portion | a treat that is still light

Adding ingredients without ruining the texture: soft, quick flavour added at the end.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

2	medium eggs
1 tbsp	milk
5 g	butter
40 g	smoked salmon, cut into strips
1 tbsp	snipped chives
1 slice	rye or wholemeal bread, toasted
Squeeze	of lemon and black pepper

1. Beat the eggs with the milk and a little pepper (smoked salmon is salty, so skip the salt).
2. Cook as for the quick scramble, over medium-low heat.
3. When the eggs are nearly set, take the pan off the heat and fold in two-thirds of the salmon and the chives. The residual heat warms the salmon through.
4. Pile onto the toast, top with the remaining salmon and a squeeze of lemon.

> **WHY ADD THE SALMON LATE?**
>
> Heat toughens the salmon and turns it dry. Warming it in the last seconds keeps it silky.

LEVEL 3 · VEG

Spinach and tomato scramble

10 minutes | 1 portion | vegetarian, healthy

Cook the vegetables first so the extra water cooks away, otherwise the scramble goes watery.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

- **1 tsp** olive oil
- **4** cherry tomatoes, quartered
- **1 large handful** (about 50 g) baby spinach
- **2** medium eggs
- **1 tbsp** grated Parmesan or Cheddar (optional)
- **Pinch** of salt and black pepper
- **1 slice** wholemeal toast

1. Heat the oil in a small non-stick pan over medium heat. Add the tomatoes and cook for 2 minutes until they begin to soften.
2. Add the spinach and stir for 30 seconds until it wilts. If a lot of liquid appears, tip it away or cook it off.
3. Beat the eggs with a pinch of salt and pour them over the vegetables.
4. Fold gently on medium-low heat for 1 to 2 minutes, until nearly set. Take the pan off the heat and stir in the cheese.
5. Serve on the toast.

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

Salt before or after

Cooks argue about when to salt scrambled eggs. Find out what you think.

1. Beat 2 eggs with a pinch of salt and let them rest for 10 minutes. Beat 2 more eggs and salt them just before they go into the pan.
2. Cook both the same way, over the same heat.
3. Taste and compare the texture.

Look for: Do the pre-salted eggs look more tender and glossy? Does the later-salted one seem drier or less even?

EXPERIMENT

Milk, cream or nothing

Does the liquid matter?

1. Scramble three batches of 2 eggs: one with 1 tbsp milk, one with 1 tbsp single cream, one with nothing.
2. Cook each on medium-low and take them off the heat at the same stage.
3. Compare the richness and the colour.

Look for: Cream is the richest. Milk is lighter and gives bigger curds. Plain eggs have the best egg flavour. Which suits your breakfast?

EXPERIMENT

Low and slow vs fast

Test the two cooking speeds against each other.

1. Make the quick scramble and the slow scramble on the same morning, with 2 eggs each.
2. Eat them side by side.

Look for: Curd size, creaminess, and which one you'd actually make on a Tuesday morning.

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	HEAT OR METHOD	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Quick scramble				
Slow, creamy scramble				
With smoked salmon				
With spinach and tomato				
Salt early vs late				
Milk / cream / nothing				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Dry, rubbery eggs	Cooked too long or at too high a heat	Take the pan off the heat while the eggs still look glossy and a bit wet
Watery eggs with liquid in the pan	Wet vegetables, or a splash of milk too much	Pre-cook vegetables and drain them; use less liquid
Eggs stuck to the pan	No non-stick, or too little fat	Use a non-stick pan and enough butter
Tough, grey-green eggs	Overcooked and held too long	Serve at once; don't hold them hot
Streaky white and yellow	Not beaten enough	Beat until the colour is even (for the slow style, add the eggs unbeaten and stir)
Burnt butter	Pan too hot	Start at medium or lower, and lift the pan off the heat when in doubt

FOOD SAFETY: SCRAMBLED EGGS

Scrambled eggs should be set, not liquid, if you're cooking for anyone pregnant, elderly, very young or unwell and your eggs have no Lion mark. Don't hold scrambled eggs warm for long: eat them straight away and refrigerate any leftovers within 2 hours (use within 24 hours, reheat until steaming hot).

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

- ☐ I can make a quick scramble in under 5 minutes.
- ☐ I can make creamy scrambled eggs by moving the pan on and off the heat.
- ☐ I take scrambled eggs off the heat while they still look a little wet.
- ☐ I can add flavourings without making the eggs watery.
- ☐ I know how I like my scrambled eggs best, and it's in my notes.

NEXT CHAPTER

Cooking Skills: Eggs 1, chapter 5 is Poached Eggs: water control, the swirl and strainer methods, and avocado toast.

Cooking Skills: Eggs 1

Chapter 5 · Poached Eggs

SKILL GOAL

Poach an egg with a neat white and a runny yolk, with or without fresh eggs.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

A poached egg is cooked gently in hot water with no shell and no fat. It looks fussy but is mostly about two things: the freshness of the egg and the temperature of the water. Get both right and the white wraps neatly round the yolk.

- **Fresh eggs matter most here.** A fresh egg has a thick white that stays close to the yolk; an old one has a thin watery white that streams out into feathery strands. Use the freshest eggs in the box and do the float test from chapter 1.
- **Water at a gentle simmer,** not a boil: small bubbles forming on the base and rising slowly. A rolling boil tears the egg apart.
- **Depth:** at least 6 to 8 cm, so the egg sets as it sinks. A wide, deep saucepan or a deep frying pan works.
- **Crack into a cup first,** then slide it into the water close to the surface.
- **Timing:** about **3 minutes** for a runny yolk and a just-set white, 4 for a jammy yolk, 5 for a firm one.
- **Draining:** lift the egg out with a slotted spoon and rest it on kitchen paper for a few seconds so the toast doesn't go soggy.

METHOD	HOW IT WORKS	BEST FOR
Plain simmer	Slide the egg into simmering water	Very fresh eggs and a bit of nerve
Swirl (whirlpool)	Stir the water into a gentle whirlpool and drop the egg into the centre	Neat shapes from fresh eggs

METHOD	HOW IT WORKS	BEST FOR
Strainer	Drain the watery white in a sieve first, then slide the egg in	Any egg, including older ones. The foolproof method
Vinegar	A splash in the water helps the white set faster	Older eggs; use a little (1 tsp per litre)

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

Poached egg, strainer method

8 minutes · 1 portion · the most reliable method

Take out the watery white and almost every egg poaches neatly. Start here.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

1	medium egg, the freshest you have
1 slice	wholemeal bread
1 tsp	butter or a thin spread
Pinch	of salt and pepper
Small sieve	and a cup

1. Half-fill a saucepan with water (at least 6 cm deep) and bring it to a **gentle simmer**. Put the bread in the toaster.
2. Crack the egg into the sieve held over a cup. Wait 20 seconds, giving it a little shake, until the thin, watery white drains away.
3. Slide the egg from the sieve into a clean cup.
4. Lower the cup to the water's surface and tip the egg in gently. Do not stir. Cook for **3 minutes**.
5. Lift out with a slotted spoon, dab on kitchen paper, and put it on the buttered toast. Season.

LEVEL 2 · NEXT STEP

Swirl poached eggs

10 minutes | 1 portion | classic technique

The whirlpool wraps the white round the yolk. It only works with fresh eggs, and it feels like magic when it does.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

2	very fresh medium eggs
1 tsp	white wine vinegar or distilled vinegar (optional)
2 slices	wholemeal toast
Pinch	of salt and pepper

1. Crack each egg into its own cup. Bring a deep pan of water to a gentle simmer and add the vinegar.
2. Use a spoon to stir the water in a fast circle so there is a small whirlpool, then slide the first egg into the centre.
3. Cook for 3 minutes. Do the second egg the same way, stirring again first.
4. Lift out with a slotted spoon and drain. Serve on the toast.

> **ONE AT A TIME**
>
> Poach one or two eggs at a time while you learn. More than that and the water cools and the eggs collide.

LEVEL 2 · FRESH

Poached egg and avocado toast

10 minutes | 1 portion | vegetarian

A modern classic that stays healthy: creamy avocado under a runny egg.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

1	medium egg, poached (strainer method)
1 slice	sourdough or wholemeal bread
½	ripe avocado
Squeeze	of lime or lemon
Pinch	of chilli flakes, salt and pepper
1 tsp	mixed seeds (optional)

1. Poach the egg using the strainer method above.
2. Toast the bread. Mash the avocado with the lime juice, salt and pepper and spread it thickly on the toast.
3. Lift the egg onto the avocado with a slotted spoon. Sprinkle with chilli flakes and seeds.

LEVEL 3 · CONFIDENCE

Poached eggs on greens with yoghurt-lemon sauce

15 minutes | 1 portion | light lunch or brunch

Two eggs on warm wilted greens, with a lemon-yoghurt sauce that stands in for hollandaise (which is a later skill). Light, bright and a bit smart.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

2	medium eggs
100 g	kale or spinach, stalks removed
1 tsp	olive oil
1	small garlic clove, sliced
2 tbsp	Greek yoghurt
1 tsp	lemon juice, plus the zest of ¼ of a lemon
Pinch	of chilli flakes, salt and pepper
1 slice	toast, to serve

1. Stir the yoghurt, lemon juice and zest and a pinch of salt together in a small bowl. Add a splash of water if it needs loosening to a drizzle.
2. Heat the oil in a pan. Add the garlic for 20 seconds, then the greens with a splash of water. Cook for 2 to 3 minutes until wilted. Season.
3. Poach the eggs for 3 minutes using your favourite method.
4. Pile the greens on a plate, top with the eggs and spoon over the sauce. Add the chilli and serve with toast.

> NEXT SKILL
>
> A proper hollandaise is an emulsion sauce made of egg yolks and butter. It's covered in Cooking Skills: Eggs 2.

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

Vinegar vs none

Is vinegar worth it?

1. Poach one egg in plain simmering water and one in water with 1 tsp vinegar per litre, both for 3 minutes.
2. Compare the shape and the taste.

Look for: Does the vinegared egg hold together better? Can you taste the vinegar? You usually can't, but the white may look a little tighter.

EXPERIMENT

Swirl vs no swirl

Does the whirlpool really help?

1. Poach one egg with a swirl and one without, using the same pan of water and the same fresh eggs.
2. Compare how neat each is.

Look for: How much feathery white trails off the egg. The swirl should give a more compact shape.

EXPERIMENT

Fresh vs older egg

Test the freshness rule.

1. Poach a fresh egg and one 2 weeks old by the plain method.
2. Then try the older one by the strainer method.

Look for: The older egg should spread more, and the strainer should rescue it.

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Strainer method				
Swirl method				
Vinegar vs none				
Fresh vs older egg				
Avocado toast				
Greens and yoghurt sauce				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Feathery, ragged white	Old egg, or water boiling too hard	Use the strainer method, a fresher egg and a gentler simmer
Egg stuck to the pan base	Not deep enough, or simmer too low	Use deeper water, and nudge the egg gently with a spoon after 30 seconds
White not set, yolk too hard	Water too hot, or timed from the wrong moment	Time from when the egg goes in, lift at 3 minutes and check
White not set at all	Water too cool	Keep the water at a steady simmer
Soggy toast	Egg not drained	Rest on kitchen paper for 5 seconds
Egg disintegrated	Water boiling too hard, or dropped from a height	Gentler simmer; slide the egg in from a cup at the surface

FOOD SAFETY: POACHED EGGS

A poached egg with a runny yolk is only as safe as the egg: use Lion-mark eggs for anyone pregnant, elderly or very young. Poach and eat at once, and don't keep poached eggs warm for hours. If you must make them ahead for guests, cook them for 3 minutes, plunge them in iced water, keep them in the fridge for up to 2 days, and reheat for 1 minute in hot (not boiling) water.

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

- ☐ I can poach an egg using the strainer method.
- ☐ I know why fresh eggs poach best.
- ☐ I keep the water at a gentle simmer, not a boil.
- ☐ I can time a runny, jammy and firm poached egg.
- ☐ I know which method I prefer.

NEXT CHAPTER

Cooking Skills: Eggs 1, chapter 6 is Omelettes: pan technique and folding, from a French omelette to a Spanish-style potato omelette.

Cooking Skills: Eggs 1

Chapter 6 · Omelettes

SKILL GOAL

Make an omelette that is set outside, soft inside, and folded around a filling.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

An omelette is scrambled eggs that set into a single sheet and get folded round a filling. It takes under three minutes. The only skill is moving fast over medium heat, and the secret is that it doesn't need to be perfect: a rolled, rustic omelette tastes the same as a smooth French one.

STYLE	HOW IT LOOKS	COOKING
French	Pale, smooth, soft, rolled	Low-medium heat, stirred then rolled, almost no colour
Folded (diner style)	Lightly golden, folded in half	Medium heat, set then folded over the filling
Flat (tortilla-style)	Thick round cake, golden	Slow heat, flipped. This is the Spanish style

- **Pan:** a 20 cm non-stick frying pan for 2 to 3 eggs. A smaller pan makes a thicker omelette.
- **Eggs:** 2 for a light one, 3 for a hungrier one. Beat them well, with 1 tbsp of water or milk.
- **Fat:** about 10 g butter or 1 tsp oil. Butter foams; wait until the foam settles before you add the eggs.
- **Fillings:** cook them first and have them ready and warm. Cold or wet fillings make a cold, soggy omelette.
- **Don't overfill:** about 3 tbsp of filling is plenty for a 2- or 3-egg omelette.

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

Simple French-style omelette

5 minutes | 1 portion | healthy

Smooth and soft, with no filling. If you can make this, you can make anything.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

3	medium eggs
1 tbsp	water
10 g	butter
Pinch	of salt and white or black pepper
1 tsp	snipped chives (optional)

1. Beat the eggs with the water and seasoning until completely mixed, about 30 seconds.
2. Melt the butter in a 20 cm non-stick pan over medium-low heat until it foams, then settles.
3. Pour in the eggs. Stir quickly with a spatula in small circles for about 20 seconds, shaking the pan back and forth, until the egg looks like soft scrambled eggs.
4. Leave it for 10 seconds to set the base into an even layer.
5. Tilt the pan, fold the near edge over the middle with the spatula, then roll it out onto a plate, seam side down. Scatter the chives on top.

> **COLOUR**
>
> A French omelette should be pale yellow. If it browns, the heat is too high: turn it down next time, and try again. Brown is fine to eat.

LEVEL 2 · FOLDED

Cheese omelette

5 minutes | 1 portion | classic diner style

A bit more colour, a filling and the fold. Easy to get right.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

3	medium eggs
1 tbsp	water
1 tsp	oil or 10 g butter
30 g	mature Cheddar, grated
Pinch	of salt and pepper

1. Beat the eggs with the water and seasoning. Heat the fat in the pan over medium heat.
2. Pour in the eggs. Draw the cooked edges into the middle with a spatula for about 30 seconds, letting the liquid egg run to the edges.
3. When the top is just moist rather than liquid, scatter the cheese over one half.
4. Slide the spatula under the empty half and fold it over the cheese. Cook for 20 more seconds, then slide onto a warm plate.

LEVEL 2 · FILLED

Mushroom and herb omelette

10 minutes | 1 portion | vegetarian

Practise cooking a filling before the eggs, so it doesn't make the omelette soggy.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

100 g	mushrooms, sliced
1 tsp	oil
1 tbsp	chopped parsley or chives
3	medium eggs
1 tbsp	water
10 g	butter
Pinch	of salt and pepper

1. Heat the oil in a pan over a medium-high heat and cook the mushrooms for 4 to 5 minutes, until golden and the liquid has gone. Season, stir in half the herbs and tip onto a plate.
2. Wipe the pan, beat the eggs, and cook as for the French omelette in the butter.
3. When the top is just moist, spoon the mushrooms along the middle and fold.
4. Slide onto a plate and scatter with the remaining herbs.

LEVEL 3 · FLAT

Spanish-style potato omelette (tortilla)

40 minutes | 2 portions | serve warm or cold

A thick omelette with soft potato and onion that you flip and cut into wedges. It tastes better the next day and travels well. It's also a good lesson in patience.

INGREDIENTS (2 PORTIONS)

300 g	waxy potatoes, peeled and thinly sliced
1	small onion, thinly sliced
2 tbsp	olive oil
4	medium eggs
Pinch	of salt and pepper

1. Heat the oil in a 20 cm non-stick pan on medium-low. Add the potatoes and onion with a pinch of salt. Cook gently, stirring now and then, for 15 to 20 minutes, until the potatoes are soft but not brown.
2. Beat the eggs with salt and pepper in a large bowl. Tip in the potato and onion (drain off the extra oil first, leaving a thin film in the pan) and stir. Leave it for 5 minutes so the egg soaks into the potato.
3. Put the pan back on medium-low and pour in the mixture. Cook for 6 to 8 minutes, shaking the pan gently, until the edges are set and the middle is only slightly wobbly.
4. Put a large plate over the pan, hold it firmly and flip the pan over so the omelette lands on the plate. Slide it back into the pan, uncooked side down, and cook for 3 to 4 minutes more.
5. Slide it onto a board, rest for 5 minutes, and cut into wedges.

> **THE FLIP**
>
> Do it over the sink at first, and use oven gloves. The pan and the plate are hot. If you're nervous, finish the top under a hot grill instead of flipping.

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

2, 3 or 4 eggs

How many eggs suit your pan and appetite?

1. Make the plain omelette with 2 eggs, then 3, then 4, in the same pan.
2. Compare the thickness, the cooking time and how easy each is to fold.

Look for: Which is thick enough to taste of egg but thin enough to fold? In most pans the answer is 3.

EXPERIMENT

Butter vs oil

How does the fat change the omelette?

1. Cook a 3-egg omelette in butter, and another in 1 tsp oil.
2. Taste them side by side.

Look for: Butter gives a richer flavour but browns easily. Oil is lighter.

EXPERIMENT

Rolled vs folded

Compare the French roll with the folded diner style, using the same eggs and filling.

1. Make one rolled omelette and one folded omelette with 30 g grated cheese in each.
2. Compare the look, the texture and how easy each was.

Look for: Pale and creamy against golden and firm. Which is your house style?

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	EGGS, FAT OR METHOD	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
French omelette				
Cheese omelette				
Mushroom and herb				
Spanish tortilla				
2 / 3 / 4 eggs				
Butter vs oil				
Rolled vs folded				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Omelette sticks to the pan	Pan too cool or scratched, not enough fat	Use a non-stick pan, let the butter foam, and warm the pan first
Brown and tough	Heat too high	Turn down to medium-low
Wet and runny inside	Taken off too soon, or wet fillings	Cook another 20 seconds; pre-cook fillings
Tore when folding	Overfilled, or too thin	Use less filling; 3 eggs not 2
Tortilla stuck when flipping	Not enough oil, or not rested	Leave the oil film in the pan and loosen the edges with a spatula before flipping
Rubbery edges	Cooked too long	Keep an eye on it; omelettes take under 3 minutes

FOOD SAFETY: OMELETTES

Cooked fillings such as meat, mushrooms and potatoes need to be piping hot. Eat omelettes straight away. Tortilla can be chilled and eaten the next day: cool it quickly, keep it in the fridge and eat within 2 days.

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

- ☐ I can make a plain omelette in under 3 minutes.
- ☐ I can fold an omelette around a filling.
- ☐ I cook my fillings first so the omelette doesn't go soggy.
- ☐ I can flip a tortilla, or finish it under the grill.
- ☐ I know how many eggs I prefer in an omelette.

NEXT CHAPTER

Cooking Skills: Eggs 1, chapter 7 is Baked Eggs: oven timing, from eggs in tomato sauce to ham-and-egg cups.

Cooking Skills: Eggs 1

Chapter 7 · Baked Eggs

SKILL GOAL

Bake eggs in the oven so the white is set and the yolk is just how you like it.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

Baked eggs ask the oven to do the work, so they're the most relaxed method in the course. The skill is timing, and knowing that eggs carry on cooking after you take them out. You can bake them in a dish of tomato sauce, in a muffin tin or inside a potato.

- **Oven:** 180°C fan (200°C conventional, gas 6) for most recipes. Your oven may run hotter or cooler, so check the eggs a minute early.
- **Dish:** an ovenproof dish or ramekin just big enough for the egg. Grease it lightly.
- **Timing: 8 to 10 minutes** for a runny yolk and set white in a ramekin, and 10 to 14 in a shallow dish of sauce. The whites turn from clear to white when set.
- **Cover or not:** foil or a lid steams the top of the white and gives a more evenly cooked egg; uncovered is firmer on top.
- **Rest:** take the dish out 1 minute before the yolk looks ready. The heat in the dish finishes it.

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

Baked egg in a ramekin with spinach

15 minutes | 1 portion | vegetarian

The simplest baked egg: egg cooked on a bed of spinach with a spoon of cream or yoghurt. Elegant, healthy and almost impossible to get wrong.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

1 large handful	(about 60 g) baby spinach
1 tsp	butter, for greasing
1	medium egg
1 tbsp	Greek yoghurt or single cream
1 tbsp	grated Parmesan or Cheddar
Pinch	of salt, pepper and nutmeg
1 slice	wholemeal toast soldiers, to serve

1. Heat the oven to 180°C fan (200°C conventional, gas 6). Grease a ramekin.
2. Wilt the spinach in a pan for 1 minute with a splash of water. Squeeze out the extra water, season with salt, pepper and a pinch of nutmeg.
3. Put the spinach in the ramekin and make a dip in the middle. Crack in the egg. Spoon the yoghurt round the egg and sprinkle with the cheese.
4. Stand the ramekin on a baking tray and bake for **10 to 12 minutes** for a set white and a runny yolk.
5. Rest for 1 minute and serve with the toast soldiers.

LEVEL 2 · SHAKSHUKA-STYLE

Eggs baked in tomato sauce

25 minutes | 2 portions | vegetarian, healthy

Eggs poached in a spiced tomato and pepper sauce. A one-pan meal inspired by shakshuka, and one of the best uses of a baked egg.

INGREDIENTS (2 PORTIONS)

1 tsp	olive oil
1	small onion, chopped
1	red pepper, chopped
1	garlic clove, crushed
1 tsp	ground cumin
1 tsp	smoked paprika
400 g	tin chopped tomatoes
4	medium eggs
1 tbsp	chopped parsley or coriander
Pinch	of chilli flakes, salt and pepper
2 slices	wholemeal toast or flatbread, to serve

1. Heat the oven to 180°C fan (200°C conventional, gas 6). Heat the oil in an ovenproof frying pan (or use a pan, then pour into a baking dish) over medium heat.
2. Cook the onion and pepper for 5 to 6 minutes until soft. Add the garlic and spices and cook for 30 seconds.
3. Add the tomatoes and a splash of water. Simmer for 8 to 10 minutes until thick, and season.
4. Make 4 dips in the sauce with a spoon and crack an egg into each.
5. Bake for **8 to 10 minutes**, until the whites are set and the yolks still soft. Scatter with the herbs and serve with the bread.

STOVETOP VERSION

No ovenproof pan? Put a lid on the pan and cook the eggs in the sauce on low heat for 5 to 7 minutes.

LEVEL 2 · MAKE AHEAD

Ham and egg cups

25 minutes | 6 cups | keeps 3 days

Eggs baked in a muffin tin wrapped in ham. Good hot or cold, and a good use of a muffin tin.

INGREDIENTS (6 PORTIONS)

6 slices	thin-sliced ham (wafer or good deli ham)
6	medium eggs
30 g	grated Cheddar
Pinch	of pepper and chives
Little	oil, for greasing the tin

1. Heat the oven to 180°C fan (200°C conventional, gas 6). Lightly grease a 6-hole muffin tin.
2. Press a slice of ham into each hole to line it (fold or trim to fit).
3. Crack an egg into each, scatter on the cheese and a little pepper.
4. Bake for **12 to 15 minutes** (12 for a soft yolk, 15 for a firm one).
5. Cool in the tin for 2 minutes before lifting out.

STORING

Cool quickly, refrigerate within 2 hours and eat within 3 days. Reheat until steaming hot. Don't reheat more than once.

LEVEL 3 · FUN

Egg in a baked potato

1 hour 15 minutes | 1 portion | uses a leftover baked potato

A baked potato with an egg baked into a hollow in the middle. Satisfying, cheap and healthy if you keep the toppings light.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

1	large baking potato (about 250 g)
1	medium egg
1 tbsp	Greek yoghurt
1 tbsp	grated Cheddar
1	spring onion, sliced
Pinch	of salt and pepper

1. Heat the oven to 200°C fan (220°C conventional, gas 7). Prick the potato all over, rub with a little salt and bake for 50 to 60 minutes until soft. (Or microwave for 8 to 10 minutes, then crisp in the oven for 10.)
2. Cut a slice off the top. Scoop out most of the flesh into a bowl (keep a thin wall), mash with the yoghurt, half the cheese, and seasoning.
3. Spoon the mash back and make a hollow in the middle. Crack in the egg.
4. Return to the oven for **10 to 15 minutes**, until the egg is set to your liking. Top with the remaining cheese and the spring onion.

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

Soft vs set

Find the oven time for your yolk, in your oven.

1. Bake 4 eggs in ramekins at 180°C fan and take one out at 8, 10, 12 and 14 minutes.
2. Let them rest for 1 minute, then break each yolk.

Look for: The minute at which the yolk turns from runny to jammy to firm. That becomes your house timing.

EXPERIMENT

Covered vs uncovered

Does a lid or foil help?

1. Bake two eggs in ramekins: one covered with foil, one uncovered, for 10 minutes.
2. Compare the whites on top.

Look for: The covered one cooks more evenly on top; the uncovered one sets more on the surface and may be drier.

EXPERIMENT

Ramekin vs pan

How does the dish change the result?

1. Bake one egg in a ramekin and another in a dish of sauce.
2. Compare the timing and the texture.

Look for: Deeper dishes need longer. A shallow dish of sauce cooks the whites faster.

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	TIME OR METHOD	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Ramekin and spinach				

WHAT I TRIED	TIME OR METHOD	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Tomato sauce eggs				
Ham and egg cups				
Egg in a potato				
Soft vs set (8 / 10 / 12 / 14 min)				
Covered vs uncovered				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Yolk set hard	Left in too long	Take the dish out 1 to 2 minutes earlier, because eggs carry on cooking
White still runny	Not enough time, or oven too cool	Bake 1 to 2 minutes longer, or cover with foil
Watery sauce	Not simmered enough	Reduce the sauce until it's thick before adding the eggs
Egg stuck to the dish	Not greased	Grease well; loosen with a knife
Egg cup tips over	Muffin tin holes too big	Use a smaller tin or the ramekin method
Uneven cooking	Hot spots in the oven	Rotate the tray halfway through

FOOD SAFETY: BAKED EGGS

Ham and cheese cups and tomato sauce should be piping hot if reheated. Cool baked egg dishes quickly, keep them in the fridge and eat within 2 to 3 days, reheated once. A runny yolk is only safe from Lion-mark eggs for vulnerable people.

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

- ☐ I can bake an egg until the white is set and the yolk runny.
- ☐ I know how long my oven takes to bake eggs.
- ☐ I can make a simple tomato sauce and bake eggs in it.
- ☐ I can make egg cups for the week.
- ☐ I know whether I prefer them covered or uncovered.

NEXT CHAPTER

Cooking Skills: Eggs 1, chapter 8 is Frittata and Egg Bakes: a big one to slice, and mini egg muffins for the week.

Cooking Skills: Eggs 1

Chapter 8 · Frittata and Egg Bakes

SKILL GOAL

Make a frittata and egg bakes that feed several people, keep well and use up what's in the fridge.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

A frittata is an omelette that stopped worrying: a thick, flat Italian-style egg dish that you start in a pan and finish in the oven or under the grill, and cut into wedges. There is no folding, no flipping and no rush. It is the best way to feed several people from a few eggs and use up leftovers.

- **Ratio:** about 1 egg per 20 g of cooked filling per person is a good guide. For a 20 cm pan, 6 eggs and about 200 g of filling give a frittata about 3 cm thick.
- **Pan:** an ovenproof non-stick frying pan, 20 to 24 cm. Check the handle can take the oven (plastic handles can't). If not, wrap a plastic handle in foil, or use the grill instead.
- **Cook the filling first** until it has lost its water, so the frittata sets firmly and doesn't weep.
- **Gentle heat:** cook the base over low-medium heat until the edges are set (about 5 minutes), then finish the top in the oven at 180°C fan (200°C conventional, gas 6) for 8 to 10 minutes, or under a medium grill for 3 to 4 minutes.
- **Done when:** it is set and slightly puffed, with a barely perceptible wobble in the very middle. A knife in the centre comes out clean.
- **Rest 5 minutes** before cutting. It is excellent warm, at room temperature or cold.

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

Basic cheese and onion frittata

25 minutes | 2 to 3 portions | vegetarian

Learn the stovetop-to-oven method with just onion and cheese.

INGREDIENTS (3 PORTIONS)

1 tbsp	olive oil
1	medium onion, finely sliced
6	medium eggs
40 g	mature Cheddar, grated
2 tbsp	milk
Pinch	of salt and pepper

1. Heat the oven to 180°C fan (200°C conventional, gas 6). Heat the oil in a 20 cm ovenproof non-stick frying pan over medium-low. Add the onion and cook for 8 to 10 minutes until soft and golden.
2. Beat the eggs with the milk, most of the cheese, salt and pepper.
3. Pour the eggs over the onion. Cook over low-medium heat for about 5 minutes without stirring, until the edges are set.
4. Scatter the rest of the cheese on top and bake for 8 to 10 minutes, until puffed and set.
5. Rest for 5 minutes, then slide onto a board and cut into wedges.

LEVEL 2 · NEXT STEP

Pepper and feta frittata

30 minutes | 2 to 3 portions | vegetarian

More flavour, same method. Adding a salty cheese at the end keeps the egg tender.

INGREDIENTS (3 PORTIONS)

1 tbsp	olive oil
1	red onion, sliced
1	red or yellow pepper, sliced
1	garlic clove, sliced
6	medium eggs
50 g	feta, crumbled
1 tbsp	chopped parsley or oregano
Pinch	of pepper (feta is salty, so taste first)

1. Heat the oven to 180°C fan (200°C conventional, gas 6). Cook the onion and pepper in the oil over medium heat for 8 to 10 minutes until soft. Add the garlic for the last minute.
2. Beat the eggs with the herbs and pepper. Pour over the vegetables and cook on low-medium for 5 minutes until the edges set.
3. Scatter on the feta and bake for 8 to 10 minutes.
4. Rest for 5 minutes and cut.

LEVEL 2 · OVEN ONLY

Crustless quiche-style slice

40 minutes | 4 portions | vegetarian

Like a quiche without the pastry: milk makes the filling softer and more custardy than a frittata. Baked entirely in the oven in a dish.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

1 tsp	oil or butter, for greasing
150 g	cooked vegetables or ham (for example broccoli florets, or ham and sweetcorn)
40 g	grated Cheddar
5	medium eggs
200 ml	semi-skimmed milk
Pinch	of salt, pepper and mustard powder

1. Heat the oven to 180°C fan (200°C conventional, gas 6). Grease a 20 cm pie dish or square ovenproof dish.
2. Spread the vegetables or ham in the dish and sprinkle with the cheese.
3. Whisk the eggs, milk and seasoning together and pour over.
4. Bake for **25 to 30 minutes**, until golden and just set in the middle (a knife in the centre comes out clean).
5. Rest for 5 minutes, then cut into squares. It's good hot, warm or cold.

> **MAKE IT A MEAL**
>
> Serve with a green salad and a spoonful of tomato relish. It keeps in the fridge for 3 days.

LEVEL 3 · BATCH

Mini egg muffins for the week

30 minutes | 8 muffins | keeps 3 days, freezes

Frittata mixture baked in a muffin tin: grab-and-go breakfasts or lunchbox protein. The best make-ahead egg recipe in the course.

INGREDIENTS (8 PORTIONS)

A little	oil, for greasing the tin
8	medium eggs
60 g	finely chopped ham or cooked bacon (optional)
60 g	chopped peppers or spinach
40 g	grated Cheddar
2 tbsp	milk
Pinch	of salt and pepper

1. Heat the oven to 180°C fan (200°C conventional, gas 6). Grease a 12-hole muffin tin well (silicone or non-stick helps), or line 8 holes with paper cases.
2. Whisk the eggs, milk and seasoning in a jug.
3. Divide the ham, vegetables and cheese between 8 holes. Pour in the egg about three-quarters of the way up each.
4. Bake for **15 to 18 minutes**, until puffed, golden and set in the middle.
5. Cool in the tin for 5 minutes, then lift out. Cool fully before storing.

> **STORING AND REHEATING**
>
> Chill within 2 hours and eat within 3 days. They freeze for up to 2 months. Reheat in the microwave from chilled for 30 to 40 seconds, or from frozen for 1 minute 30 seconds, until steaming hot. Reheat only once.

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

Stove only vs stove and oven

Is the oven worth it?

1. Make half the frittata mix in a small pan on the stove only, with a lid on for the last 5 minutes.
2. Make the other half the standard way, finished in the oven.
3. Compare the tops and the textures.

Look for: The oven gives an even, puffed top. The lidded pan is quicker but the base browns more.

EXPERIMENT

How much filling?

Find out how much filling your pan can take.

1. Make three small frittatas (3 eggs each) with 50 g, 100 g and 200 g of vegetables.
2. Cut each and compare the texture.

Look for: Too much filling falls apart when sliced and too little is just a thick omelette. Find your ratio.

EXPERIMENT

Hot, warm or cold

Frittata is meant to be eaten at any temperature. Do you agree?

1. Taste a slice straight out of the oven, one after 30 minutes at room temperature, and one chilled for 2 hours.

Look for: The flavour is stronger at room temperature and the texture is firmer when cold. Which would you put in a lunchbox?

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR FILLING	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Cheese and onion frittata				
Pepper and feta frittata				
Crustless quiche slice				
Mini egg muffins				
Stove only vs oven				
Hot / warm / cold				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Watery frittata	Wet vegetables not cooked down	Cook the filling until it's dry before adding the egg
Raw in the middle, brown outside	Heat too high on the stove	Use low-medium heat and finish in the oven
Rubbery and tough	Overbaked	Take it out when the centre has a barely perceptible wobble
Sticks to the pan	Not enough fat, or the pan is scratched	Use a good non-stick pan and enough oil. Loosen the edges with a spatula
Soggy bottom in the quiche slice	Wet filling	Pre-cook and drain the filling, and use a metal dish
Muffins stuck in the tin	Not greased	Use silicone or paper cases

FOOD SAFETY: EGG BAKES

Egg bakes should be cooked until set right through, with no liquid egg. Keep them in the fridge within 2 hours of cooking and eat within 3 days. If you take a cold frittata to work, keep it in a cool bag with an ice pack.

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

- ☐ I can make a frittata that is set and not rubbery.
- ☐ I cook my fillings first so they don't make the egg watery.
- ☐ I can use a muffin tin to make egg bakes for the week.
- ☐ I know how long egg bakes keep, and how to reheat them.
- ☐ I can use up leftover vegetables in a frittata.

NEXT CHAPTER

Cooking Skills: Eggs 1, chapter 9 is Putting It Together: timing a cooked breakfast, a brunch plate and an egg lunch box, plus your skills checklist and what comes next.

Cooking Skills: Eggs 1

Chapter 9 · Putting It Together

SKILL GOAL

Time several things to the table hot, and pull your own best egg recipes into one place.

Shopping list for this chapter

Your egg skills at a glance

You've now met every common way to cook an egg. This table pulls the timings together so you can find your way back to a method quickly. Your own tasting notes from chapters 2 to 8 matter more than these averages, so fill in the last column.

METHOD	HEAT	TYPICAL TIME	CHECK	MY OWN BEST TIME
Soft-boiled (runny)	Gentle boil	5 to 6 minutes	Soft white, runny yolk	
Jammy boiled	Gentle boil	7 minutes	Set white, jammy yolk	
Hard boiled	Gentle boil, then ice bath	9 to 11 minutes	Fully set, no grey ring	
Fried	Medium-low	2 to 3 minutes	Set white, runny yolk	
Scrambled (quick)	Medium	1 to 2 minutes	Soft, glossy curds	
Scrambled (slow)	Low	6 to 8 minutes	Small, creamy curds	
Poached	Gentle simmer	3 minutes	Set white, runny yolk	

METHOD	HEAT	TYPICAL TIME	CHECK	MY OWN BEST TIME
Omelette	Medium-low	2 to 3 minutes	Set outside, soft inside	
Baked in a ramekin	180°C fan	10 to 12 minutes	Set white, runny yolk	
Frittata	Low-medium, then 180°C fan	13 to 15 minutes in all	Set with a slight wobble	

Putting it together

The new skill in this chapter is **timing**: getting two or three things to the table hot at the same moment. The trick is to work backwards from the thing that takes longest, and to do the jobs that can wait first.

> **THE TIMING RULE**
>
> Start with what takes longest and stays hot best (beans, mushrooms, bacon). Cook eggs last, because they're the first thing to spoil when kept waiting. Toast goes in just before the eggs are ready.

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

A proper cooked breakfast

25 minutes | 1 portion | an occasional treat

Fried egg, grilled bacon, mushrooms, tomato, beans and toast, all hot together. A classic exercise in timing. This is the kind of breakfast to cook on a day off, not every day.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

2	rashers of back bacon (or 1 sausage, or leave out for vegetarian)
2	mushrooms, sliced
1	tomato, halved
100 g	baked beans
1 tsp	oil
1	medium egg
1 slice	wholemeal bread
Pinch	of salt and pepper

THE PLAN (WORK BACKWARDS FROM THE TABLE)

1. **At 0 minutes:** heat the grill to medium-high. Put the bacon and the tomato (cut side up) on the grill pan, and grill for 8 to 10 minutes, turning the bacon once.
2. **At 5 minutes:** heat half the oil in a frying pan and fry the mushrooms for 5 minutes until golden. Tip them onto a warm plate and keep warm in a low oven (100°C).
3. **At 10 minutes:** warm the beans in a small pan, stirring now and then.
4. **At 13 minutes:** wipe the frying pan, add the rest of the oil over medium-low heat and fry the egg for 2 to 3 minutes.
5. **At 14 minutes:** put the bread in the toaster.
6. Plate everything while it's hot and eat at once.

LEVEL 2 · NEXT STEP

Weekend brunch plate for two

25 minutes | 2 portions | vegetarian

Poached eggs, avocado toast and a tomato salad, all ready together. You use the poaching skill from chapter 5 and the toasting rhythm from chapter 3.

INGREDIENTS (2 PORTIONS)

4	very fresh medium eggs
2 slices	sourdough or wholemeal bread
1	ripe avocado
4	tomatoes, sliced
1 tbsp	olive oil
Squeeze	of lemon, chilli flakes, salt and pepper
1 handful	rocket or watercress

1. Bring a deep pan of water to a gentle simmer. Crack the eggs into cups (strain them if you like).
2. Slice the tomatoes onto two plates, drizzle with oil and season. Add the rocket.
3. Mash the avocado with the lemon, salt and chilli.
4. Put the bread in the toaster, and slide the eggs into the water. Cook for 3 minutes.
5. Spread the avocado on the toast, lift out the eggs, drain, and put two on each plate. Serve at once.

LEVEL 2 · PACK IT

Egg lunch box

10 minutes | 1 portion | uses your batch eggs

A cold lunch built from the hard-boiled eggs and egg mayo of chapter 2. Healthy, filling and no heating needed.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

2	hard-boiled eggs, peeled
1 tbsp	Greek yoghurt
1 tsp	wholegrain mustard
1	wholemeal pitta, or 2 oatcakes
6	cherry tomatoes
½	cucumber, in sticks
1 handful	salad leaves

1. Mash one egg with the yoghurt and mustard, season, and spoon into a small pot.
2. Halve the other egg and pack it with the tomatoes, cucumber and leaves.
3. Pack the pitta or oatcakes separately so they don't go soggy.
4. Keep it in the fridge until you leave, and eat within 4 hours, or keep it with an ice pack.

> **FOOD SAFETY**
>
> A lunch box with egg should be kept cool (below 8°C, ideally 5°C or less) with an ice pack. Eat it the same day.

Experiment: your house recipes

EXPERIMENT

Choose your favourites

This is the real purpose of the course: working out what you like.

1. Look back over your tasting notes from chapters 2 to 8.
2. For each style, choose the version you liked best (time, heat, fat, extras).
3. Write the exact recipe you'd use in the 'house recipe' table below, then cook the lot once more from your own notes to check they work.

Look for: Whether your favourites are consistent when you cook from your own recipe. If not, change the notes and try again.

My house recipes

STYLE	MY RECIPE (TIME, HEAT, FAT, EXTRAS)	WHY I LIKE IT	TWEAKS FOR NEXT TIME
Soft or jammy boiled egg			
Fried egg			
Scrambled eggs			
Poached egg			
Omelette			
Baked egg			
Frittata			

Troubleshooting a whole breakfast

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Everything is ready at different times	Started in the wrong order	Write a short plan (like the one above) and work backwards from the longest job

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Toast gets cold	Made too soon	Put the bread in just before the egg is done
Eggs overcooked while you plated	Left in the hot pan	Lift them out as soon as they're done, or take the pan off the heat early
Not enough hobs	Too many pans at once	Use the grill and oven for some items (bacon, tomatoes, bakes)
Cold plates, cold food	Plates weren't warmed	Warm plates in a low oven or under a hot tap
Too much washing up	Too many pans	Reuse the pan with a wipe in between, and clean as you go

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

- ☐ I can cook three things to arrive on the plate hot together.
- ☐ I have my own best time for every egg style in the table.
- ☐ I've written at least three house recipes in my notes.
- ☐ I can pack an egg lunch that stays safe.
- ☐ I'm ready for eggs in baking and sauces in Cooking Skills: Eggs 2.

WHAT COMES NEXT

Cooking Skills: Eggs 2 covers eggs in baking and sauces: custards, meringue, mayonnaise, hollandaise, pancakes and batters. Other Cooking Skills courses on the list include rice, pasta, potatoes and knife skills.