

fresh & LOCAL

EGGS

Good Things Come in Small Packages

by Kristen Lofstrom, CHHC

For one half of the calendar year, New Englanders enjoy an abundance of seasonal foods that nourish our bodies in harmony with nature. Spring offers us sprouts and fresh greens to lift our spirits and moods, summer provides juicy, delectable fruits to cool us during the blistering heat, and fall brings warming root vegetables that keep us feeling grounded. Sadly, this wealth is followed by fewer options as winter blankets our farms and gardens. Food from our local community becomes more limited when local farm stands, farmers' markets and CSA farms rest for the dormant season. Nonetheless, when the days grow shorter we need not fall into the mistaken belief that all of our sustenance must come from the supermarket. Eggs are a perfect example of how we can still choose to eat locally and seasonally.

Eating with the seasons can be challenging this time of year, no doubt, but committing to purchasing local eggs can sustain that feeling of connectedness we enjoy all spring, summer and fall. There are many reasons to incorporate eggs into your daily diet. I invite you to begin with simple consideration of what eggs symbolize. An egg represents new life—protected and nourished in the shell until it grows to a point where it can survive on its own. It is no wonder eggs are packed with nutrients—they simply need to be.

Quite practically, eggs offer us low-cost, high-quality protein, providing 5.5 grams of protein (11.1 percent of the daily value for protein) in one egg, with a cost of only 68 calories! Eggs also provide all 9 essential amino acids.

An egg is essentially three separate foods: the whole egg, the white, and the yolk. A whole egg is a high-fat, high-cholesterol, high-quality protein food. This is not to say eating a whole egg is a poor dietary choice. It is important to differentiate between the different types of fats in eggs. Excessive amounts of saturated fat can raise blood cholesterol levels and put our heart at risk. One egg contains just 5 grams of fat and only 1.5 grams of that is saturated

fat. We must also keep in mind that our bodies need cholesterol. Among other things, our bodies use cholesterol to maintain cell walls, insulate nerve fibers, and produce vitamin D.

All these nutritional benefits are increased in local eggs raised by conscientious individuals who let their animals graze freely. Authors Cheryl Long and Tabitha Alterman have spent years researching the differences between commercially raised meat and eggs and those produced by farmers who let their animals graze on fresh pastures. (See: Meet Real Free-Range Eggs, *Mother Earth News*, October/November 2007). Unsurprisingly, results show that pastured egg producers are turning out far superior eggs overall. It has been found that eggs from hens raised on pasture, as compared to commercially raised factory farm eggs, contain:

- 1/3 less cholesterol
- 1/4 less saturated fat
- 2/3 more vitamin A
- 2 times more omega-3 fatty acids
- 3 times more vitamin E
- 7 times more beta carotene

The vitamin D content of eggs is also being studied. Many of us are vitamin D deficient simply because we are not spending enough time outdoors soaking up the sunshine. Often, when we are outdoors, we use sunscreen that blocks vitamin D production. Eggs are one of the few food sources of naturally occurring vitamin D, and tests show that pastured eggs have 4 to 6 times as much vitamin D as typical supermarket eggs.

Sources of farm fresh eggs are plentiful on the South Shore. In addition to farms stands look for roadside signs indicating eggs for sale. Most often, these work on the honor system, where you take your carton and leave your payment in a basket. What better way to capture that friendly, small town feeling?

How to Test Egg Freshness:

Fill a deep bowl with water and carefully lower the egg in. A fresh egg will immediately sink and lie flat on its side. This is because the air cell within the egg is very small. As the egg starts to lose its freshness and more air enters the egg, it will begin to float and stand upright. The egg will still be good enough to consume. However, if the egg fully floats in the water and does not touch the bottom of the bowl at all, it should be discarded, as it will most likely be bad.



Fresh eggs rest at bottom, floaters are older eggs.

Another method to test an egg's freshness is by breaking the egg onto a flat plate. The yolk of a very fresh egg will have a bright yellow/orange color, will be round and compact and will sit quite high up in the middle of the egg. The white that surrounds it will be thick and stay close to the yolk. A less fresh egg will contain a flatter yolk that may break easily and a thinner white that spreads thinly across the plate.



Fresh Local Egg (Left) Store Bought Egg (Right)

Breakfast Burrito:

- ½ cup shredded cheddar cheese
- 1/3 cup chopped scallions
- 4 100% whole grain tortilla wraps
- 4 eggs
- ¼ cup organic milk
- ½ teaspoon sea salt
- 1 to 2 pinches of freshly ground pepper
- 1 tsp butter or ghee
- 1 Tbsp real (nitrate-free) turkey bacon bits
- ¼ cup thick & chunky organic salsa
- Small pinch cayenne

Preheat oven to 275 degrees.

Lightly spritz tortillas with water and warm in oven on baking sheet.

Crack eggs and mix with salt and pepper.

Melt butter/ghee on stovetop and add egg mixture.

Stir & chop 3–4 minutes until eggs are firm but still moist.

Stir in bacon bits & remove from heat.

Spoon ¼ of the egg mixture onto each tortilla & top with cheddar cheese, scallions and 1-2 Tbsp of salsa.

Fold tortilla and enjoy!

Yield: 4 servings

Recipe courtesy of Kristen Lofstrom

Imperial Egg Food.

FOR ALL VARIETIES OF POULTRY.

WILL MAKE HENS LAY,

FOR LAYING HENS, YOUNG CHICKS, DUCKS, and TURKEYS.

Winter and Summer, support Fowls during moult, keep them constantly in fine condition, and increase their profit 50 per cent. Half the chicks die usually. This makes bones and muscle curvy, and will save them. Packages to mix with 50 weight ordinary food, 50 etc. 1 larger for \$1.00 and \$2.00. Sent prepaid on receipt of price. For sale by Druggists, Grocers, and Postmasters. Local Agents Wanted.

WHOLESALE AGENTS.

H. B. Arnold & Co., Boston. | B. K. Bliss & Sons, New York. | Benson, Harpoe & Co., Philadelphia. | O. C. Swain & Co., San Francisco, Cal. **CHARLES R. ALLEN & CO.,** Proprietors, P. O. Box 163, Hartford, Conn.