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BREAKFAST PREPARATION

When we speak of breakfast cookery, we are not just talking about a particular meal. We are referring to a particular small group of foods that appears on perhaps every breakfast menu. These items are also popular for brunches, snacks, and late suppers. Many establishments offer a breakfast menu all day long.

Eggs, of course, are the most popular breakfast food, and they are the primary subject of this chapter. In addition, the chapter examines the preparation of other breakfast staples: pancakes, waffles, French toast, and breakfast meats.

AFTER READING THIS CHAPTER, YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO

1. Prepare the following egg items: hard-, medium-, and soft-cooked eggs; poached eggs; fried eggs; baked eggs; scrambled eggs; omelets; entrée soufflés; and savory custards.
2. Prepare breakfast breads (pancakes, waffles, and French toast), hot cereals, and breakfast meats.



EGGS

Contrary to popular opinion, there is no law that says one must have eggs or cereal or pancakes or pastries for breakfast and must not have shrimp curry or chili or spaghetti and meatballs. Although most of us would think these last suggestions rather strange for the morning meal, there is probably no food that someone, somewhere, does not enjoy for breakfast. No doubt many Japanese, who have soybean soup, sour pickles, and rice for their first meal of the day, think Western breakfast habits are strange.

However, the egg remains a favorite breakfast food, even as we become more adventurous and explore ethnic cuisines. For such apparently simple items, eggs are used in many ways in the kitchen and require special study. We examine not only the usual breakfast preparation but other egg dishes as well, such as soufflés and custards.

UNDERSTANDING EGGS

Composition

A whole egg consists primarily of a yolk, a white, and a shell. In addition, it contains a membrane that lines the shell and forms an air cell at the large end, and two white strands called chalazae that hold the yolk centered. Figure 25.1 is a cross-sectional diagram that shows the location of these features.

1. The **yolk** is high in both fat and protein, and it contains iron and several vitamins. Its color ranges from light to dark yellow, depending on the diet of the chicken.
2. The **white** is primarily albumin protein, which is clear and soluble when raw but white and firm when coagulated. The white also contains sulfur.

The white has two parts: a thick portion that surrounds the yolk and a thinner, more liquid portion outside of this.

3. The **shell** is not the perfect package, in spite of what you may have heard. Not only is it fragile but it is also porous, allowing odors and flavors to be absorbed by the egg and allowing the egg to lose moisture even if unbroken.

BROWN EGGS

Many consumers like to buy brown-shelled eggs, even pay more for them, because they think they are more nutritious, more flavorful, or somehow more natural. In fact, shell color is determined by the breed of the hen and has no relation to the flavor, purity, or nutritional value of the egg. (See also the sidebar describing free-range and cage-free poultry in Chapter 18 on p. 534.)

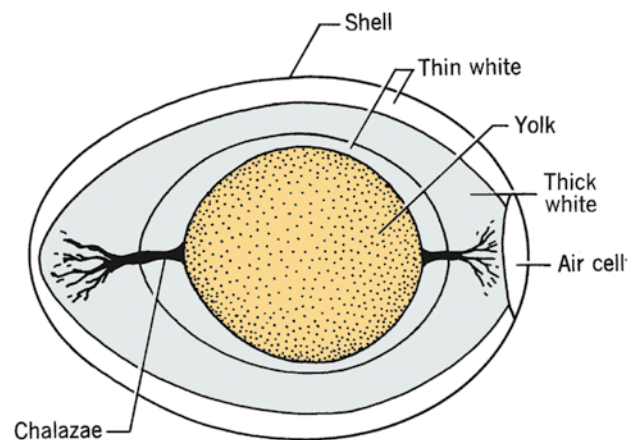
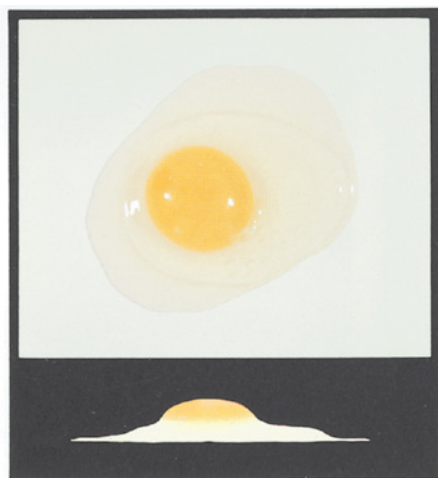


FIGURE 25.1 The parts of an egg. The diagram shows, in simplified form, the location of the parts of an unbroken egg, as described in the text.

FIGURE 25.2 Egg grades.
Courtesy of the USDA



(a) Grade AA.



(b) Grade A.



(c) Grade B eggs, as seen from the top and side. Note how the white and yolk lose thickness and spread more in the lower grades.

Grades and Quality

Grades

In the United States, eggs are graded for quality by the USDA. The three grades are AA, A, and B.

The best grade (AA) has a firm yolk and white that stand up high when broken onto a flat surface and do not spread over a large area. In the shell, the yolk is well centered, and the air sac is small.

As eggs age, they lose density. The thin part of the white becomes larger, and the egg spreads over a larger area when broken. Also, the air sac becomes larger as the egg loses moisture through the shell. Figure 25.2 shows the differences among grades AA, A, and B.

Maintaining Quality

Proper storage is essential for maintaining quality. Eggs keep for weeks if held at 36°F (2°C) but lose quality quickly if held at room temperature. In fact, they can lose a full grade in one day at warm kitchen temperatures. There's no point in paying for Grade AA eggs if they are Grade B by the time you use them.

Store eggs away from foods that might pass on undesirable flavors or odors.

Grades and Use

One glance at Figure 25.2 will show you why Grade AA is the best to use for fried or poached eggs. Lower grades spread too much to produce a high-quality product.

For hard-cooked eggs, use either Grade A eggs or Grade AA eggs that have been held a few days in the refrigerator. Very fresh eggs are difficult to peel when cooked in the shell.

Grade B eggs are suitable for use in baking. If you are certain they have developed no strong flavors, they may be used for scrambled eggs, where the firmness of the whole egg is less important.

Size

Eggs are also graded by size. Table 25.1 gives the minimum weight per dozen (including shell) according to size category. Note that each size differs from the next by 3 ounces or 85 grams.

Most food-service operations use large eggs, and recipes in most books are based on this size.

TABLE 25.1 Egg Size Classifications

Size	Weight per Dozen	
	U.S.	Metric
Jumbo	30 oz	850 g
Extra-large	27 oz	765 g
Large	24 oz	680 g
Medium	21 oz	595 g
Small	18 oz	510 g
Pee wee	15 oz	425 g

Market Forms

1. Fresh eggs or shell eggs.

These are most often used for breakfast cookery and are the main subject of this section.

2. Frozen eggs.

- Whole eggs
- Whites
- Yolks
- Whole eggs with extra yolks

Frozen eggs are usually made from high-quality fresh eggs and are excellent for use in scrambled eggs, omelets, French toast, and in baking. They are pasteurized and are usually purchased in 30-pound (13.6-kg) cans. These take at least two days to thaw at refrigerator temperatures.

3. Dried eggs.

- Whole eggs
- Yolks
- Whites

Dried eggs are used primarily for baking. They are not suggested for use in breakfast cookery.

Unlike most dehydrated products, dried eggs are not shelf-stable and must be kept refrigerated or frozen, tightly sealed.

Sanitation

In recent years, cases of salmonella food poisoning have been caused by raw or undercooked eggs. As a result, cooks have been made more aware of egg-related sanitation concerns. Pasteurized egg products are used in more operations. For a more detailed discussion of eggs and food safety, see Appendix 5, page 1040.

Egg Substitutes

Egg yolks, in addition to being high in fat, are also high in cholesterol. Efforts to reduce cholesterol in the diet have led to the development of commercial egg substitutes. These are of two types:

1. Egg substitutes that can be used to make such dishes as scrambled eggs, omelets, and custards are made of pasteurized egg whites with the addition of a blend of ingredients to substitute for the yolks, such as vegetable oil, milk solids, vegetable gums, salt, emulsifiers, and vitamin additives. They are sold in bulk liquid form, usually frozen, and can be substituted, ounce for ounce, for whole liquid eggs in most egg preparations.
2. Eggless egg substitutes contain no egg product. They are made of flours or other starches, plus vegetable gums and stabilizers, and, sometimes, soy protein. They are intended for use in baked goods only and are not suitable for use in breakfast egg preparations or custards. If they contain no milk products (read ingredient lists on individual products), they may be used in vegan diets.

General Cooking Principles

The most important rule of egg cookery is simple: **Avoid high temperatures and long cooking times.** In other words, do not overcook. This should be a familiar rule by now.

Overcooking produces tough eggs, causes discoloration, and affects flavor.

Coagulation

Eggs are largely protein, so the principle of coagulation (p. 114) is important to consider.

Eggs coagulate at the following temperatures:

Whole eggs, beaten	about 156°F (69°C)
Whites	144°–149°F (62°–65°C)
Yolks	149°–158°F (65°–70°C)
Custard (whole eggs plus liquid)	175°–185°F (79°–85°C)

Note that whites coagulate or cook before yolks do. This is why it is possible to cook eggs with firm whites but soft yolks.

Note also that when eggs are mixed with a liquid, they become firm at a higher temperature. However, 185°F (85°C) is still much lower than the temperature of a sauté pan or skillet over high heat. As the temperature of coagulation is reached, the eggs change from semiliquid to solid, and they become opaque. If their temperature continues to rise, they become even firmer. **An overcooked egg is tough and rubbery.** Low temperatures produce the best-cooked eggs.

If egg-liquid mixtures such as custards and scrambled eggs are overcooked, the egg solids separate from the liquids, or **curdle**. This is often seen as tough, watery scrambled eggs.

Sulfur

The familiar green ring you often see in hard-cooked eggs is caused by cooking at high temperatures or cooking too long. The same green color appears in scrambled eggs that are overcooked or held too long in the steam table.

This ring results when the sulfur in the egg whites reacts with the iron in the yolk to form iron sulfide, a compound that has a green color and a strong odor and flavor. The best way to avoid green eggs is to use **low temperatures and short cooking and holding times**.

Foams

Whipped egg whites are used to give lightness and rising power to soufflés, puffy omelets, cakes, some pancakes and waffles, and other products. The following guidelines will help you handle beaten egg whites properly (Fig. 25.3).

1. Fat inhibits foaming.

When separating eggs, be careful not to get any yolk in the whites. Yolks contain fats. Use very clean equipment when beating whites.

2. Mild acids help foaming.

A small amount of lemon juice or cream of tartar gives more volume and stability to beaten egg whites. Use about 2 teaspoons cream of tartar per pound of egg whites (20 mL per kg).

3. Egg whites foam better at room temperature.

Remove them from the cooler 1 hour before beating.

4. Do not overbeat.

Beaten egg whites should look moist and shiny. Overbeaten eggs look dry and curdled and have lost much of their ability to raise soufflés and cakes.

5. Sugar makes foams more stable.

When making sweet puffed omelets and dessert soufflés, add some of the sugar to the partially beaten whites and continue to beat to proper stiffness. (This will take longer than when no sugar is added.) The soufflé will be more stable before and after baking.

FIGURE 25.3 Whipping egg whites.



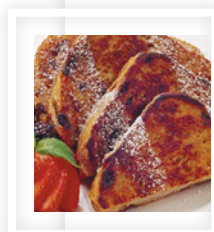
(a) The whites are just beginning to whip into a foam.



(b) The whites have reached the soft-peak stage.



(c) The whites have reached the firm-peak stage. Note the smooth texture. Whipping beyond this stage will cause the foam to break.



KEY POINTS TO REVIEW

- What are the three components of a whole shell egg? Describe each of these components.
- How are eggs graded for size and quality? What are the grades?
- How should egg products be stored?
- What are five guidelines to keep in mind when whipping egg white foams?

COOKING EGGS

Simmering In The Shell

The term *hard-boiled egg* is not a good one to use because eggs should be simmered instead of boiled.

Eggs may be simmered in water to the soft-, medium-, or hard-cooked stage according to the following methods.

Standards of Quality for Eggs Simmered in the Shell

1. Cooked to the proper degree of hardness or softness. The yolk should be still liquid for soft-cooked eggs, soft but no longer liquid for medium-cooked eggs, and fully set with a uniform color throughout for hard-cooked eggs. The whites should be completely set, even for soft-cooked eggs, but not rubbery.
2. No green ring around the yolk.

PROCEDURES for Simmering Eggs in the Shell

METHOD 1

1. Collect equipment and food items.
2. Bring eggs to room temperature by (a) removing them from the cooler 1 hour before cooking, or (b) placing them in warm water for 5 minutes and draining. Cold eggs are more likely to crack when placed in boiling water.
3. Place eggs in boiling water and return the water to a simmer.
4. Simmer, do not boil, for the required time:

Soft-cooked	3–4 minutes
Medium-cooked	5–7 minutes
Hard-cooked	12–13 minutes

Exact cooking time depends on temperature of eggs, size of eggs, and amount of water used.
5. Drain immediately and cool under cold running water to stop the cooking. Cool just a few seconds if eggs are to be served hot. Cool further if they are to be held for later use.
6. To peel, crack the shell and pull it away, starting at the large end (where the air sac is located). For easier peeling, peel while still warm, and hold under running water to help loosen shell. Very fresh eggs are hard to peel. Eggs for cooking in the shell should be several days old.

METHOD 2

1. Collect equipment and food items.
2. Place eggs in saucepan and cover with cold water.
3. Bring water to a boil.
4. Reduce heat and simmer for the required time:

Soft-cooked	1 minute
Medium-cooked	3–5 minutes
Hard-cooked	8–9 minutes

METHOD 3: FOR HARD-COOKED EGGS ONLY

Proceed as in Method 2, but remove pan from heat and cover as soon as it comes to a boil. Let stand off heat 20 minutes.

Poaching

The principles of cooking eggs in the shell are applicable to poached eggs. The only difference between the two items is the shell.

This difference, of course, complicates the cooking process, as emphasized in the following procedure. The object is to keep the eggs egg-shaped—that is, in a round, compact mass rather than spread all over the pan.

Standards of Quality for Poached Eggs

1. Bright, shiny appearance.
2. Compact, round shape, not spread or flattened.
3. Firm but tender whites; warm, liquid yolks.

PROCEDURE for Poaching Eggs

1. Collect equipment and food items.
2. Use the freshest Grade AA eggs whenever possible for best results. These maintain their shape best because the yolks and whites are firm.
3. If eggs are not very fresh, add 1 teaspoon salt and 1 tablespoon distilled vinegar per quart of water (5 mL salt and 15 mL vinegar per L). The vinegar helps coagulate the egg white faster so it keeps a better shape.
Vinegar is not necessary if very fresh eggs are used. Omit in this case because whites will be tougher and not as shiny if cooked with vinegar.
4. Bring water to a simmer.
If water is boiling, eggs will toughen and may be broken up by the agitation.

If water is not hot enough, eggs will not cook quickly enough and will spread.

5. Break eggs, one at a time, into a dish or a small plate and slide into the simmering water. Eggs will hold their shape better if they slide in against the edge of the pan.
6. Simmer 3–5 minutes, until whites are coagulated but yolks are still soft.
7. Remove eggs from pan with slotted spoon or skimmer.
8. To serve immediately, drain very well. For better appearance, trim ragged edges.
9. To hold for later service, plunge immediately into ice water to stop the cooking. At service time, reheat briefly in hot water.



Eggs Benedict

YIELD: 1 PORTION (SEE NOTE)

U.S.	METRIC	INGREDIENTS
½	½	English muffin
as needed	as needed	Butter
1	1	Egg, fresh Grade AA
1 slice	1 slice	Canadian bacon or ham, cooked (about 2 oz/60 g per slice)
1½ fl oz	50 mL	Hollandaise Sauce (p. 200)

PROCEDURE

1. Toast the muffin half. Spread it with butter and place on a serving plate.
2. Poach the egg according to the basic procedure given in this section.
3. While the egg is poaching, heat the Canadian bacon or ham for 1 minute on a hot griddle or in a sauté pan. Place the meat on the toasted muffin.
4. Drain the poached egg well and place it on the Canadian bacon.
5. Ladle hollandaise over the top. Serve immediately.

Per serving: Calories, 660; Protein, 19 g; Fat, 58 g (79% cal.); Cholesterol, 480 mg; Carbohydrates, 15 g; Fiber, 1 g; Sodium, 1260 mg.

Note: To prepare Eggs Benedict in quantity, the eggs may be poached ahead of time, cooled in ice water, and refrigerated. At service time, reheat the eggs in simmering water 30–60 seconds. Drain, plate, and serve.

VARIATIONS

Eggs Florentine

Instead of the muffin and bacon, place the egg on a bed of hot, buttered cooked spinach (about 2 oz/60 g). Cover with Mornay sauce instead of hollandaise. Optional: Sprinkle with parmesan cheese and brown under the salamander or broiler.

Eggs Bombay

Instead of the muffin and bacon, place the egg on a bed of hot rice pilaf (about 2 oz/60 g). Cover with curry sauce instead of hollandaise.

Frying

Fried eggs are an especially popular breakfast preparation. They should always be cooked to order and served immediately. For best quality, observe each step in the following procedure.

The choice of cooking fat is a matter of taste and budget. Butter has the best flavor, but margarine or oil may be used. Use bacon fat only if that flavor is desired by the customer.

PROCEDURE for Frying Eggs to Order

1. Collect all equipment and food items.

Eggs may be fried in small, individual sauté pans (omelet pans) or on the griddle. Griddled eggs are not as attractive because they tend to spread more. See page 783 for the procedure for conditioning sauté pans to avoid sticking.

2. Select very fresh Grade AA eggs for best results.

3. Add about $\frac{1}{8}$ inch (2 mm) fat to the sauté pan and set it over moderate heat, or preheat the griddle to 325°F (165°C) and ladle on a small quantity of fat. Too much fat will make the eggs greasy. Not enough will cause them to stick, unless a pan with a nonstick coating is used.

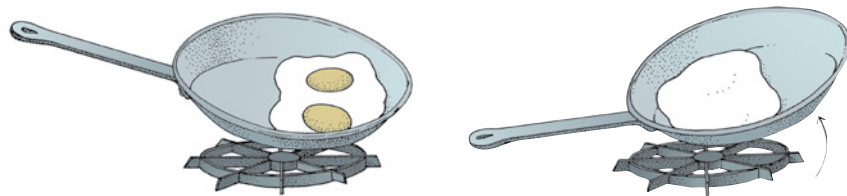
4. Break the eggs into a dish. This lessens the chance of breaking the yolks.

5. When the fat is hot enough so a drop of water sizzles when dropped into it, slide the eggs into the pan (or onto the griddle).

If the fat is not hot enough, the eggs will spread too much and may stick. If it is too hot, the eggs will become tough or even crisp.

6. Reduce heat to low (if using sauté pan) and cook the eggs to order as indicated below. See Figures 25.4 and 25.5 for flipping and turning techniques.

FIGURE 25.4 Flipping eggs in a pan.



(a) Lift the handle of the pan and slide the eggs to the far edge with a quick jerk.

(b) With a quick flip of the wrist, as shown by the arrow, turn the eggs over. Do not flip the eggs too hard, or the yolks may break when they land.

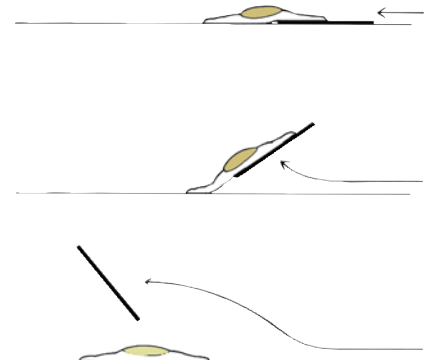
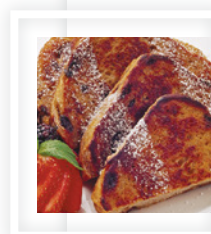


FIGURE 25.5 When frying eggs on a griddle, turn them with one smooth motion of the spatula, as shown. The left edge of the egg never actually leaves the surface of the griddle.

- **Sunny side up.** Cook slowly without flipping until white is completely set but yolk is still soft and yellow. Heat must be low, or bottom will toughen or burn before top is completely set.
- **Basted.** Do not flip. Add a few drops of water to pan and cover so steam cooks the top. A thin film of coagulated white will cover the yolk, which should remain liquid. *Note:* This preparation is sometimes called country style. The term basted is used because the same effect may be achieved by spooning hot fat over the egg as it fries. This method may make the eggs excessively greasy, however.
- **Over easy.** Fry and flip over. Cook just until the white is just set but the yolk is still liquid.
- **Over medium.** Fry and flip over. Cook until the yolk is partially set.
- **Over hard.** Fry and flip over. Cook until the yolk is completely set.

Standards of Quality for Fried Eggs

1. White should be shiny, uniformly set, and tender, not browned, blistered, or crisp at edges.
2. Yolk should be unbroken (unless requested by customer) and set properly according to desired doneness. Sunny-side-up yolks should be yellow and well rounded. In other styles, the yolk is covered with a thin layer of coagulated white.
3. Relatively compact, standing high. Not spread out and thin.



KEY POINTS TO REVIEW

- What are the procedures for simmering eggs in the shell?
- What are the steps in the procedure for poaching eggs?
- What are the steps in the procedure for frying eggs to order?

Huevos Rancheros



YIELD: 1 PORTION

U. S.	METRIC	INGREDIENTS
as needed	as needed	Vegetable oil
1	1	Corn tortilla
2	2	Eggs
4 fl oz	125 mL	Salsa Roja (p. 212)
1 oz	30 g	Monterey jack or fresh Mexican white cheese, grated or crumbled

PROCEDURE

1. Heat a thin layer of oil in a sauté pan.
2. Fry the tortilla briefly in the oil, turning it once, until softened.
3. Remove from the pan and drain on paper towels.
4. Fry the eggs sunny side up or basted, following the procedure on page 780.
5. Place the tortilla on a warm dinner plate.
6. Top with the eggs.
7. Ladle the sauce over the whites of the eggs, leaving the yolks uncovered.
8. Top with the grated cheese.
9. If desired, add a portion of Frijoles Refritos (p. 378) to the plate.

Per serving: Calories, 400; Protein, 22 g; Fat, 27 g (60% cal.); Cholesterol, 450 mg; Carbohydrates, 19 g; Fiber, 3 g; Sodium, 340 mg.

Baked Eggs

Baked eggs are baked in individual serving dishes. They are also called *shirred eggs* and *eggs en cocotte*.

They may also be baked with or garnished with a variety of meats and sauces, as indicated in the variations that follow.

Baked Egg Variations

Any of the following may be placed in the buttered egg dish before adding the egg:

- Ham or Canadian bacon, thin slice, lightly browned on griddle or in sauté pan
- Bacon, cooked crisp, 3 or 4 half-strips
- Corned beef hash, beef hash, or ham hash
- Cheese, such as cheddar, Swiss, or Gruyère, grated
- Diced chicken in cream sauce
- Tomato concassé, sautéed in butter

PROCEDURE for Making Baked Eggs

1. Collect equipment and food items.
2. Butter individual-portion ramekins or baking dishes.
3. Break eggs into dish.
4. Place in oven at 350°F (175°C) and cook to desired doneness. Unless otherwise requested, they should be soft-cooked, with the whites set and the yolks barely set, still partly liquid.
5. Serve in the same dish or ramekin.



Baked eggs with sausages

Any of the following may be placed on top of the eggs, either before or after baking. Place solid garnish to one side. Spoon sauces around the outside. Do not cover the yolk.

Heavy cream, hot	Sautéed chicken livers and brown sauce
Brown sauces such as bordelaise, Madeira, or demi-glace	Small grilled sausages
Tomato sauce	Mushrooms sautéed in butter or cream sauce
Soubise sauce	Asparagus tips

Standards of Quality for Baked Eggs

1. Whites should be set and milky-looking, with no part of the white still liquid.
2. Unless the customer requests them otherwise, yolks should be barely set, still partly liquid.
3. Additional ingredients should be in appropriate proportion to the egg, enough to add a pleasing flavor component but not so much as to overwhelm the egg.

Scrambled Eggs

Like other egg preparations, scrambled eggs are best if cooked to order. However, they may be made in larger quantities. They should be undercooked if they are to be held for volume service, as they will cook more in the steam table.

If scrambled eggs must be held over 30 minutes, they will be more stable if the eggs are mixed with a medium white sauce (béchamel) before cooking. Use about 8 ounces sauce per quart of eggs (250 mL per L).

Do not overcook scrambled eggs or hold them too long. Overcooked eggs are tough and watery, and they eventually turn green in the steam table.

Scrambled eggs should be soft and moist, unless the customer requests “scrambled hard.”

PROCEDURE for Scrambling Eggs

1. Collect equipment and food items.
2. Break eggs into a stainless-steel bowl and beat until well blended. Season with salt and white pepper. Do not use aluminum, which may discolor the eggs.
3. If desired, add a small amount of milk or cream, about 1 to 1½ tablespoons (15 to 20 mL) for 2 eggs, or 8 to 12 ounces per quart of eggs (250 to 375 mL per L).
Too much liquid may make cooked eggs watery, and it dilutes the flavor. Heavy cream adds richness but also adds cost.
4. Heat butter in a small sauté pan (for cooking to order) or in a large skillet, as for fried eggs.
Note: Steam kettles or tilting skillets may be used for scrambling large quantities of eggs.
5. When fat is just hot enough to make a drop of water sizzle, pour in eggs.
6. Cook over low heat, stirring gently from time to time as the eggs coagulate. Lift portions of coagulated egg so uncooked egg can run underneath.
Too much stirring breaks up eggs into very small particles.
Do not let the eggs brown. Keep heat low.
7. When eggs are set but still soft and moist, remove from heat. Turn out onto plate or into steam table pan.

Additions to Scrambled Eggs

Flavor variations may be created by adding any of the following ingredients to scrambled eggs before serving:

Chopped parsley and/or other herbs	Sautéed diced onion and green bell pepper
Grated cheese (cheddar, Swiss, parmesan)	Diced smoked salmon
Diced ham	Sliced cooked breakfast sausage
Crumbled bacon	

Scrambled Eggs in Breakfast Sandwiches

The breakfast sandwich is a popular item for people on the go. Fillings generally contain scrambled eggs, often with one or more of the additions listed in the previous section, plus breakfast sausage, and served hot. Wrap sandwiches (p. 729) are especially popular because they are easiest to eat while engaged in another activity. Refer to the principles of sandwich making discussed in Chapter 23.

An example of a typical breakfast wrap is a flour tortilla wrapped around a filling of a few pieces of breakfast sausage and a portion of scrambled eggs mixed with grated cheese and sautéed, diced onion and green pepper. For a traditional bread sandwich, enclose this same filling between two pieces of bread.

Standards of Quality for Scrambled Eggs

1. Soft, moist, creamy texture, not hard, rubbery curds (unless the customer requests “scrambled hard”).
2. Uniform yellow color. No browned bits (from excessively high heat) or greenish tinge (from overcooking and long holding at high temperature).

Omelets

Making omelets is like riding a bicycle. When you are learning, it seems difficult, and you can’t imagine how anyone can do it. But once you have mastered the technique, it seems easy, and you don’t understand how anyone could have trouble doing it.

We are talking about the plain or French omelet. There are several kinds, as described here, but the French omelet remains the standard. Making it is a technique worth mastering.

French Omelet

Omelets may be described as sophisticated scrambled eggs. The first part of the technique is similar to that for making scrambled eggs. But the similarities end there, and the omelet emerges from the pan not as a shapeless pile of curds but an attractive oval with a light, delicate texture.

Two elements are necessary for making omelets:

1. Moderately high heat. This seems like a contradiction to our basic principle of low-temperature egg cookery. But the omelet cooks so fast that its internal temperature never has time to get too high.
2. A conditioned omelet pan. First, the pan must have sloping sides and be the right size so the omelet can be shaped properly. Second, it must be well seasoned or conditioned to avoid sticking.

PROCEDURE for Conditioning an Omelet Pan

The following method is only one of many. Your instructor may show you another. The object is to seal the surface of the metal with a layer of baked-on oil.

1. Rub the clean pan with a thin film of vegetable oil.
2. Set the pan over moderately high heat until it is very hot.
3. Remove from heat and let cool.
4. Do not scour the pan or wash with a detergent after use. Rub with salt, which will scour the pan without harming the primed surface. Rinse only after pan has cooled, or wipe with a clean towel.
5. Reseason as often as necessary, or after each day’s use.

PROCEDURE for Making a French Omelet

See Figure 25.6 for illustration of technique.

1. Collect all equipment and ingredients.
2. Beat 2 or 3 eggs in a small bowl just until well mixed. Do not whip until frothy. Season with salt and pepper.
If desired, 1 tablespoon (15 mL) water may be added to make the omelet lighter.
For extended service, beat a large quantity of eggs. Measure each portion with a ladle.
3. Place an omelet pan over moderately high heat.
4. When the pan is hot, add about 1 tablespoon (15 mL) clarified butter and swirl it around to coat the inside of the pan. Give it a second to get hot.
Raw butter may be used, but great care is necessary to keep it from burning. Milk solids in the butter will brown, detracting from the appearance of the finished omelet.
5. Add the eggs to the pan. They should begin to coagulate around the edges and on the bottom in a few seconds.
6. With one hand (the left, if you are right-handed), vigorously shake the pan back and forth. At the same time, stir the eggs with a circular motion with the bottom side of a fork, but do not let the fork scrape the pan.

This is the difficult part. The most common errors are not shaking and stirring vigorously enough and using heat that is too low. The purpose of this action is to keep the eggs in motion so they coagulate uniformly.

7. Stop shaking and stirring when the eggs are almost set but still very moist. If you continue stirring, you will have scrambled eggs instead of an omelet.
8. Tilt the handle up and shake the pan so the omelet slides to the opposite side of the pan and begins to climb up the opposite slope.
9. For a filled omelet, spoon the filling across the center of the egg, perpendicular to the handle.
10. With the fork, fold the sides of the omelet over the center. The omelet should now be resting in the corner of the pan and have an approximately oval shape.
11. Grasp the handle of the pan with your palm underneath and tilt the omelet out onto a plate so it inverts and keeps an oval shape.

The whole procedure should take less than 1 minute.

The finished omelet should be moist on the inside, tender on the outside, and yellow or only slightly browned.

FIGURE 25.6 Making a French omelet. Read the accompanying text for a full description of the steps shown here.



(a) As soon as the eggs are added to the hot pan, shake the pan back and forth with one hand and stir the eggs in a circular motion with a fork.



(b) When the eggs are almost set, tilt the pan and shake the eggs down to the opposite side of the pan. Rapping the handle sharply helps move the eggs.



(c) Spoon the filling, if used, across the center.



(d) Fold over the side of the omelet to make an oval shape.



(e) Grasp the handle of the pan with your palm underneath and tilt the omelet onto a plate.



(f) The finished omelet should have a neat, oval shape. The color should be a bright, uniform yellow, with no browning (although some chefs prefer a light browning).

Suggested Omelet Fillings

Cheese
 Sautéed or creamed mushrooms
 Creamed or curried chicken
 Creamed or buttered spinach
 Sautéed onions, with or without bacon
 Sautéed onions and diced potatoes
 Seafood Newburg or seafood in a cream sauce
 Red caviar
 Thick Spanish Sauce (p. 195)
 Ratatouille (p. 335)

American-Style or Folded Omelet

This style of omelet is often called a **French omelet**, but it is not a French omelet. It was probably devised by cooks who hesitated to tackle the French method.

It is made somewhat like a French omelet, except low heat is used and the eggs are not stirred or agitated. Instead, the edges of the cooked portion are lifted with a fork or spatula, allowing the uncooked portion to flow underneath. The finished omelet may be folded in half or like a French omelet.

The advantage of this method is that it is easier to learn.

The disadvantages are that the omelet is not as light or delicate in texture and the method is much slower.

Fluffy Omelet or Soufflé Omelet

These omelets are made by beating the egg whites separately and folding them into the beaten yolks, which may have some milk added. The mixture is poured into a hot, buttered omelet pan, and the omelet is finished in the oven. It is folded in half for service.

Fluffy omelets are not often made in food service because of the time they take to make.

Frittatas and Other Flat Omelets

A **frittata** is a flat omelet that originated in Italy. The same basic techniques are used for many popular American preparations. Flat omelets are made by mixing beaten eggs with a variety of ingredients, such as vegetables, meats, or cheese, and cooking the mixture over low heat without stirring. To finish, it is either flipped over or run under the broiler or into the oven until the top is set.

A popular American frittata (actually derived from the Chinese egg foo yung) is the Western omelet, containing diced sautéed onion, green bell pepper, and ham.

Standards of Quality for Omelets

French omelets

1. Neat oval shape.
2. Creamy interior, not dry.
3. Properly seasoned with salt.
4. If a filling is used, the filling should be hot.

Fluffy omelets

1. Light, puffy texture; completely set but with a moist, tender, not rubbery, interior.
2. Properly seasoned with salt.
3. Puffy, not sunken, appearance on the plate.

Flat omelets

1. Fully cooked, hot, and completely set but with a moist, tender, not rubbery, interior.
2. Properly seasoned with salt.
3. Interior garnish is flavorful and properly seasoned.

Summer Squash, Spinach, and Leek Frittata

YIELD: 4 PORTIONS

U. S.	METRIC	INGREDIENTS	PROCEDURE
4 oz	125 g	Leeks, white part and a little of the green, trimmed and cleaned	1. Split the leeks in half lengthwise, and then slice them crosswise into thin slices.
10 oz	300 g	Yellow summer squash or zucchini	2. Trim and slice the squash.
1 oz	30 g	Butter	3. Heat the butter in a sauté pan over moderate heat.
8 oz	250 g	Spinach leaves (no stems)	4. Add the leeks and sauté until wilted.
			5. Add the squash and sauté until just tender.
			6. Remove from the pan and cool.
			7. Blanch the spinach in boiling water until wilted.
			8. Drain and cool the spinach in cold water. Drain again and squeeze dry.
			9. Chop the spinach coarsely and mix it with the squash.
6	6	Eggs	10. Beat the eggs and add them to the vegetables.
to taste	to taste	Salt	11. Add salt and pepper to taste
to taste	to taste	Pepper	12. Heat the butter over moderate heat in a well-seasoned or, preferably, a nonstick 10-in. (25-cm) sauté pan (see <i>Note</i>).
½ oz	15 g	Butter	13. Add the egg mixture. Immediately lower the heat as low as possible. Cover loosely.
			14. Cook slowly until the eggs are mostly set but creamy in the middle.
			15. Place the pan under the broiler until the eggs are set.
			16. Slide the frittata onto a plate.
			17. Cut into 4 wedges. Serve immediately.

Per serving: Calories, 230; Protein, 12 g; Fat, 17 g (65% cal.); Cholesterol, 340 mg; Carbohydrates, 9 g; Fiber, 3 g; Sodium, 220 mg.

Note: To make individual portions to order, cook one-fourth of the egg mixture in a 6-in. (15-cm) sauté pan.



Summer Squash, Spinach, and Leek Frittata

Soufflés

Soufflés are not normally featured on breakfast menus. However, they are important basic egg preparations with which you should be familiar.

Amateur cooks often consider soufflés difficult to make. Actually, they are relatively easy preparations. Many restaurants have no difficulty turning out large numbers of soufflés to order. The only hard part is making sure the waiter picks up the order when it is ready.

A standard entrée soufflé consists of three elements:

1. Base—usually a heavy béchamel sauce.
2. Flavor ingredient—cheese, vegetables, seafood, etc.
3. Egg whites, beaten.

GENERAL PROCEDURE for Preparing Entrée Soufflés

1. Prepare a heavy béchamel sauce.
2. Combine the sauce with egg yolks.
3. Prepare the flavor ingredients—grate cheese, cook and chop vegetables, and so on.
4. Combine the base and the flavor ingredients.
5. Beat egg whites and fold in.
6. Bake in a soufflé dish that has been buttered and dusted with parmesan cheese.
7. Serve immediately.

À LA CARTE SERVICE

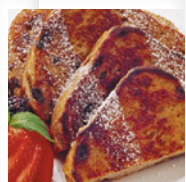
Prepare through step 4 and hold in refrigerator.

If several flavors are offered, prepare a single large batch of base and keep the flavor ingredients separate.

For each order, beat egg whites and combine with measured amount of base.

Standards of Quality for Soufflés

1. Well risen above the rim of the baking dish.
2. The top should be level, not tilted; that is, the soufflé should be evenly risen on all sides.
3. Moist interior.
4. Light, puffy texture.
5. Properly seasoned.



KEY POINTS TO REVIEW

- What are the steps in the procedure for making baked eggs?
- What are the steps in the procedure for making scrambled eggs?
- What are the steps in the procedure for making a French omelet?
- What are the steps in the procedure for making entrée soufflés?



Cheese Soufflé

PORTIONS: 12 PORTION SIZE: 4 OZ (125 G)

U.S.	METRIC	INGREDIENTS	PROCEDURE
as needed	as needed	Butter	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Select three 1½-qt (1½-L) soufflé dishes (4 portions each) or two 2-qt (2-L) dishes (6 portions each). Butter the insides of the dishes well. Sprinkle with cheese or crumbs so the bottom and sides are completely coated. 2. Make a white roux with the butter and flour. Cook the roux a few minutes. 3. Beat in the hot milk. Bring to a boil while stirring. Cook and stir until very thick and smooth. 4. Remove from the heat. Stir in the salt, pepper, cayenne, and nutmeg.
as needed	as needed	Parmesan cheese or dry bread crumbs	
		Roux:	
2½ oz	75 g	Butter	
2½ oz	75 g	Flour	
1½ pt	750 mL	Milk, hot	
1½ tsp	7 mL	Salt	
1 tsp	5 mL	White pepper	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Add the egg yolks to the hot sauce and quickly mix in with a wire whip. 6. Stir in the cheese.
pinch	pinch	Cayenne	
pinch	pinch	Nutmeg	
12	12	Egg yolks	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Beat the egg whites with the salt until they form stiff peaks. (The larger number of egg whites will make a lighter soufflé.) 8. Fold the egg whites into the cheese mixture. 9. Pour the mixture into the prepared soufflé dishes.
10 oz	300 g	Gruyère cheese, coarsely grated (see <i>Note</i>)	
12–15	12–15	Egg whites	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Place the dishes in a preheated 375°F (190°C) oven. Bake 40 minutes without opening the oven door. After this time, check for doneness by <i>very gently</i> shaking the dishes. If the centers are firm and do not jiggle, the soufflés are done. If necessary, bake another 5–10 minutes. 11. Remove from oven and serve <i>immediately</i>.
¼ tsp	1 mL	Salt	

Per serving: Calories, 290; Protein, 17 g; Fat, 21 g (65% cal.); Cholesterol, 265 mg; Carbohydrates, 8 g; Fiber, 0 g; Sodium, 600 mg.

Note: Other cheeses may be used: sharp cheddar, Swiss, a mixture of Swiss and Gruyère, or a mixture of Swiss or Gruyère and parmesan.

VARIATIONS

À la Carte Service: Prepare the basic recipe through step 6. Chill mixture quickly and hold in refrigerator. For each order, scale 3½ oz (100 g) of the mixture. Beat 1 egg white and fold in. Bake in an individual soufflé dish 20–30 minutes.

Spinach Soufflé

Reduce cheese to 5 oz (150 g). Add 5 oz (150 g) well-drained, chopped cooked spinach.

Spinach and Ham Soufflé

Add 2 oz (60 g) ground or finely chopped ham to Spinach Soufflé.

Mushroom Soufflé

Reduce cheese to 5 oz (150 g). Add 4 oz (125 g) cooked chopped mushrooms.

Other Vegetable Soufflés

Follow the procedure for Spinach Soufflé, using chopped cooked vegetables such as broccoli, asparagus, or carrots.

Salmon Soufflé

Make the sauce base with milk plus liquid from canned salmon. Add 1½ oz (45 g) tomato paste to the base. Reduce cheese to 4 oz (125 g) and add 8 oz (250 g) flaked cooked or canned salmon.

Custards

A **custard** is a liquid that is thickened or set by the coagulation of egg protein.

There are two basic kinds of custard:

1. **Stirred custard** is stirred as it cooks and remains pourable when done.
2. **Baked custard** is not stirred and it sets firm.

One basic rule governs the preparation of both custards: Do not heat custards higher than an internal temperature of 185°F (85°C).

This temperature, as you know, is the point at which egg-liquid mixtures coagulate. If they are heated more than this, they are likely to curdle. An overbaked custard becomes watery because the moisture separates from the toughened protein.

Most custards are sweet. These preparations are covered in the baking and dessert section of this book.

The **quiche** (keesh), which is a custard baked in a pastry shell, is probably the most popular form of savory custard. The following recipe illustrates the technique for preparing savory custards.

Standards of Quality for Quiches

1. The filling must be completely set with soft, moist texture, not overcooked and rubbery.
2. Top should be smooth and level, with no large cracks.
3. Interior garnish should be flavorful, properly seasoned, and properly cooked.
4. Crust should be completely cooked and golden, with a tender, flaky texture.

Quiche au Fromage (Cheese Tart)

YIELD: FOUR 8-INCH (20-CM) TARTS PORTIONS: 24
16 PORTION SIZE: 1/6 OF TART
1/4 OF TART

U. S.	METRIC	INGREDIENTS	PROCEDURE
2 lb	900 g	Mealy Pie Dough (p. 994)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Scale the dough into 4 pieces, 8 oz (225 g) each. 2. Roll the dough into 4 circles, 1/8 in. (3 mm) thick. 3. Fit the dough into four 8-in. (20-cm) pie pans or tart pans. 4. Hold the pie shells in the refrigerator until needed (see Note).
1 lb	450 g	Swiss or Gruyère cheese, grated	5. Sprinkle 4 oz (110 g) cheese into the bottom of each tart shell.
12	12	Eggs, beaten	6. Beat together the eggs, cream, milk, and seasonings. Pour into the tart shells.
1 pt	500 mL	Heavy cream	7. Place the tarts in a 375°F (190°C) oven on the bottom shelf or, if using a deck oven, directly on the deck.
2 pt	950 mL	Milk	8. Bake until the filling is set, about 20–30 minutes.
2 tsp	10 mL	Salt	9. Serve hot or cold. Cut into wedges of desired size.
1/4 tsp	1 mL	White pepper	
1/8 tsp	0.5 mL	Nutmeg	

Per 1/6 tart: Calories, 370; Protein, 12 g; Fat, 30 g (69% cal.); Cholesterol, 155 mg; Carbohydrates, 18 g; Fiber, 3 g; Sodium, 450 mg.

Note: Pastry shells may be partially baked before filling if uncooked bottoms tend to be a problem. This is sometimes the case if you are using shiny aluminum pie pans or if the bottom heat of the oven isn't strong enough. See page 997 for procedure.

VARIATIONS

Quiche Lorraine

Dice 1 lb (450 g) bacon strips and cook until crisp. Drain and add to pie shell in step 5. Omit cheese or leave it in, as desired. (Quiche Lorraine was originally made without cheese.)

Onion Quiche

Sauté 2 lb (900 g) sliced onions very slowly in 2 oz (60 g) butter until golden and tender. Cool and add to empty pie shells. Reduce cheese to 8 oz (225 g).

Spinach Quiche

Sauté 3 oz (90 g) chopped onion in 3 oz (90 g) butter until soft. Add 1 1/2 lb (700 g) cooked, drained chopped spinach. Sauté until most of the liquid evaporates. Cool and add to empty pie shell. Omit cheese.

Mushroom Quiche

Sauté 2 lb (900 g) sliced mushrooms and 3 oz (90 g) chopped onion in 3 oz (90 g) butter. Add 1 tbsp (15 mL) lemon juice to keep the mushrooms white. Cook until juices evaporate. Cool and add to the empty pie shell. Omit cheese.

Seafood Quiche

Substitute 8 oz (225 g) cooked diced shrimp and 8 oz (225 g) cooked diced crabmeat for the cheese. Add 3 fl oz (90 mL) sherry and 2 oz (60 g) tomato paste to the egg mixture.

BREAKFAST BREADS, CEREALS, AND MEATS

Bread items probably play a more important role at breakfast than even eggs. Hardly an order of eggs is sold without an order of toast on the side. And for the diner who prefers a continental breakfast, coffee and a bread item such as a roll or pastry constitute the entire breakfast.

Except for toast, few breakfast breads are prepared to order. Most operations purchase such items ready-made. These products include muffins, doughnuts, Danish pastries, sweet rolls, and regional favorites such as bagels and cornbread.

In this section, we consider three items that are made to order: pancakes, waffles, and French toast. You may not think of pancakes and waffles as breads, but they are actually a form of quick bread, a category of foods we consider in more detail in the baking section of this book, Chapter 32.

PANCAKES AND WAFFLES

Waffles and pancakes, also called *griddle cakes* and *hot cakes*, are made from pourable batters. Pancakes are made on a griddle, while waffles are made on a special tool called a *waffle iron*.

Both items should be cooked to order and served hot. Waffles lose their crispness very quickly, and pancakes toughen as they are held. However, batters may be prepared ahead and are often mixed the night before.

Serve with butter and with maple syrup or syrup blends (pure maple syrup is expensive). Other condiments that may accompany these items are fruit syrups, jams and preserves, applesauce, and fruits such as strawberries or blueberries.

Ingredients and Procedures

Compare the basic pancake and waffle recipes and note how much alike the batters are, with important exceptions:

1. Waffle batter contains more fat.
2. Waffle batter contains less liquid, so it is slightly thicker.
3. Waffles are given extra lightness when the egg whites are beaten separately and folded into the batter. (Some recipes omit this step.)

A standard-size pancake requires $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (60 mL) batter. The amount of batter needed for waffles depends on the size of the waffle iron.

Pre-Preparation for Volume Service

Pancake and waffle batters leavened by *baking powder only* may be mixed the night before and stored in the cooler. Some rising power may be lost, so baking powder may have to be increased.

Batters leavened by baking soda should not be made too far ahead because the soda will lose its power. Mix dry ingredients and liquid ingredients ahead and combine just before service.

Batters using beaten egg whites and baking powder may be partially made ahead, but *incorporate the egg whites just before service*.

Buttermilk Pancakes

YIELD: 3½ PT (1.75 L) BATTER, ENOUGH FOR 25–30 LARGE OR 50 MEDIUM PANCAKES

U. S.	METRIC	INGREDIENTS	PROCEDURE
1 lb	500 g	Pastry flour or all-purpose flour	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Sift together the flour, sugar, salt, baking powder, and baking soda.
2 oz	60 g	Sugar	
1 tsp	5 mL	Salt	
1 tbsp	15 mL	Baking powder	
1½ tsp	7 mL	Baking soda	
4	4	Eggs, beaten	
1 qt	1 L	Buttermilk	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Mix the beaten eggs, buttermilk, and butter or oil. Add the liquid ingredients to the dry ingredients. Mix just until the dry ingredients are thoroughly moistened. Do not overmix. (Note: Buttermilk makes a thick batter. Thin with a little skim milk or water if the batter seems too thick.) Depending on the size pancake desired, measure 1–2 fl oz (30–60 mL) portions of the batter onto a greased, preheated griddle (375°F/190°C), allowing space for spreading. Griddle the pancakes until the tops are full of bubbles and begin to look dry and the bottoms are golden brown. Turn and brown the other side. Remove from the griddle and serve.
4 fl oz	125 mL	Melted butter or oil	

Per 2-ounce (56.7-g) pancake: Calories, 120; Protein, 4 g; Fat, 5 g (36% cal.); Cholesterol, 40 mg; Carbohydrates, 16 g; Fiber, 0 g; Sodium, 250 mg.

Waffles

YIELD: 3½ PT (1.75 L) BATTER

U. S.	METRIC	INGREDIENTS	PROCEDURE
1 lb 4 oz	625 g	Pastry flour or all-purpose flour	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Sift together the flour, salt, and baking powder.
1 tsp	5 mL	Salt	
2 tbsp	30 mL	Baking powder	
6	6	Egg yolks, beaten	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Mix the egg yolks, milk, and butter or oil. Add the liquid ingredients to the dry ingredients. Mix just until the dry ingredients are thoroughly moistened. Do not overmix.
1½ pt	750 mL	Milk	
8 fl oz	250 mL	Melted butter or oil	
6	6	Egg whites	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Whip the egg whites until they form soft peaks. Add the sugar and whip until stiff peaks form. Fold the egg whites into the batter. Pour enough batter onto a lightly greased, preheated waffle iron to almost cover the surface with a thin layer. Close the iron. Cook waffles until signal light indicates they are done or until steam is no longer emitted. Remove from the iron and serve.
2 oz	60 g	Sugar	

Per 1 fl oz (29.57 mL) batter: Calories, 80; Protein, 2 g; Fat, 4 g (45% cal.); Cholesterol, 30 mg; Carbohydrates, 9 g; Fiber, 0 g; Sodium, 100 mg.

Buckwheat Pancakes

YIELD: 2 QT (2 L) BATTER, ENOUGH FOR ABOUT 30 LARGE OR 50 MEDIUM PANCAKES

U.S.	METRIC	INGREDIENTS	PROCEDURE
6 oz	180 g	Buckwheat flour	1. Sift together the flours, baking powder, and salt.
8 oz	240 g	Pastry flour or all-purpose flour	
4 tsp	20 mL	Baking powder	
1 tsp	5 mL	Salt	
4	4	Egg yolks, beaten	2. Mix the egg yolks, milk, melted butter, and honey.
2 pt	1 L	Milk	
4 oz	120 g	Melted butter	
5 fl oz	150 mL	Honey	3. Add the liquid ingredients to the dry ingredients. Mix just until the dry ingredients are thoroughly moistened. Do not overmix.
4	4	Egg whites	
			4. Whip the egg whites until they form soft peaks.
			5. Fold the egg whites into the batter.
			6. Depending on the size pancake desired, measure 1–2-oz (30–60-g) portions of the batter onto a greased, preheated griddle (375°F/190°C), allowing space for spreading.
			7. Griddle the pancakes until the tops are full of bubbles and begin to look dry and the bottoms are golden brown. Turn and brown the other side.
			8. Remove from the griddle and serve.

Per 2-ounce (56.7-g) pancake: Calories, 120; Protein, 3 g; Fat, 4.5 g (35% cal.); Cholesterol, 35 mg; Carbohydrates, 16 g; Fiber, 1 g; Sodium, 140 mg.

FRENCH TOAST

French toast in different versions is popular in many regions, and it has the advantage of being an excellent way to utilize day-old bread.

Basic French toast consists of slices of bread dipped in a batter of eggs, milk, a little sugar, and flavorings. French toast is cooked on a griddle like pancakes.

Variations may be created by changing the basic ingredients:

Bread. White pullman bread is standard. Specialty versions can be made with French bread, rich egg bread, or whole-grain breads.

Batter. Milk is the usual liquid, mixed with egg in various proportions. Deluxe versions may include cream or sour cream.

Flavorings. Vanilla, cinnamon, and nutmeg are popular choices. Other possibilities are grated lemon and orange rind, ground anise, rum, and brandy.

The most common fault in making French toast is not soaking the bread long enough to allow the batter to penetrate. If the bread is just dipped in the batter, the final product is just dry bread with a little egg on the outside.

French toast is dusted with powdered sugar and served, like pancakes, with accompanying butter, syrups, preserves, or fruits.

Cinnamon Raisin French Toast

PORTIONS: 6 PORTION SIZE: 2 SLICES

U.S.	METRIC	INGREDIENTS
6	6	Eggs
12 fl oz	375 mL	Milk
4 fl oz	125 mL	Heavy cream
4 oz	125 g	Sugar
1 tbsp	15 mL	Vanilla extract
1 tsp	5 mL	Cinnamon
1/8 tsp	0.5 mL	Nutmeg
1/8 tsp	0.5 mL	Salt
12 slices	12 slices	Cinnamon raisin bread, 3/4 in. (2 cm) thick
1 1/2 oz	45 g	Butter
as needed	as needed	Confectioners' sugar

PROCEDURE

1. Beat together the eggs, milk, cream, sugar, vanilla, cinnamon, nutmeg, and salt until the sugar is dissolved.
2. Soak the bread in the egg mixture until the bread is soaked through, but do not leave so long that it falls apart.
3. For each portion, heat 1 1/2 tsp (7 mL) butter in a sauté pan large enough to hold 2 slices of bread.
4. Put 2 slices of bread in the pan and brown the bottoms.
5. Turn the bread over and cook 30 seconds.
6. Transfer the sauté pan to an oven preheated to 375°F (190°C). Bake 10 minutes. The bread should be cooked through and slightly puffed up.
7. Plate, dust with confectioners' sugar, and serve immediately.

Per serving: Calories, 470; Protein, 15 g; Fat, 23 g (43% cal.); Cholesterol, 260 mg; Carbohydrates, 51 g; Fiber, 2 g; Sodium, 400 mg.

VARIATION

The amount of batter in the recipe is enough to soak about 24 thin slices of sliced bread. Regular slices of bread are thin enough to be cooked from start to finish on a griddle or in a sauté pan.



Cinnamon Raisin French Toast

Standards of Quality for Pancakes and French Toast

1. Moist and tender, not dry or tough.
2. Golden brown exterior.
3. Pancakes and waffles should not taste strongly of baking powder (excessive baking powder gives a soapy taste).
4. Pancakes and waffles should contain no lumps of dry flour.
5. Interior of French toast should be moist and eggy, not merely dry bread.

CEREALS

Hot Cooked Cereals

Cooked cereals are of two types:

1. Whole, cracked, or flaked cereals, such as oatmeal (rolled oats), Scotch oatmeal (cracked oats), and cracked wheat. The particles are large and can be added to boiling water without lumping.
2. Granular cereals, such as farina and cornmeal. The particles are small and tend to lump when added to boiling water.

For more information on cooking grains, see Chapter 14.

PROCEDURE for Cooking Whole, Cracked, or Flaked Cereals

1. Collect equipment and ingredients.
2. Measure the correct amount of water and salt into a pot and bring to a boil. Read package directions for quantities.
Using milk or part milk makes a richer cereal, but a more expensive one. Be careful not to scorch the milk if you use it.
3. Measure the correct amount of cereal.
4. Add the cereal slowly, stirring constantly.
5. Stir until some thickening takes place, then stop stirring. Too much stirring makes cereal gummy.
6. Reduce heat to a slow simmer, cover, and cook until desired doneness and consistency are reached. Cooking times vary greatly.
7. Keep covered until service to prevent drying.

PROCEDURE for Cooking Granular Cereals

The procedure is the same as above, except the cereal is mixed with a little cold water before being added to boiling water. This separates the grains and prevents lumping. The cold water must be calculated as part of the total amount of liquid. Alternatively, mix the cereal with all the cold liquid, then bring to a boil and simmer until done.

Cold Cereals

Cold, dry cereals are purchased ready prepared and need no preparation by the kitchen. Like hot cereals, they are served with accompanying milk or cream, sugar, and, sometimes, fruit such as berries or sliced bananas.

BREAKFAST MEATS

Meats and meat cooking methods are covered in previous chapters, but we mention them again because three meats in particular—bacon, sausage, and ham—appear on most breakfast menus.

Although most breakfast meats are traditionally pork products, items like turkey bacon and other non-pork products are also available. In addition, meat substitutes made from soy can be used on vegetarian menus.

Bacon

Bacon is a cured, smoked pork product. It is available in whole slabs but is almost always purchased sliced. Thickness of slices is specified by number of slices per pound, usually 18 to 22 (40 to 48 per kg).

Low-temperature cooking applies to bacon as well as to other meats. Bacon is about 70 percent fat and shrinks a great deal. However, cooking at low temperatures minimizes shrinkage. The oven is most often used for cooking bacon in quantity, though a griddle or sauté pan may also be used.

To cook in the oven, lay out the bacon strips on sheet pans in a single layer, or, even better, on racks over sheet pans. (Bacon may be purchased already laid out on parchment.) Bake at 300°–350°F (150°–175°C) until about three-fourths done. Remove from the oven, being careful not to spill the hot fat. Finish individual portions to order on the griddle or in the oven, cooking them until crisp.

Ham

Ham for breakfast service is almost always precooked. Slices in 3- to 4-ounce (90- to 115-g) portions need only be heated and browned slightly on a griddle or under the broiler.

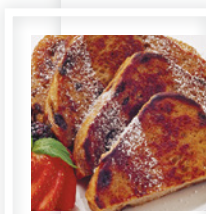
Canadian bacon is boneless pork loin that is cured and smoked like ham. It is handled like ham in the kitchen.

Sausage

Breakfast sausage is simply fresh pork that has been ground and seasoned. It is available in three forms: patties, links, and bulk.

Because it is fresh pork, sausage must be cooked well done. This does not mean, however, that it should be cooked until it is just hard, dry, shrunken little nuggets, as it often is.

Most kitchens cook sausages by the same methods as bacon. For volume service, sausage is partially cooked in the oven and then finished to order. Link sausages hold better than patties because the links are protected from drying by their casings.



KEY POINTS TO REVIEW

- How does pancake batter differ from waffle batter?
- How can a basic French toast recipe be modified to create variety?
- What are the steps in the procedure for cooking whole, cracked, or flaked cereals? What are the steps in the procedure for cooking granular cereals?
- How are bacon, ham, and sausages prepared for breakfast service?

TERMS FOR REVIEW

yolk

white

shell

curdle

sunny side up

basted

over easy

over medium

over hard

baked egg

frittata

soufflé

custard

quiche

breakfast sausage

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Which grade of egg would you choose to prepare poached eggs? hard-cooked eggs? fried eggs? scrambled eggs? Why?
2. Is it possible to prepare hard-cooked eggs in a pressure steamer? Give reasons for your answer.
3. When separating eggs, many chefs advise breaking them one by one over a small bowl, then transferring each white to the larger bowl as it is separated. Can you give a reason for this advice?
4. Give two reasons for being careful not to add too much vinegar to the poaching water for eggs.
5. In the recipe for waffles, what is the purpose of beating the sugar into the egg whites rather than combining it with the other dry ingredients?
6. What precautions might you take if you were making French toast from thick slices of French bread?