



Texas Agricultural Extension Service
The Texas A&M University System

Enjoy Easter Eggs - Safely



Texas Agricultural Extension Service • Zerle L. Carpenter, Director
The Texas A&M University System • College Station, Texas

EGG SAFETY

Eggs have been used to celebrate spring festivals for centuries. Symbolic Easter rabbits and colored eggs came to America with German settlers, and egg hunts have been beloved by children ever since. Easter egg hunts can be fun and safe for all if a few simple guidelines are followed:

- Inspect eggs before purchasing them, making sure that they are not dirty or cracked. Dangerous bacteria may enter a cracked egg.
- Store eggs in their original carton on a refrigerator shelf until ready for preparation. Keep eggs away from foods with strong odors (such as fish). Be sure that they do not freeze.
- For best results with hard-cooked eggs, buy eggs 1 week in advance and refrigerate them. Eggs can be "too fresh" to peel easily.

Follow these directions for perfect hard-cooked eggs:

- Place eggs in a single layer in a saucepan; add enough tap water to cover at least 1 inch above eggs.
- Cover and quickly bring just to boiling. Turn off heat, and if needed, prevent further boiling by removing pan from the burner.
- Let covered eggs stand in the hot water for 15 to 17 minutes for Large eggs. Adjust time up or down by about 3 minutes for each size larger or smaller.
- Immediately run cold water over eggs or place them in ice water until completely cooled.
- Dry and refrigerate, or decorate eggs immediately. Do not decorate cracked eggs. Refrigerate them and use as ingredients in holiday recipes.

To decorate Easter eggs:

- Decorate Easter eggs with food coloring or commercially available egg dyeing kits. Use water 10 to 15 degrees warmer than the eggs for the dye bath. Write names or holiday messages on eggs with a wax crayon before coloring. Marking out patterns during repeated coloring can give intricate designs.

To make your own colors from nature:

- Simmer uncooked eggs in water for up to 20 minutes with 1 tablespoon white vinegar per cup of water and one of the following materials. This is an art, so colors may vary.

Material	Color
Fresh beets or cranberries, frozen raspberries	Pinkish red
Yellow onion skins	Orange
Orange or lemon peels, carrot tops, celery seed or ground cumin	Light yellow
Ground turmeric	Yellow
Spinach leaves	Pale green
Yellow Delicious apple peels	Green-gold
Canned blueberries or red cabbage leaves	Blue
Strong brewed coffee	Beige to brown

After decorating: Return eggs to the refrigerator until time for the hunt. Do not hide cracked eggs. Do not hide eggs where they may come into contact with pets, wild animals, birds, reptiles, insects, or lawn chemicals. Gather eggs as soon as possible after they are hidden. Do not allow them to remain hidden overnight.

After the hunt: Inspect eggs; discard cracked eggs. Any uneaten eggs can be stored in the refrigerator for up to 1 week. Eggs gathered at public hunts should not be eaten if they are out of refrigeration for more than 2 hours.

Table decorations: Eggs used for table decoration should not be eaten.

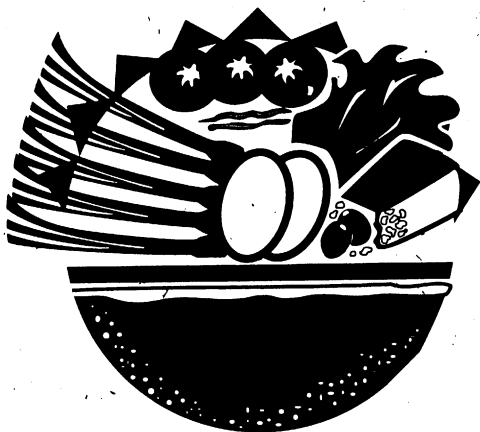
Take care from the time of selection, and eggs can help make your holiday safe and fun.



ATHENS EGG SALAD

1/2 cup plain yogurt
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon crushed oregano leaves
6 hard-cooked eggs, chopped
18 cherry tomatoes
1/2 cup (2 oz.) crumbled feta cheese
1/4 cup sliced drained pitted ripe olives
1/4 cup chopped green onions with tops
4 pita breads halved
lettuce leaves
anchovy fillets, optional

In medium bowl, stir together yogurt, salt and oregano until well blended. Stir in remaining ingredients, except pita breads, lettuce, and anchovy fillets until well combined. Cover and chill to blend flavors. To serve, line each pita half with lettuce leaves and fill with about 1/2 cup of the egg salad. Garnish with anchovy fillets if desired.



GOLDEN CANAPES

1/2 cup mayonnaise
1 tablespoon chopped chives
1/2 teaspoon prepared mustard
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/8 to 1/4 teaspoon hot liquid pepper seasoning
6 hard-cooked eggs, chopped
1/2 cup (2 oz.) shredded Cheddar cheese
1/4 cup chopped pecans
16 slices cocktail-sized rye bread

In medium bowl, stir together mayonnaise, chives, mustard, salt and seasoning until well blended. Stir in eggs, cheese and pecans until well combined. Dollop each bread slice with 1 rounded tablespoon of the egg mixture. Broil about 6 inches from heat until lightly browned and bubbly, about 1 to 2 minutes.

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The information in this leaflet was provided by Dr. Sarah G. Birkhold, Assistant Professor and Extension Poultry Specialist, The Texas A&M University System.

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