

FARMERS MARKETS



Handling Eggs and Egg Products

Proper safe handling and storage of eggs, egg dishes and egg products are important to prevent bacterial contamination that leads to foodborne illness and outbreaks.

Egg handling:

- Always keep eggs refrigerated during storage and sale.
- Check the eggs and make sure they are clean and the shells are not cracked.
- Store promptly in a clean refrigerator or cooler at a temperature of 40 F or below. Check the temperature with a food thermometer.
- Provide an expiration date and handling instructions on the container (three weeks for best quality).

Egg and leftovers storage:

- Use cooked eggs, with or without shells, within one week.
- Frozen eggs can be used for up to a year. To freeze eggs, mix the yolks and whites together. Egg whites can also be frozen separately.
- Leftover cooked eggs can be used within three to four days if refrigerated.
- Leftover hot eggs should be refrigerated by separating them into several small containers to cool faster.

Preparation:

- Eggs are properly cooked when both the yolk and white are firm. In the case of scrambled eggs, they should not be liquid.
- The proper temperature for cooking dishes containing eggs is 160 F. Check the temperature with a food thermometer.
- For recipes that call for the addition of raw or undercooked eggs, such as Caesar salad dressing and ice cream, it is recommended to use eggs or egg products that have undergone pasteurization or another approved method to prevent microorganisms such as *Salmonella* spp.

Serving eggs & dishes containing eggs:

- Serve cooked eggs or egg-containing foods, such as quiches and soufflés, immediately after cooking.
- It is important to refrigerate eggs and egg dishes after cooking. Do not leave them out of refrigeration for more than two hours or more than one hour if the temperature is above 90 F. Illness-causing bacteria can grow quickly at temperatures between 40 F and 140 F.
- Eggs or egg dishes that have been refrigerated should be completely reheated to 165 F before serving.

- Keep egg dishes at refrigeration temperature until ready to sell or serve.
- Keep cold dishes containing eggs on ice if they are going to remain out for longer than two hours.

Transport:

- To transport cooked eggs and egg dishes in the cold condition, use a cooler with ice or frozen gel packs.
- Transport the cooler containers in the passenger compartment of the car, not in the much warmer trunk.
- Keep the cooler in the shade, if possible, and keep the lid closed as much as you can.
- Establish procedures to periodically check the products for leaks and temperature during transit.
- Use pallets or other instruments on the floor so that proper air circulation can be maintained, and the food does not have contact that can lead to contamination.

Egg products:

- Store frozen egg products for up to one year to keep the quality. The freezer should be set at 0 F or lower.
- To thaw eggs, it is recommended to do it under cold running water or in the refrigerator. Do not thaw eggs on the counter. After thawing, do not freeze the products again.
- For liquid products, follow the storage and handling instructions provided by the manufacturer on the container.
- Liquid egg products that do not have an expiration date should be stored at 40 F for up to seven days if unopened and for up to 3 days after opening.
- Liquid egg products should not be frozen after being opened.
- Unopened dry egg products and egg white solids can be kept at room temperature in a cool, dry place.
- Reconstituted egg products should be used immediately or refrigerated and used the same day.
- U.S. Department of Agriculture staples, such as dry egg mix, should be stored below 50 F, preferably at refrigeration temperature of 40 F or below. Products that are opened must be consumed within seven to 10 days. To consume, the necessary amount must be reconstituted each time.
- Use pallets or other instruments on the floor so that proper air circulation can be maintained, and the food does not have contact that can lead to contamination.



Label

Egg packaging should include:

- The name and address of the producer, distributor or carton manufacturer.
- The egg size designation: Jumbo, Extra Large, Large, Medium and/or Small.
- Net content, such as 6 eggs, half dozen eggs, 12 eggs, one dozen eggs, etc.
- Safe handling instructions must be set off in a box by use of hairlines. It should read, “SAFE HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS: To prevent illness from bacteria: keep eggs refrigerated, cook eggs until yolks are firm and cook foods containing eggs thoroughly.”
- Inform customers of important dates for the product by listing “Sell By,” “Best By” and/or “Use By” dates.

References

U.S. Food and Drug Administration. (2022). What You Need to Know About Egg Safety. USDA – Food and beverages. <https://www.fda.gov/food/buy-store-serve-safe-food/what-you-need-know-about-egg-safety>

U.S. Department of Agriculture. (2015). Egg Products and Food Safety. <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/food-safety/safe-food-handling-and-preparation/eggs/egg-products-and-food-safety>

U.S. Department of Agriculture. (2018). Shell Egg Labeling guidelines for products bearing the USDA grademark. <https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/ShellEggLabelingUSDAGrademarkedProduct.pdf>

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