
Poached Eggs



1. In saucepan or deep omelet pan or skillet, bring 2 to 3 inches of **water, skim or 1% low-fat milk, reduced-fat broth, tomato juice, wine or other liquid** to boiling. Reduce heat to keep water gently simmering. Break cold **eggs**, 1 at a time, into custard cup or saucer or break several into bowl. Holding dish close to water's surface, slip eggs into water.



2. Cook until whites are completely set and yolks begin to thicken but are not hard, about 3 to 5 minutes. With slotted spoon, lift out eggs. Drain in spoon or on paper towels. Trim any rough edges, if desired.



3. There are many types of “poaching” gadgets: rings and egg-shaped, colander-like holders to corral eggs as they cook in liquid; tiny pans and nonstick pan inserts with egg-shaped cups for steam-cooking eggs held above the liquid; even steam-poaching electric egg cookers. The rings can also be used for fried eggs. Most electric egg cookers steam-cook eggs in the shell, too, and some have flat inserts for cooking fried or scrambled eggs. The easiest poaching method requires only a saucepan and a slotted spoon.



Microwave – for 4 eggs, use amounts, bowl size and time in parentheses ():

1/3 (2/3) cup water
2 (4) eggs

Pour water into 10-ounce custard cup or small, deep bowl (1-quart bowl or baking dish). Break and slip in eggs. Gently prick yolks with tip of knife or wooden pick. Cover cup with plastic wrap. Cook on full power about 1 1/2 to 2 (1 1/2 to 3) minutes. If necessary, let stand, covered, until whites are completely set and yolks begin to thicken but are not hard, about 1 to 2 minutes. Pour off water to serve in custard cup, or lift out with slotted spoon.

Microwave cooking time is based on a full power output of 600 to 700 watts. For a lower wattage oven, allow more time.

Poached Egg Tips

- The secret to pretty poached eggs is using very fresh eggs which will hold their shape better and produce fewer “angel wings” in the liquid. Adding salt to the poaching liquid may promote coagulation and adding vinegar may lower the coagulation temperature, but neither are necessary and can flavor the eggs.
- Swirling the poaching liquid or creating a vortex merely serves to ruffle the delicate egg protein. Nicely-shaped eggs are easier to produce in relatively quiet water that is gently simmering.
- Adventurous cooks use broth, milk, tomato juice or wine as the poaching liquid. Any unclear liquid will lend its color to poached eggs. Eggs poached in beef broth pick up brownish highlights, while using tomato juice or sauce produces reddish tones and red wine results in unpleasant purplish specks.
- When entertaining or preparing poached eggs for more than just a few, it’s tempting to poach the eggs in advance and hold them refrigerated in water. This is a questionable practice from a food safety standpoint. Leftovers should always be thoroughly reheated, preferably to 160° F, and delicate poached eggs can easily become overdone in the process.
- To suit dieters, serve pristine poached eggs in custard cups or on toast. Or, spoon steamed vegetables onto toasted English muffin halves and top with poached eggs – the golden yolks can serve as the sauce. For an indulgence instead, serve a Benedict variation or complement bland poached eggs with lemon juice and capers, caviar, truffles or almost any other edible for which taste buds yearn. On the more practical side, make a hearty cold-weather meal by poaching eggs in a pot of simmering soup.