

## **Chapter 2**



*The Wonderful World of Eggs*

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<i>The Wonderful World of Eggs</i> .....	39
Part 1: Eggs and How They Work.....	35
The Mechanics of Eggs.....	35
The Three Parts of the Egg .....	35
Fresh, Safe Eggs .....	36
Part 2: Techniques for Using Eggs .....	37
How to Make Meringue for Pies .....	37
How to Avoid Weeping Meringues.....	39
How to Make Angel Food Cakes .....	40
Consider Pie Weights for that Pre-baked Crust .....	42
How to Make Quiches .....	43
How to Make Soufflés .....	44
How to Make Strata and Baked French Toast .....	44
How to Build a Frittata .....	45
How to Make a Custards .....	46
How to Make Pannekoeken.....	49
Part 3--Recipes: Applying What You Learned .....	51
Royal Lemon Meringue Pie .....	51
“Meringue that Does Not Weep” Recipe .....	52
Easy Oven-Baked Frittata .....	54
Classic Quiche Lorraine .....	55
Cinnamon Ripple Angel Food Cake Recipe .....	56
Spinach, Bacon, and Swiss Quiche.....	57
Easy Baked Omelet .....	58
Chocolate Malt Pudding .....	59
Southern Chess Pie .....	60
Traditional Dutch Pannekoeken .....	62
Apple and Bacon Pannekoeken .....	63

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# *The Wonderful World of Eggs*

## **Part 1: Eggs and How They Work**

### **The Mechanics of Eggs**

Eggs are wonderful. They are used in so many products and so many ways. Most of our cakes are not possible without eggs and cookies are very difficult to make without eggs.

We know of nine different functions of eggs in baking:

- ◆ As eggs cook, the protein coagulates and provides structure to the product.
- ◆ Eggs help leaven certain products by trapping air cells in whipped eggs or egg whites. Angel food and chiffon cakes are often entirely leavened with eggs.
- ◆ The fat in the egg yolk shortens gluten strands in batters and dough to tenderize the product.
- ◆ Since eggs are mostly water, they moisten the products to which they are added.
- ◆ Eggs, egg whites, and yolks, are used as washes on bread loaves to give them a glossy finish and hold sesame seeds and other accoutrements in place.
- ◆ Eggs are natural emulsifiers that help make our batters smooth.
- ◆ They add flavor.
- ◆ They add color. Most lemon meringue pie recipes rely entirely on egg yolks for color.
- ◆ They add nutritional value.

### **The Three Parts of the Egg**

The egg is composed of three main parts plus membranes and two white strands called chalazae that hold the yolk to the center of the white.

**The shell** contains the egg. It is fragile and porous. It is important to remember that eggs will absorb flavors and odors through the shell and therefore must be protected from strong smelling substances and unsanitary surfaces. When baking, make sure that your eggs are odor free. A tainted egg will spoil your product.

**The yolk** is high in both fat and protein and is a natural emulsifier. It is rich in vitamins and minerals and contains cholesterol. The color of the yolk varies depending on the diet of the chicken but color is not an indicator of food value or quality.

**The white** is primarily albumin protein. It is clear and soluble before it is cooked. It contains sulfur and becomes odorous when old.

Brown eggs are not more nutritious than white eggs. Blood spots are not a cause for alarm; for baking, you do not need to remove them.

When you add eggs to a batter you add a great deal of water to the product; about 3/4's of the egg by weight is water. The remaining portion is nearly equal parts fat and protein. For those of you using kitchen scales, a large egg weighs 1 2/3 ounce without the shell with the yolk weighing two-thirds of an ounce and the white, one ounce.

## **Fresh, Safe Eggs**

The egg industry is conscientious and regulated and it is very rare to find an inferior or rotten egg in a carton from commercial sources. It is not rare to find broken or cracked shells. When you open a carton and find a cracked egg, discard it since a crack creates an easy avenue for bacteria to enter.

Eggs are a potential source of salmonella contamination. The American Egg Board estimates that only one in 20,000 eggs is contaminated. Still, it is recommended that you do not use raw eggs in your food and that egg products be cooked to 160 degrees. Always wash your hands after handling eggs and sanitize any work surfaces where raw eggs may have been used.

Always buy eggs that are graded A or AA. You can determine the quality of the eggs from your refrigerator just as an inspector does. Open an egg onto a flat surface. If the egg is compact with a plump yolk, it is fresh. If the chalazae, the white strands in the egg white, are prominent, the egg is fresh.

Eggs kept in the coldest part of the refrigerator keep up to five weeks though we plan on using our eggs within two weeks. Fresh eggs make for more stable egg white foams. Eggs become more alkaline as they age and may have a minor affect on the function of chemical leaveners.

Because the shells are porous, eggs will lose moisture over time. Eggs packaged for consumers are given a mineral oil bath to help seal the shells, reduce the moisture loss, and protect the egg from odors. Do not wash your eggs since doing so will remove the protective mineral oil covering.

Many recipes call for eggs at room temperature. Rather than leaving your eggs on the counter to warm, simply place them in a bowl of warm water for a few minutes.

## **Part 2: Techniques for Using Eggs**

### **How to Make Meringue for Pies**

There are just a few easy steps to making delectable and attractive meringue toppings for pie. In this section, you will top an unusual lemon pie. What makes it unusual? Both cream and orange juice are added to the filling. Of course, you can top any cream pie the same way.

Meringues can be dreamy smooth, sweet, and melt-in-your-mouth. They are simple to make—just follow a few steps.



- 1. Bring the eggs to room temperature.** Egg whites whip better at moderate temperatures. Instead of leaving the eggs on the counter (where they are invariably forgotten and sit out for too long) immerse only the eggs that you will use in warm (not hot) water for five minutes.
- 2. Make sure that the bowls and beaters are immaculately clean.** Any fat will reduce the egg white volume. Use stainless or glass bowls, not plastic since oil may be impregnated into the surfaces of plastic bowls.
- 3. Separate the whites from the eggs.** It is recommended that you use an egg separator so that there is less chance of contaminating your eggs with bacteria on the shell surfaces. An egg separator saves time and captures more of the egg white. You can purchase an egg separator.
- 4. Use the three bowl method.** Let the white slip into your first small bowl. Pour the egg yolk into a second bowl. As you complete each egg, pour the egg white into the third bowl in which you will beat the egg whites. In this way, if you contaminate an egg white with a bit of yolk, you can put that white aside; you have not contaminated the entire batch of egg whites.
- 5. Add 1/2 teaspoon cream of tartar** for every three or four large eggs. Beat the eggs at medium speed until soft peaks form, about one minute. Do not beat past this stage. At a soft peak stage, the tips of the soft peaks will bend over.
- 6. Drizzle the sugar into the egg whites** with the beaters at slow speed. The sugar will now help stabilize the egg whites. We prefer to use superfine sugar since it dissolves easier in the egg whites. Continue at medium speed until stiff peaks form. At this stage, the meringue should be glossy and the tips should stand straight up. Rub a little egg white between your fingers to make sure that the sugar has dissolved.

**7. Gently fold** in the vanilla extract.

**8. Spread the meringue over the pie filling.** Make sure the meringue is pressed against the crust so that it adheres and is less likely to shrink during baking.

**9. Bake the meringue at 350 degrees** for 15 minutes or until golden brown. When baked at higher temperatures, the meringue may not be baked through. (Placing the meringue on a hot filling helps it bake.) Partially baked meringue is more prone to weeping.

## How to Avoid Weeping Meringues

Weeping meringues aren't very pretty. The meringue pulls back from the crust, moisture beads on the topping, and a clear liquid forms below the crust. It doesn't hurt the pie but it's not presentable.

Most weeping seems to be caused by one of two conditions, either the sugar isn't completely dissolved or the egg whites are not fully cooked.

Here are our suggestions:

- 1. Use superfine sugar.** Superfine sugar dissolves quickly and easily and we recommend it for meringues.
- 2. Spread the meringue to the crust.** If the meringue is attached to the crust, there is less chance of shrinkage when baking.
- 3. Make sure the meringue is fully cooked.** Instead of baking the pie in a hot oven, say 400 degrees, turn the temperature down to 350 or even 325. In a cooler oven, the heat will better penetrate and cook the topping before browning.
- 4. Get full volume from your whites.** Heat penetrates light, airy meringue better than a more dense meringue. It is difficult to get full volume with plastic bowls because fat molecules are often trapped in the plastic surface.
- 5. Place the topping on the filling while hot.** The heat from the filling will help cook the meringue.

All of these suggestions will help. In our experience, none is foolproof.

Consider the recipe later in the chapter for a meringue that does not weep. It is a little more work but is often worth the time.

## How to Make Angel Food Cakes

Angel food cakes are really easy if you follow a few principles. Once you master these basic principles, you'll be making perfect angel food cakes. In this lesson, we'll introduce you to these principles and provide you with several recipes to practice with.

Angel food cakes seem so much like summer, light and heavenly and never too filling. With a little whipped cream, they showcase the fruits of summer so well—from strawberries to fresh peaches.



Here we'll show you how to employ these principles and share a recipe that is nearly foolproof. Once you understand these basic principles, you can make delectable angel food and chiffon cakes from chocolate mocha to orange chiffon.

Angel food cakes are quick and easy to make. Consider an angel food cake the next time that guests are about to arrive. With their tender, melt-in-your-mouth goodness, they are always a favorite, always impressive, and save time for the other things you need to do. And you'll feel good about serving these to your family and friends—angel food cakes are always low fat, nearly fat free.

**For perfect angel food cakes, keep the following principles and practices in mind:**

**1) Get the right pan.** You will need a tube pan with a removable bottom. (Most recipes call for a ten-inch tube pan.) To make an angel food cake, you never grease the pan so it would be very difficult to remove the cake without the removable bottom of the tube pan.



**2) Beat the egg whites right.** The main ingredient in angel food cakes is the egg whites. They are beaten to a foam to provide the leavening; usually there is no baking powder called for in the recipe.

a) **Make sure that no grease or fat touches the egg whites.** Just a tiny bit of fat interferes with the foam formation. Make sure that the pan, the beaters, the bowl, and any other utensils are clean, dry, and grease free.

b) **Separate the whites from the yolks while the eggs are cold.** The eggs are thicker and easier to separate while cold.

c) **Separate the eggs one at a time into a cup.** If you get a bit of yolk in the white, set it aside. That white will fail to perform and if you mix it with the other whites, the whole batch will fail. Continue with a clean cup. After each egg white is successfully separated, pour it into the bowl that will be used for beating.

d) **Whip the whites until glossy peaks form.** Start at medium speed with your hand-held mixer. As the foam begins to develop, increase the speed. Fold in ingredients as called for in the recipe. Do not over whip. If the egg whites are beaten too long, they will become dry and gritty and will ruin the cake.

**3) Add the sugar after the whites have begun to hold their shape.** If you add the sugar too soon, the whites will be soft and sticky. Add the sugar in a slow stream, not all at once.

**4) Fold the other ingredients gently into the egg whites.** Use a spatula and gently reach to the bottom of the bowl and lift the egg whites through the mixture in an up and down, folding motion. Do not over mix. The other ingredients need to be uniformly dispersed but over mixing will drive the entrained air from the mixture and cause the cake to lose volume.

**5) Bake immediately.** If the batter sits in the pan, it will lose air and volume.

**6) After baking, turn the cake upside down to cool.** Gravity will help the cake maintain its volume. Most tube pans have little legs that will hold the cake above the counter. If your pan doesn't, invert the pan over a narrow necked bottle to hold the cake up.

There you have it. It looks like a lot to keep in mind but the process is really quite quick and simple.

## Consider Pie Weights for that Pre-baked Crust

Pie crusts are made with water or milk and baked in a hot oven. In a hot oven, the liquid turns to steam and bubbles form in the crust. Where the bubbles collapse, the pie filling leaks through the crust. One way to avoid blisters is to prick the crust with the tines of a fork to vent the steam but often, this is only partially effective. There is a better way—pie weights.



You don't have to buy expensive weights—beans or rice will do. Line the shell with aluminum foil and then place the beans or rice in the shell to hold the crust down. Because the beans or rice absorbs heat, you will need to increase the baking time, sometimes up to twice as long. (The crust in the picture took 20 minutes at 450 degrees. Baking times will vary with weights.)

## How to Make Quiches

Quiches are a custard made with eggs and milk or cream and loaded with cheeses or meat or vegetables to create an elegant main dish. They are no more difficult than making a custard pie. Here we present seven principles and two recipes for great quiches.



Making a quiche is not difficult. Just follow a few simple principles to make a great quiche. Once you are comfortable building quiches, you can experiment and be creative—adding almost anything to a quiche that you would to an omelet.

Just keep these principles in mind:

**1. Make a good crust.** We're talking about a pre-baked crust. It doesn't have to be pretty and certainly not perfect. The trick is to avoid the bubbles; bubbles break and let the filling ooze through. Use [pie weights](#) to hold the crust down. Or, if you prefer, prick the dough before baking, the steam that causes bubbles will escape through the pricked holes. (We've never been able to get those little holes to work as well as pie weights.)

If you are not comfortable making pie pastry, purchase a ready-made crust or use puff pastry from the grocery store.

**2. Use quality ingredients.** Your quiche is no better than what you put in it. Use fresh eggs and vegetables and quality cheeses.

**3. Chop the ingredients finely.** Coarsely cut ingredients make it very difficult to obtain attractive slices.

**4. Get enough eggs.** It's the eggs that coagulate when baked to create a firm, clean quiche. The ratio of eggs to liquid has to be high enough. Make certain that there are at least 2 eggs for every one cup of liquid.

**5. Cook it right.** Bake it at 325 degrees. Higher temperatures increase the risk of over-cooking and curdling.

**6. Cover the edges with foil.** To get the quiche baked properly often requires enough time that the edges of the crust over-brown. Half way through the baking, cover the edges with foil so that you won't over-brown the crusts.

**7. Get it cooked.** The center of the quiche has to reach at least 160 degrees for the protein in the eggs to coagulate. But a simple test is to simply slip a knife blade into the

center of the quiche. If cooked, it should come out clean. Your knife test is more important than the number of minutes in the recipe. A properly cooked quiche will display a sharp, clean knife cut when sliced.

## **How to Make Soufflés**

Soufflés can be truly gorgeous, almost magical as they mushroom up in the oven into a light airy dish. And even if you're a first-timer and your soufflé doesn't look quite right, it'll taste great. But there are some tricks to making them come out right.

Soufflés are made in two parts, whipped egg whites and a base made with the other ingredients including such things as a cheese sauce or chocolate. Since the base holds the flavor, make the flavor intense because it will be diluted with the addition of the egg whites.

Beat the egg whites properly. It's the air trapped in the egg whites that causes the dramatic expansion of the soufflé in the oven. You want the egg white to remain elastic. Beat the egg whites just until soft peaks form, add the sugar if the recipe calls for it, and then beat until stiff peaks form. Cream of tartar will help the egg whites develop.

Fold the egg whites into the base carefully. Stir about a cup of the egg whites into the base to lighten the base then gradually fold in the remaining egg whites. Use a spatula to cut through the whites and gently lift the base through the foam in an up and down motion only until the two parts are combined.

## **How to Make Strata and Baked French Toast**

A strata is basically a savory bread pudding. Most are made by layering bread cubes in a baking dish and then pouring an egg mixture over it. The mixture soaks through the bread and sets up in baking as custard does. Most recipes call for cheese and spices.

### **Baked French Toast**

Baked French toast is a cousin to a strata. It's made with whole slices of bread layered in a baking pan instead of bread cubes. Baked French toast can be savory or sweet.

## How to Build a Frittata

Do you have a favorite omelet recipe? You can build a great frittata with the same ingredients that you would use in an omelet. Here's a step-by-step guide:

- 1. Sauté the vegetables until soft.** As an alternative, you can steam the vegetables in the microwave until they are tender.
- 2. Turn the broiler on.**
- 3. Beat the eggs,** pepper and salt together. Put a tablespoon of oil in a heavy, oven-proof skillet and place the skillet on medium heat. Pour the egg mixture into the pan and scatter your vegetables and/or cooked meats on top. Turn the heat to low and cook until the frittata is golden brown on the bottom and the egg is beginning to set, approximately 7 minutes.
- 4. If necessary, oven-proof the skillet handle** by wrapping it in aluminum foil. Place frittata under the broiler and cook until it is almost firm.
- 5. Add any cheese** to the top and again put the frittata under the broiler until it is completely set and the cheese is melted. Slide your frittata onto a plate and serve.

## How to Make Custards

Most puddings and cream pie fillings are thickened either with starch or eggs. Any liquid thickened or set with eggs is called a custard. It is our intention in this chapter to examine how custards work and how to make them.

There are two types of custards: stirred and baked. Stirred custards are cooked on the stovetop, stirred as they cook, and remain pourable. Many puddings and pastry creams are stirred custards. Baked custards are made of sugar, whole eggs, and liquids and are set in the oven. Pies such as pumpkin or chess, some desserts, and baked puddings are classified as baked custards. Cheesecakes and quiches are also baked custards.

Many custards have added starch to help set the liquid and to reduce separation or weeping. For our purposes, if the primary agent for thickening or setting a dessert is eggs, we will treat it as a custard.

How does a custard work? As the egg protein in the custard heats, these proteins set and the mixture becomes thick. Egg whites, without the addition of other ingredients, begin to set at 145 degrees; egg yolks at 155 degrees. When other ingredients are added such as sugar and starch, the temperatures at which setting begins is higher. There is a fairly narrow range of temperatures that are acceptable for making a custard. The liquid must be cooked long enough for the eggs to set but should not exceed 185 degrees. Above 185 degrees, the proteins become toughened as coagulation completes. At this point, the custard tends to curdle and after setting, weep as the liquids drain from the toughened protein. Later in this section, we will discuss methods for cooking custards to the right temperature.

### Stirred Custard

Stirred custards include pastry cream, pie fillings, and sauces. Cooking temperatures are variable depending on the starches and other ingredients called for in the recipe. Cooking times are not difficult since the custard must be stirred nearly constantly and the baker is overseeing the cooking and can remove the pan from the heat when the desired thickness is obtained.

Stirred custards remain pourable. Many bakers strain the custard before use to remove any cooked egg particles and ensure smoothness. Plastic wrap is often placed against the surface before refrigerating so that a “skin” does not form.

Pastry cream is a starch-aided custard. Because of the starch content, it can be brought to a boil without toughening the egg proteins and should be brought to a boil for the starch to function properly.

Crème anglaise is a thin custard sauce made without starch. Accordingly, it should not be cooked beyond 175 degrees.

Lemon curd is thick and intensely flavored using only lemon juice and the eggs for liquid. It is used as a filling for cakes and as a spread.

Lemon pie filling is another custard. Because acid interferes with the swelling of starch particles and their ability to thicken, lemon pie filling is thickened before the lemon juice is added.

### **Baked Custard**

Most baked puddings are a mixture of eggs, sugar, liquid, and usually some other ingredient. (A baked rice pudding is a custard with rice added; a bread pudding is a custard with bread added.)

A good baked custard has a clean, sharp edge when cut. The amount of egg in the custard determines its firmness. A baked dessert that is going to be unmolded requires more egg than a softer, spooned pudding. Egg whites rather than whole eggs are rarely used in custards. Egg yolks provide a richer, smoother texture. Some custards such as pumpkin pie or cheesecakes may call for cornstarch or flour as an additional stabilizer to the eggs.

A typical ratio of eggs, sugar, and milk in a firmly baked custard is one large egg for every 1/4 to 1/3 cup milk and 1 1/2 to 2 tablespoons sugar for each egg. Use these ratios as guidelines. The addition of starch, flour or cornstarch, may reduce the need for eggs as will the desire for a softer custard rather than firmly baked custard suitable for a mold. (Softer custards may have up to twice as much milk per egg.) Sugar is even more variable and may be different because of tastes or the presence of other sweeteners such as raisins or sweetened condensed milk.

The following mixing and baking procedure is typical of baked custards. Using this procedure and the ratios above, you can create or modify your own desserts.

1. Combine the eggs, sugar, salt, and flavorings in a mixing bowl. Stir until the sugar is dissolved but do not whip. (It is desirable to avoid foam.)
2. Scald the milk over low heat stirring regularly. Heating the milk before adding it will help cook the eggs evenly and will reduce baking time.
3. Gradually pour the milk into the egg mixture, stirring while pouring. Gently pour the custard into the baking pan or cups. If the custard is to be unmolded, grease the molds with butter. For a smooth surface, gently skim any bubble from the top.
4. Place a baking pan or cups in a larger baking pan. Place the baking pan on the oven rack. Fill the outer pan with hot water until the water level is approximately equal with the level of the dessert. The water in the pan helps bake the custard evenly without a tough outer layer that has been baked beyond 185 degrees. A cloth can be added to the bottom of the baking pan to insulate the dessert from the heat on the bottom.
5. Bake at 325 degrees to avoid over-baking. Typical baking time is about 45 minutes but will vary on the recipe, the baking pans, the initial heat of the custard, and the heat of the hot water used as an outer bath. To test for doneness, insert a sharp knife into the custard about two inches from the center. It should come out clean. The very center of the custard may not be quite set but

- will continue to cook after removal from the oven. The custard should be removed from the water bath immediately so that it does not continue to cook.
6. Cool the custard and refrigerate it. Often, plastic wrap is pressed against the custard surface to avoid the forming of a “skin” on the top of the dessert.

**Baker's notes:**

A water bath is usually not necessary when starch is part of the recipe. Bread puddings are usually not baked in a water bath. Neither are pies since it is desirable to bake the crust thoroughly and the pie crust insulates the custard from the heat of the pan.

## How to Make Pannekoeken

We debated adding pannekoeken to this chapter. But pannekoeken is so good, so much fun, and so easy that we couldn't resist. And because it is an egg-rich batter with little flour, we inserted it in this chapter.



We think of pannekoeken most often for breakfast but it seems to fit in just right for brunch (especially with guests), lunch, a late supper.

And if you can make pancakes, you can make pannekoeken. In fact, there is less prep time than with pancakes—mix the batter and stick it in the oven. (In our test kitchen with the ingredients sitting on the counter, we were 2 1/2 minutes to the oven.) They are great without toppings and sublime with toppings.

Here are the steps to making easy pannekoeken:

1. Place one-half cube of butter in a pannekoeken (Dutch Baby) pan or an ovenproof skillet with rounded sides. (You can make a fine pannekoeken with an ovenproof skillet; it's a little easier with a pannekoeken pan. You can purchase one on our site.)
2. Pannekoeken puffs up in a hot oven. Preheat your oven to 400 or 425 degrees depending on the recipe. Put the rack in the center, not the top, shelf. When you turn the oven on, place the pan with the butter in the oven. When the oven reaches 250 degrees the butter should be melted. Remove the pan from the oven.
3. Whisk the eggs and the salt in a medium bowl. Add the milk. Whisk in the flour until nearly smooth. (A whisk makes mixing easier than a spoon.) Your batter is now ready.
4. Pour the batter into the pan. Cover with toppings if desired. Bake. Serve hot.

Pannekoeken makes an excellent canvas for your imagination. When we lived in Minnesota there was a chain of pannekoeken restaurants. They served these Dutch pancakes with all types of toppings, some cooked into the batter but often used as toppings after the pancake is baked.

Apples are the classic complement to pannekoeken. They can be cooked in the batter, sautéed, made into a compote, or simply sliced thinly and used as a topping. But meats, cheeses, and vegetables work also, especially for a dinner or lunch dish. When made with meats or vegetables, leave them as they are or drizzle them with a white sauce, a cheese sauce, or syrup.

Here are some suggestions to get you started.

- Traditional Pannekoeken
- Apple and Bacon Pannekoeken

- Sausage, pears, and dried cherries
- Sautéed apples in brown sugar and cinnamon
- Apples and sausage
- Blueberries and cottage cheese
- Bananas and pecans
- Peaches and honey raisin sauce

Let your imagination reign. You will find recipes for the first two suggestions at the end of this chapter.

### ***Part 3: Recipes--Applying What You Learned***

The following recipes were chosen to give you the opportunity to make some very good baked goods while working with eggs. With these recipes, you'll make meringues, frittata, omelets, quiches, and custards.

## **Royal Lemon Meringue Pie**

A cool, tart lemon meringue pie on a hot summer day is so refreshing. There are lots of lemon meringue pie recipes but a royal lemon pie is a cut above. It's made with cream instead of water and the lemon juice is tempered with a touch of orange juice so it is just a touch sweeter and not quite as tart. We think you will love it.

This recipe was designed for a nine-inch deep-dish pie and the meringue is piled high with five egg whites--not three or four.



### **Royal Lemon Meringue Pie Recipe**

#### Ingredients

1 nine-inch deep-dish pie shell

4 teaspoons lemon zest  
1 cup lemon juice  
1/2 cup orange juice  
1 cups granulated sugar  
dash of salt

1/3 cup cornstarch  
1 cup whipping cream  
3 large eggs, whisked  
5 large egg yolks

1/4 cup butter

5 large egg whites  
1/2 teaspoon cream of tartar  
1/2 cup granulated sugar, preferably superfine  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

### Directions

1. Bake the pie shell at 450 degrees for about ten minutes or until it just starts to turn brown on the edges. It will help the pie shell keep its shape during baking if you line the shell with aluminum foil and then place beans, rice, or pie shell weights in the shell to hold the crust down.
2. Grate the zest from one large lemon or two small lemons. Avoid the white, pithy part of the peel for it is bitter. Add the zest to a saucepan with the lemon juice, orange juice, sugar, and salt. Stir and heat until it just starts to boil.
3. While the filling is beginning to heat, mix the cornstarch with the whipping cream, Add the eggs and egg yolks and mix until smooth.
4. Drizzle the hot lemon mixture into the egg mixture while stirring constantly. Return the combined mixture to the stove and heat until it thickens and starts to boil. Add the butter and stir until melted. Scrape the filling into the pie shell.
5. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.
6. In a medium metal or ceramic bowl, beat the egg whites and cream of tartar together. When soft peaks are formed, drizzle in the sugar while beating. Continue beating until stiff peaks are formed. Fold in the vanilla.
7. With a spatula, spread the meringue topping on the filling. Press the topping against the crust so that the meringue will adhere to the crust during baking.
8. Bake for 15 minutes at 350 degrees or until the top is a golden brown. Let cool for an hour on the counter and then two hours in the refrigerator.

### **“Meringue that Does Not Weep” Recipe**

4 large egg whites  
1/2 teaspoon cream of tartar  
6 tablespoons sugar, preferably superfine  
1 tablespoon cornstarch  
1/2 cup water  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

### Directions

1. In a medium metal or ceramic bowl, beat the egg whites and cream of tartar together. When soft peaks are formed, drizzle in the sugar while beating. Continue beating until stiff peaks are formed.
2. In a saucepan, dissolve the cornstarch in water. Heat and stir until it is bubbling and thickened. Drizzle the hot syrup into the egg whites while beating slowly with the electric mixer. Add the vanilla. Continue beating until the egg whites are at full volume and stiff peaks are formed.
3. With a spatula, spread the meringue topping on the filling. Press the topping against the crust so that the meringue will adhere to the crust during baking.
4. Bake for 15 minutes at 350 degrees or until the top is a golden brown.

Let cool for an hour on the counter and then two hours in the refrigerator.

**Baker's notes:** Why does this work? The cornstarch acts as a stabilizer; the hot syrup facilitates the cooking of the egg whites.

## Easy Oven-Baked Frittata

Frittatas are easy; this one is even easier. Remember this recipe when you need a great dinner dish in a hurry. Serve it with your favorite bread and a garden salad.

### Ingredients

1 cup of diced vegetables (onions, green peppers, etc.)  
6 eggs  
dash of pepper  
1/8 teaspoon salt  
2 tablespoons grated parmesan cheese  
1 cup shredded cheddar, mozzarella or other cheese

### Directions

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees

1. Sauté the vegetables until soft. Alternately, you can steam the vegetables in the microwave until they are tender.
2. Beat the eggs, pepper, salt, and parmesan cheese together. Put a tablespoon of oil in a heavy, oven-proof skillet. Pour the egg mixture into the pan and scatter the vegetables on top.
3. Bake for 15 minutes or until a knife inserted in the center comes out clean. Immediately sprinkle the remaining cheese on the top and let it melt.
4. Slide your frittata onto a plate and serve.

## Classic Quiche Lorraine

Quiches are made with a custard filling—eggs and milk or cream—and loaded with cheeses or meat or vegetables to create an elegant main dish. They are simple to make, at least no more difficult than making a pie.

A Quiche Lorraine is the classic bacon and Swiss cheese filling. It originated in the Lorraine region of what is now northeastern France. Originally it had no cheese, simply custard flavored with bacon. Today, most Quiche Lorraine recipes call for just a touch of nutmeg. The recipe that follows is a little less rich than many because it uses milk instead of cream in the filling.



### Classic Quiche Lorraine Recipe

#### Ingredients

1 single crust pie shell  
6 large slices of bacon, about 6 ounces  
4 eggs, beaten  
1 tablespoon all-purpose flour  
1 1/2 cups milk  
dash of pepper  
1/8 teaspoon salt  
1/4 teaspoon nutmeg  
1 1/2 cups grated Swiss cheese, about 6 ounces

#### Directions

Preheat the oven to 325 degrees

1. Bake the pie shell at 450 degrees for about ten minutes or until it just starts to turn brown on the edges. Do not prick the pie shell with a fork. It will help the pie shell keep its shape during baking if you line the shell with aluminum foil and then place beans, rice, or pie shell weights in the shell to hold the crust down.
2. While the pie shell is baking, cook the bacon in the microwave oven until crisp. Cut the bacon into small chunks.
3. In a medium bowl, mix the eggs and flour together. Add the remaining ingredients, including the bacon. Pour the mixture into the hot pie shell.
4. Bake for 40 to 45 minutes or until a knife inserted in the center comes out clean. If the shell starts to brown too quickly, cover the edges with aluminum foil.

## Cinnamon Ripple Angel Food Cake Recipe

### Ingredients

1 1/2 cups egg whites (about 12 to 14 large eggs)  
1 cup plus one tablespoons sifted cake flour  
1 1/2 cup sugar divided  
1/4 teaspoons salt  
3/4 teaspoon cream of tartar  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
3 to 4 teaspoons ground cinnamon

### Directions

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees (after step 1).

1. Separate the eggs before heating the oven (see tips), adding the whites to a liquid measuring cup until you have 1 1/2 cups. It will take about 12 large eggs.
2. Sift the flour before measuring. If you do not have a sifter, use a whisk to fluff the flour before measuring. Add about half the sugar to the flour and sift again.
3. Beat the egg whites in a large bowl, adding the salt and the cream of tartar to the whites as soon as they become foamy. Continue beating. As soft peaks begin to form, add the remaining sugar and extracts. Beat until peaks form.
4. Using a spatula, gently fold the flour and sugar mixture into the egg white foam with “over and up” motions. Be sure to scrape the bottom of the bowl or the flour mixture will sink. Mix only until the flour is moistened. Working the batter longer tends to drive the air bubbles from the foam and reduces the cake's volume.
5. Scrape the batter into a ten-inch tube pan in three or four layers. Sprinkle the cinnamon through a fine sieve onto the batter between layers. Bake immediately. Bake for 45 minutes or until the cake is done.
6. When the cake is removed from the oven, immediately invert the tube pan on the counter. Many tube pans have legs for this purpose. If the tube pan does not have legs, invert the pan over a narrow-necked bottle inserted into the tube.

## Spinach, Bacon, and Swiss Quiche

A spinach quiche recipe is the second most popular quiche recipe on the internet—and no wonder; it is very good. This one has Swiss cheese and bacon added along with a touch of tarragon.



### Spinach, Bacon, and Swiss Quiche Recipe

#### Ingredients

1 nine-inch deep-dish pie shell  
4 large slices of bacon  
4 eggs, beaten  
2 large egg yolks  
1 tablespoon all-purpose flour  
2 cups half and half  
dash of pepper  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1/8 teaspoon nutmeg  
1/2 teaspoon dry tarragon  
1 1/2 cups grated Swiss cheese, about 6 ounces  
3/4 cup spinach, partially cooked and finely chopped

#### Directions

Preheat the oven to 325 degrees

1. Bake the pie shell at 450 degrees for about ten minutes or until it just starts to turn brown on the edges. It will help the pie shell keep its shape during baking if you line the shell with aluminum foil and then place beans, rice, or pie shell weights in the shell to hold the crust down.
2. Cook the spinach until nearly tender. Remove any stems. The spinach should be finely chopped.
3. While the pie shell is baking, cook the bacon in the microwave oven until crisp. Cut the bacon into small bits.
4. In a medium bowl, mix the eggs, yolks, and flour together. Add the remaining ingredients, including the bacon and chopped spinach. Pour the mixture into the hot pie shell.
5. Bake for 50 minutes or until a knife inserted in the center comes out clean. If the shell starts to brown too quickly, cover the edges with aluminum foil.

## Easy Baked Omelet

This recipe is dedicated to all of the klutzes among us who often mutilate our omelets while trying to fold them or for the distracted among us that need to just stick a baking dish in the oven and forget it until the timer goes off.

And it's easy. Notice that there are only two steps to this recipe. Prep time is less than ten minutes.

This is a puffy omelet recipe. It will mushroom in the oven and then fall back as it cools. Still, it is a lighter omelet than what is fixed on the stovetop.



Use this basic cheese omelet recipe or add meat and veggies to create any omelet you desire. (If you add veggies, consider sautéing them or partially cooking them in the microwave before adding them to the egg mixture.)

### Ingredients:

1/3 cup flour  
1/2 tsp. baking powder  
1/8 tsp. salt  
dash pepper  
1 1/2 cups milk  
8 eggs  
1 1/2 cup shredded cheddar or other cheese

### Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

1. Mix the dry ingredients in a bowl. Add enough milk to make a paste and then add the remaining milk a little at time, stirring after each addition, until you have a smooth mixture. Add the eggs and cheese.
2. Grease a 9-inch pie pan with butter. Pour the omelet mixture into the pie pan and bake for 40-45 minutes or until the omelet starts to brown and a knife inserted in the center comes out clean.

### Variations:

Add herbs, spices, sautéed vegetables, ham, or other meats or vegetables as desired to this recipe as you would for stovetop omelets.

## Chocolate Malt Pudding

This works as both a soft pudding and an excellent pastry cream. It is a stirred custard pudding but with the addition of cornstarch, it meets the definition for pastry cream. See the section in this chapter for making custards for more information on making custards.

And remember those chocolate malts that we used to enjoy at the corner drug store? This old-fashioned pudding will remind you of those days. It is much, much better than those box pudding mixes from the store.

### Ingredients:

2 tablespoons cornstarch  
1/3 cup malted milk powder (we use Carnation brand usually found in the hot drink section of the grocery store)  
1/2 cup sugar  
2 1/2 cups milk  
1 large egg  
2 large egg yolks  
3/4 cup milk chocolate chips  
2 tablespoons butter  
1 teaspoon vanilla

### Directions:

1. Combine the cornstarch, malted milk powder, half of the sugar with 1/2 cup of the milk. Stir to dissolve the sugar. Add the egg and egg yolks and whisk until smooth.
2. In a heavy saucepan, cook the remaining 2 cups of milk and the remaining sugar until it boils for several minutes.
3. Slowly pour the egg mixture into the hot milk while whisking the mixture to keep it smooth. Cook until bubbles rise through the liquid and it just starts to boil. Remove from the heat.
4. Melt the chocolate chips and the butter in the microwave. Stir the melted chocolate into the hot pudding. Add the vanilla.
5. Pour the pudding into serving dishes or a casserole dish. Cover the pudding surface with waxed paper placed directly on the pudding. Let cool for one hour and then place in the refrigerator to chill.

## Southern Chess Pie

A chess pie is an old Southern pie type--like cream pies--that has been around for nearly a century. They are baked as smooth custard pies or loaded with almost anything. We looked at dozens of recipes and found chess pies with nuts, raisins, pineapple, peaches, blueberries, and chocolate. We'll give you a basic recipe and you can experiment forever.



Chess pies are usually spiked with something tart—vinegar, lemons, or bourbon. Most have dairy—buttermilk, cream, or milk—though some are labeled “transparent” with little dairy. Some have cornmeal, corn flour, or cornstarch.

We started experimenting with composites of what we found trying to stick with principles, not recipes. We ended up with the following recipe that we found very good. Instead of having a touch of tartness from lemon or vinegar, this is butterscotch flavored with brown sugar and butter. (We didn't care for the traditional lemon or vinegar with this pie.)

### Southern Chess Pie Recipe

#### Ingredients

- 1 nine-inch pie shell
  
- 4 large eggs, whisked
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 tablespoon vanilla extract
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg (optional)
  
- 1/2 cup butter
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons fine ground cornmeal
- 1/4 teaspoon salt

#### Directions

1. Bake the pie shell at 450 degrees for about ten minutes or until it just starts to turn brown on the edges. It will help the pie shell keep its shape during baking if you line the shell with aluminum foil and then place beans, rice, or pie shell

- weights in the shell to hold the crust down. If you do so, the weights will act as heat sinks and you will need to bake the shell longer.
2. Whip the eggs and brown sugar together until the sugar dissolved. Add the vanilla extract and optional nutmeg.
  3. In a saucepan, melt the butter. Stir in the cream, 1/4-cup brown sugar, cornmeal, and salt. Heat, stirring constantly, until it thickens and just starts to bubble.
  4. Dribble the hot cream mixture into the egg mixture while stirring constantly. Whisk the mixture until it is smooth. Pour the filling into the pie shell.
  5. Bake the pie for 40 to 45 minutes at 325 degrees or until it tests done when the blade of a knife is inserted in the filling one inch from the center.

Let cool on a wire rack and then refrigerate.

Serve with ice cream or whipped cream.

Baker's notes:

1. This pie was made with brown sugar. It can also be made with honey crystals or molasses crystals for some interesting renditions.
2. Feel at liberty to experiment. Many chess pies are light in color while this one is caramel-colored from the brown sugar and egg yolks. For a lighter-colored pie, substitute granulated sugar for the brown sugar and four egg whites plus two large eggs for the eggs. The pie will then be more vanilla flavored. The pie made with honey crystals will be lighter colored also and honey and vanilla is a wonderful combination. Molasses crystals will make a more traditional pie.
3. Any fine-ground cornmeal will work or even corn flour. We used corn masa mix and it worked perfectly.

## Traditional Dutch Pannekoeken

This is the basic pannekoeken. It is designed for an 11 to 12-inch Dutch baby pan or a skillet with rounded sides. This is a five ingredient-five step recipe that really goes together quickly.

### Ingredients

1/4 cup butter  
3 large eggs  
1/8 teaspoon salt  
3/4 cup milk  
3/4 cup all-purpose flour



### Directions

1. Place the butter in a Dutch Baby pan or an ovenproof skillet with rounded sides.
2. Preheat your oven to 400 degrees. Put the rack in the center, not the top, shelf. When you turn the oven on, place the pan with the butter in the oven. When the oven reaches 250 degrees the butter should be melted. Remove the pan from the oven.
3. Whisk the eggs and the salt in a medium bowl. Add the milk. Whisk in the flour until nearly smooth. Your batter is now ready.
4. Pour the batter into the pan.
5. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes or until the top starts to turn golden brown. Serve hot with your favorite syrup.

## Apple and Bacon Pannekoeken

This is a traditional pannekoeken with ingredients added. You can use this as template for other pannekoeken recipes.

### Ingredients

6 ounces of bacon fried crisply  
1 apple, peeled and cored  
1/2 red bell pepper (optional)  
1/4 cup butter  
3 large eggs  
1/8 teaspoon salt  
3/4 cup milk  
3/4 cup all-purpose flour



### Directions

1. Snip the bacon into 3/4-inch pieces. Slice the apple thinly. Dice the red pepper and steam it in the microwave for a minute to make the dices crisp-tender.
2. Place the butter in a Dutch Baby pan or an ovenproof skillet with rounded sides.
3. Preheat your oven to 400 degrees. Put the rack in the center, not the top, shelf. When you turn the oven on, place the pan with the butter in the oven. When the oven reaches 250 degrees the butter should be melted. Remove the pan from the oven.
4. Whisk the eggs and the salt in a medium bowl. Add the milk. Whisk in the flour until nearly smooth. Your batter is now ready.
5. Pour the batter into the pan. Sprinkle the toppings over the batter.
6. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes or until the top starts to turn golden brown. Serve hot with maple syrup.