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Kindred *Spirits*

Tips for food safety

Enjoying Easter eggs

How to use

left-over eggs

This recipe for herbed deviled eggs is a new twist on an old favorite:

6 hard-cooked eggs
3 tbsp. low-fat cottage cheese
2 tbsp. low-fat plain yogurt
1 tbsp. finely chopped onion
1 tsp. prepared Dijon-style mustard
½ tsp. dried parsley
½ tsp. dill weed
⅛ tsp. garlic powder
Dash hot pepper sauce
Salt and pepper to taste

Cut eggs in half. Put half the yolks in a small bowl; reserve the rest for another use or discard. With a fork, mash yolks with cottage cheese and yogurt. Stir in remaining ingredients. Fill egg halves and chill before serving.

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MU Extension contributors: Dr. Nina Chen, Saralee Bury Jamieson, Kris Jenkins, Lynda Johnson, Glenda Kinder, Susan Mills-Gray, Diana Milne and Lisa Wallace.

Easter brings opportunities for families to enjoy egg decorating, yolk painting and participating in old-fashioned Easter egg hunts. "Do not hide the same eggs you plan to eat," says Saralee Bury Jamieson, University of Missouri Extension human development specialist. "Plan to hide plastic eggs and decorate hard-boiled eggs for eating only." For a fun and enjoyable family Easter, follow these simple food safety guidelines when handling eggs.

Always use eggs that have been kept cool. Purchase eggs from a refrigerated section, not kept at room temperature in the aisle. Eggs should be held at 45 degrees F or below in the original carton until it is time to cook them. Store eggs in the main part of the refrigerator, not in the door.

Always wash your hands with hot, soapy water before and after food preparation, especially when you handle raw animal products. To prevent cross-contamination in the kitchen, always wash surfaces and cooking equipment before and after food preparation.

Always cook eggs and egg dishes thoroughly. Cook eggs until the yolks and whites are firm, or reach at least 160 degrees F. Cheesecakes, lasagna and other

egg dishes also need to reach an internal temperature of at least 160 degrees F. Although it may be tempting, refrain from tasting a mix that contains raw eggs before it is cooked properly.

Older eggs peel easier so purchase eggs for dyeing at least one week ahead of the time you plan to use them. Use only food-grade dyes for decorating. You may display decorated eggs; however, store them in the refrigerator when they are no longer in use for up to one week. Don't eat cracked eggs or eggs that have been out of the refrigerator longer than two hours.

To boil the perfect Easter egg, place eggs in a single layer in a saucepan. Add water to 1 inch above the eggs. For better dye coverage, add one tablespoon of vinegar. Cover the pan and quickly bring the water to a boil. (Boiling for a long period of time causes the yolks to have a greenish tint.) Remove from heat and let the eggs remain in the covered pan for 15 minutes. Immediately run cold water over the eggs. Refrigerate immediately.

When handled properly, eggs are a safe and nutritious food for your family.

Easter egg trivia

What you can learn about this holiday tradition

Origins: “There is some evidence that early Americans had native fowl, but it is generally believed that Columbus’ ships carried to this country the first chickens related to those now in egg production,” says Glenda Kinder, MU Extension nutrition specialist.

Food Traditions: For centuries, eggs were among the foods forbidden by the church during Lent, so it was a special treat to have them again at Easter. For people of other beliefs, the egg has long symbolized spring and the

promise of nature’s rebirth. European traditions include many types of sweet breads braided around colored eggs or decorated with hard-cooked eggs.

Fun and Games: In addition to the fun of decorating and hunting eggs at Easter, eggs can be used in games. In egg bowling, players try to roll a hard-cooked egg through a croquet wicket or wire arch. If the egg cracks, the player is disqualified. The winner is the one who can get his egg through the hoop without breaking it. Spoon racing involves running a marked distance while carrying a raw or hard-cooked egg on a spoon. The winner is whoever completes the course without dropping the egg.

Nutrition: Eggs are highly nutritious, containing a high quality protein and a wide range of vitamins and minerals in proportion to the calories. As a grandparent you may not be consuming eggs regularly because of health conditions, i.e. high blood cholesterol levels. But researchers say that three-fourths of Americans don’t need to be seriously concerned about dietary cholesterol. They can eat eggs and other cholesterol-containing foods without increasing their blood cholesterol levels.

So don’t assume you need to severely limit eggs in your grandchild’s diet. Eggs are a wholesome choice and can be a part of a healthful diet.

University of Missouri Extension

Bates County

1 N. Delaware, Butler, MO 64730
660.679.4167

Cass County

302 S. Main St., Harrisonville, MO 64701
816.380.8460

Clay County

1901 NE 48th St., Kansas City, MO 64118
816.407.3490

Henry County

100 W. Franklin, Rm 16, Clinton, MO 64735
660.885.5556

Jackson County

1106 W. Main St.
Blue Springs, Mo 64015
816.252-5051
2700 E. 18th St., Suite 240
Kansas City, MO 64127
816.482.5850

Lafayette County

14 E. 19th St., Suite 102
Higginsville, MO 64037
660.584.3658

St. Clair County

655 2nd St., Osceola, MO 64776
417.646.2419

extension.missouri.edu

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Ideas for green crafts

“Rather than shop for your kids’ springtime craft supplies, why not use materials you already have on hand?” says Diana Milne, MU Extension human development specialist. “Here’s what I found around my house and in the recycling bin: plastic whipped topping tubs, cardboard egg cartons, bread twist-ties, plastic milk jug lids, newspapers, magazines, strawberry baskets, coffee filters, clothes pins, string and ribbons and a broken tree branch.”

You can create an Easter tree using the branch. Make ornaments by decorating egg carton sections and the milk jug lids; hanging them on the tree with ribbon. Make butterflies by first coloring the coffee filters with felt markers, misting with water to allow the colors to bleed. Then pinch each coffee filter with a clothespin, fanning it out to look like butterfly wings.

With a little bit of creativity, you can provide a fun craft time for youngsters without spending a dime. Not only will you keep the green in your pocket; you’ll teach children that using items already on hand is good for keeping our environment green.