

Econo-eating: Eggs are a good buy

by Monine Strode Stebbins

What food comes in its own perfect package, can be stored in the refrigerator for a month and can be made into lots of appetizing dishes? Eggs, a really versatile protein food.

Most families spend about a third of their food budget on meat. We're all aware that we need protein but we tend to forget that there are also meat alternates that can make delicious main dishes and provide excellent sources of protein.

When you compare the cost of 20 grams of protein from various sources, the most economical ones are dry beans and eggs, as well as bread and cereal grains.

Eggs, in fact, are an excellent source of protein. They don't even have to be combined with other sources of protein to make them complete as other meat alternates do.

Although eggs are sold by the dozen, it's easy to compare the cost with meat. A dozen large eggs weigh 24 ounces or 1½ pounds. If they cost 80 cents per dozen the price is then about 53 cents per pound. There's also very little waste. Two eggs are considered a serving so you get six servings from a dozen eggs making them less than 20 cents.

Eggs provide an economical way to stretch your food dollar. Besides providing protein, eggs are a good source of Vitamin A and a fair source of iron. Egg yolks do contain quite a bit of cholesterol. People who have been advised to moderate cholesterol can use eggs up to the limit of their diet, or they can use only the whites.

There is a continued debate about cholesterol. Several factors have been linked to heart disease. Among them are high blood cholesterol levels, high blood pressure, diabetes, family history of heart disease, and obesity. Many scientists believe that the following raise the risk of heart disease: smoking, stress, physical inactivity, and excessive consumption of fat, saturated fat, cholesterol and sodium.

It upsets me when ad campaigns put a big emphasis on the fact that their product has no cholesterol when it's peanuts or fruits — both plant products. It is confusing and tends to worry people about chole-

sterol. Cholesterol is found only in animal foods. Cholesterol is a normal component of the body. In fact, our bodies manufacture it. The key to using foods that are high in cholesterol is moderation. If you have a family history of heart disease or any of the other factors, then it might be wise to consult a physician. If you do have a high blood cholesterol level, you need to be careful of the meat and fats you eat, too.

There are several delicious main dish items that can be made with eggs. Quiche, frittatas, omelets, crepes and various breakfast specialties are economical and easy to prepare. They also combine easily with a small amount of meat or

cheese. Fruits and vegetables are nice to combine in these dishes, too. It's a great way to stretch your food dollar and use your leftovers creatively.

FRITTATA

The frittata is an Italian omelet. It's like an open face omelet. You just mix the ingredients, pour them into a greased pan or baking dish and bake in the oven.

3 eggs, beaten
½ cup milk
½ to 1 cup leftovers, chopped
½ small onion chopped

½ to 1 cup cheese of your choice
1 teaspoon seasoning that goes with the leftovers

Combine ingredients, pour into greased 9-inch pie pan or baking dish. Bake at 350° for 25 to 35 minutes, until golden brown and set. One generous serving or two moderate servings.

DUTCH PUFF PANCAKE

This is like a giant popover. It makes a spectacular brunch or Sunday night light supper.

6 eggs
1 cup milk

1 cup flour
½ teaspoon salt
½ cup melted butter or margarine

Melt butter or margarine in oven at 400° in a very large, low-sided container — a large frying pan or a couple of pie pans will work. Beat eggs in a blender or mixer. Add milk, flour and salt. Beat until blended. Pour into pan with melted butter or margarine.

Bake 20 minutes at 400° then lower the temperature to 350° and bake for another 10 minutes. Serve immediately. Can be served with fruit, lemon slices and powdered sugar, or pancake syrup. Serves four.



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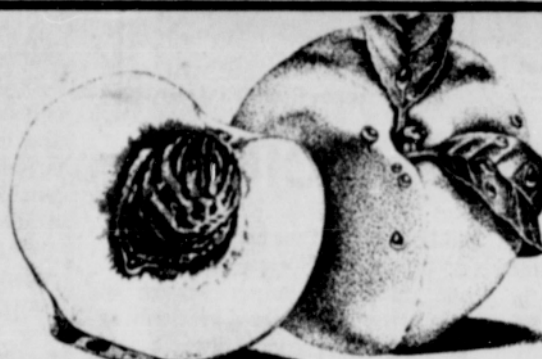


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