

5 Easy Recipes Deviled Eggs

Simmer down! Gentle treatment guarantees tender deviled eggs. BY JEREMY SAUER

IN THEORY, THE RECIPE is simple: Boil, peel, and halve eggs. Remove yolks and mash with mayonnaise and mustard. Fill white "boats" with mashed yolk mixture. In fact, many cooks find making deviled eggs bedeviling. Over the years, the test kitchen has developed a handful of tips and techniques that guarantee perfect, no-fuss deviled eggs every time.

They're called hard-cooked eggs, but be gentle with them: Overcook the eggs, either by boiling them for several minutes or dropping them into boiling water, and the whites will turn rubbery, the yolks chalky and tinged with green. Moreover, the eggs will smell sulphurous.

To avoid these problems, place the eggs in a saucepan, cover them with cold water by an inch, and bring them to a hard boil. Immediately remove the pan from the heat, cover it, and let the residual heat of the water finish cooking the eggs for exactly 10 minutes, which is just long enough for large eggs to cook through.

Pour off water from the pan and gently shake the pan so that the shells crack all over. Immediately plunge the eggs into ice water to stop them from cooking further. The water will also seep under the cracked shells, which will loosen them for easier peeling. Begin peeling from the large, more-rounded end of each egg; this end has an air pocket that lets you grasp the shell for easy removal without marring the white.

Most recipes call for mashing the cooked yolks with a fork to make the filling,

but we've never cared for the lumps in what should be a creamy mix. To make it smooth, we press the cooked yolks through a fine-mesh strainer. Mayonnaise is key, but augmenting it with a little sour cream adds flavor and silkiness. Mustard provides spice; vinegar offers tang, and the merest speck of sugar lends the merest speck of sweetness.

Deviled eggs are easy to dress up. The yolks take especially well to assertive ingredients like pickles, olives, and cheese. But nothing says winter's gone and spring has sprung like delicate fresh herbs, hence our variation for eggs with tarragon, parsley, chives, and chervil.

BASIC DEVILED EGGS Makes 1 dozen

You can use reduced-fat mayonnaise and sour cream in this recipe. To fill the eggs, a spoon works just fine, but for eggs that look their Sunday best, use a pastry bag fitted with a fluted (star) tip or make your own pastry bag (see below).

- 4 large eggs
- 2 tablespoons mayonnaise (see note)
- 1 tablespoon sour cream (see note)
- ½ teaspoon white vinegar
- ½ teaspoon spicy brown mustard (such as Golden's)
- ¼ teaspoon sugar
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper

1. **COOK EGGS** Combine 4 cups water and 4 cups ice cubes in large bowl; set aside. Place eggs in saucepan,



We push yolks through a fine-mesh sieve for an extra-creamy filling.

cover with 1 inch water, and bring to boil over high heat. Remove pan from heat, cover, and let stand 10 minutes. Pour off water from saucepan and gently shake pan back and forth to crack egg shells. Transfer eggs to ice water and cool 5 minutes.

2. **MAKE FILLING** Peel eggs and halve lengthwise. Transfer yolks to fine-mesh sieve set over medium bowl. Using spatula, press yolks through sieve into bowl. Stir in remaining ingredients until smooth.

3. **FILL** Arrange whites on serving platter. Divide yolk mixture among whites. Serve. (Egg white halves and filling mixture can be refrigerated separately for 2 days. Wrap egg whites in double layer of plastic wrap. Transfer filling mixture to zipper-lock bag, squeeze out air, and seal.)

HERBED DEVILED EGGS

You can substitute an equal amount of finely chopped watercress for the chervil.

Prepare Basic Deviled Eggs, replacing white vinegar with ½ teaspoon white wine vinegar and brown mustard with ½ teaspoon Dijon mustard. Stir 2 teaspoons each finely chopped fresh tarragon, fresh parsley, fresh chives, and fresh chervil into remaining ingredients.

SPANISH-STYLE DEVILED EGGS

For a smoky, spicy kick, use smoked rather than plain paprika.

Prepare Basic Deviled Eggs, replacing white vinegar with ½ teaspoon sherry vinegar. Stir ¼ cup finely chopped green olives with pimento, ¼ cup shredded cheddar cheese, and 1 teaspoon paprika into remaining ingredients.

DILL-PICKLED DEVILED EGGS

Avoid dried dill here. Used in this quantity, it will taste dusty and stale.

Prepare Basic Deviled Eggs, replacing white vinegar with ½ teaspoon dill pickle juice and brown mustard with ½ teaspoon yellow mustard. Stir in 1 tablespoon finely chopped dill pickles and 1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh dill with remaining ingredients.

BLUE CHEESE DEVILED EGGS

A relatively mild blue cheese like Stella Blue works best here.

Prepare Basic Deviled Eggs, replacing white vinegar with ½ teaspoon cider vinegar and brown mustard with ½ teaspoon Dijon mustard. Increase pepper to ¼ teaspoon and stir ¼ cup crumbled blue cheese into remaining ingredients.

STEP-BY-STEP Filling Deviled Eggs without a Pastry Bag

A little ingenuity can turn an ordinary plastic bag into a homemade pastry bag.



1. Set a plastic bag inside a measuring cup and fold the bag over the lip; this makes it easy to spoon the filling into the bag.



2. Once you've filled the bag with the yolk mixture, use scissors to snip about ½ inch off of one corner of the bag.



3. Twist the top of bag and squeeze to force filling to the snipped corner. Fill egg whites by squeezing filling through the hole.