

How to Fry an Egg: 4 Ways

The names for fried eggs describe two things: whether the egg is flipped and how set the yolk becomes. Once you control the pan heat, the four common styles are easy to repeat.

PREP 1 MIN • COOK 2–6 MIN • SERVINGS 1 EGG • LEVEL EASY

Before You Start

Fried eggs are not ideal for make-ahead cooking. Have the pan, fat and seasonings ready and cook them just before serving.

What You Need

- 1 large egg
- 1 tsp butter or cooking oil, or enough to lightly coat the pan
- Salt and black pepper, to taste
- Small nonstick or well-seasoned skillet
- Thin spatula

How to Do It

1. Heat the skillet over medium-low heat and add enough butter or oil to lightly coat the surface. Crack in the egg.

Sunny-Side Up



1. Cook without flipping for about 2–4 minutes, until the white is set and the yolk remains runny.
2. Covering the pan briefly can help set the top of the white without flipping.

Over Easy



1. Cook the first side about 2–3 minutes until the white is mostly set.
2. Flip gently and cook the second side about 15–30 seconds so the yolk stays runny.

Over Medium



1. Cook the first side about 2–3 minutes, flip gently, and cook the second side about 45–90 seconds.
2. The yolk should be thicker and partially set but still soft in the center.

Over Hard



Cook the first side about 2–3 minutes, flip, and cook the second side about 2–3 minutes or until the yolk is fully set.

Season and serve immediately. Adjust timing slightly for your pan, burner and preferred yolk texture.

Tips

Medium-low heat gives the white time to set without making the bottom tough or browned before the yolk reaches the texture you want. Slide a thin spatula fully under the egg before flipping. If serving someone at higher risk from foodborne illness, use pasteurized eggs or cook the egg until both white and yolk are fully set.

Jane’s Note

Keep the heat at medium-low and give the pan a minute to warm up. If the edges start bubbling and browning right away, the pan is too hot.

Storage

Fried eggs are best served immediately. If leftovers must be stored, refrigerate promptly and reheat until hot throughout.

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