

three very different degrees of digestibility. Hard-boiled eggs are more easily digested if they are finely divided. This is done when the yolk is rubbed through a wire sieve, and the powdered yolk can be employed in a variety of ways to increase the nourishment of invalids' fare.

When eggs are kept for any length of time they undergo several changes. There is a loss of water, which means a loss of weight, so that stale eggs will float in a 10 per cent. solution of common salt, while fresh eggs sink. The albumen becomes less digestible, and chemical changes are set up by the action of phosphoric acid of the yolk on alkaline sulphides of the white, resulting in the formation of sulphuretted hydrogen, which gas gives rise to the unpleasant smell of a bad egg. The latter change takes place in a small degree in eggs which are boiled for a long time, and accounts for their strong flavour. It is easy to see that eggs which are given to children and invalids should be perfectly fresh.

Hens' eggs are the most commonly used. Turkeys' eggs are more scarce, but they are as delicate as those of the hen. The eggs of the Guinea fowl are smaller than those of the hen, but they are delicate in flavour and easy of digestion. Plovers' eggs are highly regarded by the epicure, but as they are generally served hard-boiled, they are not suited to invalids. The eggs of water birds are much stronger in flavour, and particularly those of the duck. They are not highly regarded, excepting for ordinary culinary purposes.

Raw eggs are generally added to milk in order to increase its nutritive value. One egg represents as much nourishment as half a glass of milk, so that a glass of egg and milk represents the nourishment of a glass and a-half of milk. In preparing egg and milk, the egg should be broken into a basin, and the two chalazæ or cords which attach the thin membrane of the yolk to the membranes of the white should be removed. Sugar should be added, as the grain helps in the beating of the egg. A Dover egg-whisk is useful, as the sharp edges of the wheels are better able to divide the egg substance than the round wires of the ordinary whisk. When sufficiently beaten it should be put into a tumbler and filled up with milk. Egg and milk makes a convenient vehicle for the conveyance of stimulants.

Raw eggs are useful in the first-aid treatment of poisoning. They should be swallowed at once to dilute the poison which has entered the stomach, and an emetic should be administered as soon as possible afterwards in all cases, excepting in those of corrosive poisons, which can be distinguished by the marks on the lips.

Next to raw eggs in order of digestibility are those which are lightly boiled. An ordinary hen's egg weighs 2 oz., and should be boiled for three minutes. It should be dropped gently into the water by

means of a spoon, and the lid should be kept on the saucepan while it is boiling. There are two methods of cooking eggs which do away with the raw taste, and yet do not harden the albumen. The first consists in putting the egg into cold water and bringing it to the boil, removing the egg as soon as the water boils. The other is almost as simple. Boiling water should be poured into a basin, and when the basin is hot the water should be thrown away. The eggs should be placed in the basin and rolled about until they are slightly warmed. The basin should then be filled with boiling water, and covered with a thick plate, and at the end of twelve minutes the eggs will be lightly cooked.

Poached eggs are light and are less difficult to cook to the exact degree than boiled eggs, because the progress can be watched. An egg-poacher (or a frying-pan) should be nearly filled with water and allowed to boil. The egg, previously broken into a cup, should be dropped into the boiling water, and, when the white is lightly set, the egg should be lifted from the water with an egg-slice. A tablespoonful of vinegar to a pint of water will help to make the albumen more easy of digestion.

Scrambled eggs are useful in the sick-room, because they can be served before the albumen is too hard; but they should not be served with too much butter for an invalid, as it is well known that food which is coated with fat is not easily acted upon by the gastric juice. The following is a recipe suitable for invalids: Two new-laid eggs, two tablespoonfuls of milk, half an ounce of butter, and a pinch of salt. Break the eggs and remove the cords. Put the eggs in a small enamelled saucepan and add the other ingredients. Place the saucepan over a slow fire, and with a wooden spoon stir the ingredients in one direction until the mixture is just set. Serve the eggs at that moment, remembering always the effect of continued heat on albumen.

There is nothing in cookery so easy to make nor so hard to cook as custards. The making consists of beating eggs and sugar and adding milk. The proper proportion is one egg in a teacup, and the remainder of milk. The cooking is a more difficult matter. The lightest form of custard is a steamed one. The mixture should be placed in a greased basin, and stood in a saucepan of boiling water, which should reach half-way up the basin. The bubbling of the water will cease when the cold basin is put in, and it must not recommence so long as the custard remains in. As soon as the custard is set, it can be served, and will be found to be smooth and free from bubbles. It is the bubbling of the water which causes the bubbles in a custard, and their presence shows that too great a heat has been used. In the same way, only moderate heat must be used in baking a custard. The ingredients and mode of preparation are the same as for steamed custard, but the heat of the oven should never be so

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