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PRESERVING EGGS

Four simple ways to preserve some of this spring's bountiful supply of eggs for home cooking next fall are suggested by H. L. Shrader, extension poultry specialist of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. To families who live near a freezer locker plant Mr. Shrader recommends freezing a supply of eggs for home use. Other families may preserve eggs at home to advantage if they live near enough to the source of supply to obtain eggs the day they are laid, and if they have a cool cellar or other cool place to store them.

Mineral oil or waterglass, both sold at drug stores, or "dry ice", sold at many ice cream plants, are three substances that may be used to preserve eggs at home. The oil and the waterglass preserve eggs by sealing the pores in the shell through which spoilage organisms enter. Waterglass seals so thoroughly that an egg preserved this way must have its shell pricked with a pin before boiling or it will explode in the hot water. Dry ice gives off carbon dioxide gas, a familiar preservative. Eggs sealed in a jar of this gas keep well for months. To be preserved successfully by any of these substances, however, eggs must be infertile, as most commercial eggs are, and as fresh as possible, preferably not over 24 hours old. They should also have clean, sound, strong shells. Eggs with soiled, cracked or even slightly checked shells will not keep.

Dipping eggs in mineral oil is a simple, inexpensive way to preserve them for several months. Use the lightest grade mineral oil the drug store sells because heavy oil makes the shell greasy and collects dust. Warm the oil to thin it but have it no hotter than the hand can stand with comfort. Eggs keep best if they are oiled the day they are laid, but they should not be oiled until they have been laid at least 4 hours. Put several eggs in a wire basket,

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dip the basket down into the oil, drain, then pack the oiled eggs in clean baskets, crates or cases in a cool cellar.

A very common household method of preserving eggs is to put them down in a solution of waterglass or sodium silicate, a clear liquid sold at drug stores. One quart of waterglass is enough to preserve 14 or 15 dozen eggs. Into a 5-gallon crock or galvanized can, thoroughly cleaned and scalded, pour 9 quarts of water which has been boiled and then cooled. Stir in the quart of waterglass. Place the eggs in this solution carefully so as not to crack shells. Keep the eggs in waterglass in a cool place, and make sure the liquid covers the eggs at least an inch at all times. More eggs may be added from time to time, or more of the solution added as it evaporates. A cover over the top helps prevent evaporation.

A third and more unusual method to preserve eggs at home is to seal them in glass fruit jars filled with carbon dioxide gas . "Dry ice" gives off carbon dioxide as it melts, but must be used with care because it can cause burns or even explosions. Always handle dry ice with tongs or paper so that it does not come in contact with the skin. For preserving eggs with this material use 2-quart size glass fruit jars with rubber rings and screw tops. Adjust the rings on clean jars, then into each jar drop 2 pieces of dry ice about the size of walnuts. Put as many eggs in the jar as it will hold. When the ice stops fuming, and the jar is filled with white vapor, screw on the top tight and set away in a cool place. The gas does not leak out of the jar easily so eggs keep well for a number of months. Once the jar is opened, however, the eggs are no longer surrounded by the preserving gas so they should be used within a few days.

Though home preserving by these methods provides a supply of cooking eggs for a later season, the eggs do gradually lose their very fresh quality over the months. Eggs preserved in a freezer locker keep their freshness much longer. For freezing, eggs are removed from the shell and put into clean baking powder cans or other tight tins or special vaporproof containers. Whites and yolks may be frozen separately if desired. Whites are ideal for freezing, but yolks must be beaten and have sweetening or salt added to keep them from becoming gummy when thawed. Add 1 tablespoon of corn sirup, honey or sugar sirup to 2 cups of egg yolks before freezing.