

Eggs En Cocotte (Eggs Baked in the Oven)

This recipe is one of my favorites for the most luxuriously creamy, velvety eggs I've ever had. It is elegant and yet super easy to make, especially for company. You can get creative with it and put anything you like in the bottom, although I would suggest pre-cooking it first. My favorite is lightly sauteed spinach, mushrooms and leek with a hint of swiss cheese. Enjoy!

INGREDIENTS:

- Butter or olive oil
- Large eggs (1 per dish)
- Salt
- Pepper
- Grated nutmeg (optional)
- Milk or cream (optional but recommended)
- Optional Extras: minced fresh herbs, grated cheese, sautéed mushrooms, steamed greens, caramelized onions, crumbled bacon, spring onions, diced tomatoes, tomato sauce, or any other little bits or spoonfuls that would be tasty with eggs.

EQUIPMENT:

Small ramekins (2-3 ounces for baking single eggs, 5-6 ounces for baking two eggs)
Roasting pan, cake pan, or other oven-safe dish with sides

METHOD:

- 1. Prepare the Oven and Hot Water Bath:** Pre-heat the oven to 375°F. Boil water for the hot water bath
- 2. Prepare the Ramekins:** Rub the insides of the ramekins with butter or olive oil. If you're adding any extras like grated cheese or veggies, add a spoonful or two to each ramekin. My favorite is lightly sauteed mushrooms, spinach and leek/onion with a little bit of shredded swiss cheese.
- 3. Crack the Eggs into the Ramekins:** Crack one egg into each ramekin (or two eggs if using larger ramekins). If you'd like a richer baked egg, and some extra insurance against the yolk drying out in the oven, add approx a tablespoonful of milk or cream to each ramekin.
- 4. Sprinkle with Salt and Pepper:** Sprinkle each egg with a pinch of salt and pepper and the nutmeg if using.
- 5. Transfer Ramekins to the Baking Dish:** Arrange all the ramekins in the baking dish. Some people put a towel in the bottom of the pan to avoid the dishes sliding around. Pour the hot/boiled water into the baking dish to come partway up the sides of the ramekins. Very hot tap water is fine, or you can heat water on the stove until it's just starting to steam.
- 6. Bake the Eggs:** Transfer the baking dish with the ramekins of eggs to the middle rack of the oven. Bake until the whites are set: 12-15 minutes for runny yolks, 15-18 minutes for soft-cooked yolks, or 20 minutes for hard-cooked yolks. Remove the ramekins with oven mitts and eat immediately with toast for dipping or a lovely side salad.