

hard boiled eggs

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Hard-Boiled Eggs

The cheapest complete protein there is and the most portable item in [Cold Meals](#) — an egg cooked in its shell keeps a week and needs no container.

The timings

Large eggs, lowered into **already-boiling** water, then simmered:

Minutes	Result
6	Liquid yolk, set white — jammy, for ramen and bowls
7	Soft-set centre — best for a cold lentil bowl
9	Fully set, still bright yellow, still moist
10	Firm throughout — the egg salad sandwich egg
13+	Chalky, and the grey ring appears

Ice water immediately, for at least five minutes. This stops the carryover cooking and shrinks the egg slightly away from the shell.

The grey-green ring

Iron sulfide, formed where the yolk's iron meets sulfur from the white when the egg is held too hot for too long. It tastes sulfurous. It is entirely a timing-and-cooling fault, not an egg-quality one.

Peeling

Use eggs that are a week or two old, not fresh ones. As an egg ages its albumen pH rises and the inner membrane releases from the shell; genuinely fresh eggs are miserable to peel. Starting the eggs in boiling water rather than cold is the other reliable trick — it sets the outer white fast and it releases cleanly. Peel under running water, from the fat end where the air cell sits.

Keeping

In the shell, one week refrigerated. **Peeled, 2 days.** Made into egg salad, 2 days — that is a firm limit, not a cautious one.

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