

# mayonnaise

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## Mayonnaise

An emulsion of oil in egg yolk, held together by the lecithin and proteins in the yolk, sharpened with vinegar or lemon. It does two distinct jobs in cold food and it is worth keeping them separate: it **binds** a salad, and it **waterproofs** bread.

## The myth worth killing

**Mayonnaise is not what spoils a picnic.** Commercial mayonnaise is made with pasteurised egg and acidified to around pH 4.0 — below the level at which *Salmonella* and most spoilage bacteria can grow. It is a more hostile environment than the chicken, egg or tuna it is dressing. What spoils a bound salad is the protein in it, held in the danger zone; the full rule is on [Cold Meals](#).

Homemade mayonnaise with raw egg is a genuinely different case and should be treated as a two-day fridge item.

## Types

- **American style** (Hellmann's, Duke's) — neutral oil, distilled vinegar. Duke's has no added sugar, which

is why it is the Southern default for a [chicken salad sandwich](#).

- **Kewpie** — Japanese, made with **yolks only** plus rice vinegar and MSG. Richer, tangier, distinctly savoury. The right choice for [cold rice bowl](#) and *tamago sando*.
- **Aioli** — properly garlic and oil emulsified without egg; in most shops, a garlic mayonnaise.

## Making it

One yolk, 1 tsp Dijon, 200 ml neutral oil added drop by drop then in a thread, finished with lemon or vinegar and salt. **If it splits**, start a fresh yolk in a clean bowl and beat the broken mixture into it a spoonful at a time. Everything at room temperature; a cold yolk is the usual cause.

## Keeping

Commercial, months unopened, 2 months refrigerated after opening. **Homemade, 2 days.**

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