

How to Cook the Perfect Omelet

Few stovetop skills can reward a humble cook with as much eating pleasure as the ability to make a decent omelet. A properly made omelet will be a little creamy in the center and perhaps lightly browned on the outside. It can be filled or plain, sauced or unsauced. The elegance is in the making, and making an omelet is easier than you might think. A slope-sided 8-inch frying pan is just right for a 3-egg omelet; use a 7-inch pan for a 2-egg version. Purists use seasoned steel or aluminum pans, but lots of us find it easier to use a nonstick pan. Gently warm serving plates just before making the omelet(s) by rinsing them with hot water, then drying with a towel.



Recipe picture

Ingredients:

3 large eggs, at room temperature
Pinch salt and freshly ground pepper
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
1 tablespoon chopped fresh herbs (basil, tarragon, oregano, thyme, etc.)



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By Diane Morgan

In a small bowl, using a fork, beat eggs with salt and pepper until fluffy. Over medium-high heat melt butter in a frying pan. When butter has stopped foaming and before it burns, add eggs. Allow a few seconds for eggs to coagulate on the bottom, and then use your fork to give eggs a quick stir. Allow a new “skin” to form on the bottom. Tilt the pan so that the omelet slides away from you toward the edge of the pan, and either push-jerk the pan (see Cook’s Notes) so that the omelet folds over on itself or use a rubber spatula to fold it over. Allow to cook a few seconds to brown lightly, then turn or flip it over to brown lightly on the other side. When both sides are set and the center still feels soft--not firm or dry--slide your new-born omelet onto its plate and serve at once. Garnish with the fresh herb.

Serves 1.

Cook’s Notes

The technique of “push-jerking” food in a slope-sided frying pan can make it easier to cook a great omelet, to flip fried eggs, and to toss vegetables while they sauté. Practice by putting a cup of dried beans or rice in your pan and repair to the back porch. Hold the pan level, push it away from you and then jerk it just a little back toward you, raising the outside edge of the pan just slightly as you jerk. Sounds tough, but soon you’ll be able to mix-toss your practice beans or rice without spilling much. That’s the right time to apply for the egg-cooking job at the corner

cafe!

Variations are limitless. Add 1/2 cup of any filling you like, while the second skin is forming and before the omelet is folded. Try shredded cheese, cooked chopped potatoes, sautéed onions, sliced scallion tops, diced fresh tomatoes, diced leftover bits of meat or shellfish. Just open the refrigerator door and use your imagination.