

How to Store Eggs Without Refrigeration

associatedcontent.com/article/2012292/how_to_store_eggs_without_refrigeration.html

It has only been for the past fifty years that refrigerators have been a staple in kitchens across America. Prior to that, fresh foods were stored without refrigeration in a variety of different ways. Households had to store seasonal produce, meats and other homestead products like milk and cheese to tide them over through the winter. Refrigeration is still the best way to preserve eggs, but in the absence of refrigeration, there are still several easy methods that work well.

Storing fresh eggs without refrigeration was a very important task as hens lay more when days are long and begin to shut down production in the winter. Because eggs were a staple not only as a breakfast item but also as an ingredient in many homestead staples, spreading them out throughout the year was a critical skill.

While it may seem like being able to store fresh eggs without refrigeration has no application in the modern kitchen, it can make a huge difference in emergency situations such as hurricanes and ice storms when power is out for extended lengths of time.

There are many ways to store eggs without refrigeration, some of which work better or last longer than others. Mother Earth News performed a [comparative experiment](#) in 1977 to test the different "old school" methods of egg preservation alongside refrigerating eggs. Their observations on each method appear below.

No Treatment

An egg that is not subjected to some form of preservation, whether refrigeration or one of the room-temperature methods below, can last fresh longer than you may think. One of the important determinants of longevity is whether the egg has been washed or not. Eggs are coated with a natural "bloom" which protects them against air and bacteria. In nature, this is to allow the eggs to develop into chicks successfully. Washing the egg strips it of its natural bloom and leaves it vulnerable to the elements. The Mother Earth News study found that homestead eggs that retained their natural bloom stayed fresh for more than three months on average without refrigeration although the quality and texture began to decline after about two months. Commercial eggs that had been washed lasted a far shorter time.

Lard

There are two "old timey" methods of preserving the freshness of eggs with lard. One is to immerse the eggs in lard in a crock. The other is to simply coat the eggs in lard. The theory behind the method is that egg shells are porous and allow in air and bacteria over time, which spoils the egg. Covering the egg with lard prevents access through the pores and keeps the egg fresher longer. Coating the eggs in a thin film of lard using a paint or pastry brush uses less lard overall so this is the preferred method of the two. Storing the coated eggs in a cool dark location will preserve them longer than keeping them out on the counter. Mother Earth News found that both methods were effective for four to five months on unwashed eggs.

Wet or Dry Sand

This is also a time-tested method of storing eggs. Take a crate and layer the eggs in it between layers of sand to completely cover the eggs and protect them from jostling against each other. Dampen the soil slightly if wanted and store the crate in a cool dry location. While this method has been used for over a hundred years, Mother Earth News found that it was the least effective method of storing fresh eggs without refrigeration, possibly because it does not completely seal the pores of the eggs or because the sand can introduce bacteria into the eggs.

Waterglass

Waterglass is another name for sodium silicate, a chemical compound that has many uses. Waterglass has been used for egg preservation since the turn of the last century and is one of the most successful preservation methods available. When mixed with water, waterglass forms a gelatinous substance in which eggs are completely immersed and stored in a crock in a dark, cool location. Waterglass can preserve eggs for five months or more without refrigeration and can be reused for subsequent batches of eggs. Waterglass works like lard in sealing up the pores of the egg and preventing air and bacteria from entering. It is easy to store and can be made up into solution as needed.