

Pasteurized Eggs?

If you haven't seen them yet, they are on their way to a store near you - raw eggs, in the shell, but all ready pasteurized! They've been on the market in other states for awhile. Now a major grocery chain in Florida has signed on to carry them too. Keep your eyes open for them.

They are raw eggs. You can use them to bake a cake, you can fry them or boil them. So what's different about these eggs? They have been treated to a low temperature process that effectively pasteurizes them, the same way all our milk is pasteurized. The eggs are heated just enough to kill bacteria, but not enough to cook the egg itself. There are no preservatives or anything injected into the egg, just the mild heating. But the result is that these eggs are guaranteed to not have inside them any Salmonella or other bacteria that could make us sick.

So, they are much safer for any high-risk person. That means that small children, or very elderly persons, can eat them without risk. It means that pregnant women, people who have had chemotherapy or even an organ transplant can eat a soft scrambled egg without worrying about Salmonella food poisoning.

It also means that we can all dare to make Caesar salad dressing with a raw egg again. We can make homemade ice cream with raw eggs. We can have sunny-side up or soft-boiled eggs. We could dare to eat raw cookie dough again without worrying about getting sick. We could even make real egg nog for the holidays! None of these should be eaten when made with regular, un-pasteurized eggs.

It does NOT mean that we can leave the eggs sitting on the counter, or in the trunk of the car for hours. These eggs still need to be refrigerated, and handled carefully. Bacteria that get

onto the shell could still manage to get inside and spoil the eggs. Eggs have lots of protein and lots of moisture inside, which makes them great places for bacteria to grow. We still need to handle them carefully.

And once these eggs are boiled, they will still need to be eaten within the next two days, the same as regular eggs. Boiled eggs do not keep as well as raw eggs, and these are no different.

So, be sure to check the label. If it says 'Pasteurized', go ahead and make a sunny-side up egg. If not, flip it over and cook till it's hard.