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How Long Can I Keep Eggs?

You do read the date on the egg carton, don't you? It's on the side or top of every carton. If USDA has their way, the date and safe handling information will soon be on the inside too, so that every time you open the carton you will see it. But, what does it mean?

The date is a 'sell-by' date. That means it's the last date that the eggs should be in the store. It is usually one month after the eggs were laid. The standard recommendation is that eggs are good for at least one month. Plus, the grocery wants you to be able to use them, and be perfectly satisfied for at least several weeks after you buy them. They know if you're not happy, you will ask for your money back!

Recently the USDA took a look at how long eggs really were good to use. They checked if the eggs had bacteria growing on or in them, and if the egg whites would still make good meringue and angel food cakes. Instead of only 4 weeks, they found that the eggs were still completely safe, and still made excellent angel food cakes as long as 10 weeks after they were laid. That's 2 ½ months later!

Remember, eggs should not be left unrefrigerated for more than 2 hours at any time. And, boiled eggs don't keep as long as fresh eggs. Once an egg is hard cooked it should only be kept for 7 days, and must be refrigerated the same as raw eggs.

But the good news is that clean raw eggs can last for 2 ½ months. So don't waste good money by throwing eggs away the day after the date on the carton. They'll still be good for another 6 weeks as long as they are kept refrigerated.