

Deviled eggs know no single season

By Katie Workman

Deviled eggs know no single season or demographic. They are blissfully democratic appetizers. Everyone is happy to see them, sophisticated people shed their cool. You can't be annoyed when there are deviled eggs around; it would be like being irritated in the presence of a puppy or a rainbow. I have added all sorts of extra ingredients to deviled eggs over the years. Cumin, goat cheese, avocado, za'atar, lemon, capers. I have topped them with all kinds of extras: minced jalapenos, sprigs of fresh herbs, sesame seeds and so on.

But in the end, we all come back to the basic deviled egg. It's like how you might admire someone you love all done up in a fancy outfit, but then remember you really like them best in a T-shirt and broken-in jeans. In other news, I have finally learned the best way to peel egg shells easily, and also to get a perfectly cooked yolk, without that unattractive green ring. If that's not a kitchen game changer, I don't know what is.



CLASSIC DEVILED EGGS

Ingredients

Makes 24 deviled egg halves

Serves 12

40 minutes start to finish

1 dozen large eggs

1/3 cup mayonnaise

2 teaspoons Dijon mustard

A few dashes of hot sauce to taste, such as Tabasco or Sriracha

1 tablespoon finely minced shallot

Paprika or minced chives for sprinkling

Preparation

Bring to a boil over high heat a large saucepan of water about 3 inches deep (enough to cover the eggs, remembering the water will rise when the eggs are added). One by one, lower the eggs into the boiling water, using a small ladle or tablespoon to place

them gently on the bottom of the pot. Allow the water to boil for 30 seconds, then remove from the heat, cover, and let the eggs sit in the hot water for 10 minutes.

While the eggs are sitting in the hot water, fill a large bowl with water and a copious amount of ice. After 10 minutes, drain the eggs and transfer them to the ice bath for about 10 minutes. Remove them from the ice bath; they will be cooled but not completely. Tap them lightly on the counter in several places, and give them a quick roll to crackle up the shells; then peel carefully. Another tip for easy egg-peeling is to do it while they are submerged in water.

Cut the eggs in half lengthwise. Carefully remove all of the yolks into the bowl of a food processor (or a medium-size mixing bowl), making sure to keep the white parts intact. Place the egg whites on a serving platter, scoop side up. Add the mayonnaise, Dijon mustard, hot sauce, shallot, salt and pepper to the yolks.

Pulse the mixture if you want it to be a bit coarse, or let it run if you are looking for super-smooth. Or, if you prefer, mash in a bowl with a fork until smooth and well blended.

For the most elegant deviled eggs, transfer the filling to a pastry bag with a large-opening tip if you have it, and pipe it in decoratively. Or, for a fast, easy and still pretty way to fill deviled eggs, fill a sturdy zipper-top bag with the yolk mixture, cut a small hole in one corner and squeeze the mixture into the whites. Or simply scoop the filling into the egg whites with a spoon, which is functional and efficient, if not as showy. Whatever works. Sprinkle the eggs with paprika. You can make these several hours ahead and store them in the fridge loosely covered with plastic wrap.