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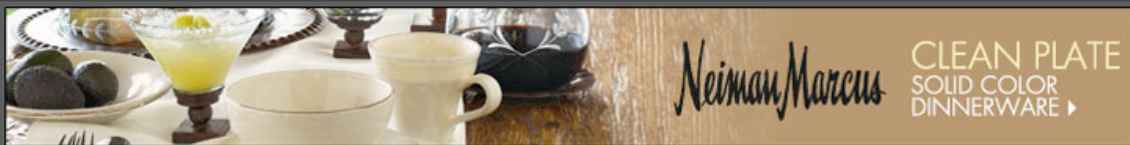
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Bacon & Eggs

By [Melissa Kirsch](#) & [Josh Ozersky](#) Published Jun 1, 2008

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How to Tell One Egg From Another...

Two experts—a nutritionist and a chef—evaluate the staple for health and deliciousness.

An egg isn't just an egg. Not when you have to parse the differences between free-range and cage-free, jumbo and extra-large, organic and omega-3 DHA. In an effort to demystify the egg-buying process, we grabbed four cartons from a Food Emporium and four from the [Union Square Greenmarket](#) and brought them to the authorities. Dr. Jeffery Morrison, a nutrition specialist, explained each egg's health benefits. George Weld, the chef-owner of Egg in Williamsburg, scrambled them up. *By Melissa Kirsch*

THE SUPERMARKET



\$2.99/dozen

AMERICA'S CHOICE JUMBO EGGS

Like every jumbo egg, each of these contains 8 grams of protein (compared with 7 grams in an extra-large egg) and about 2 grams of saturated fat (versus 1.5 grams in an extra-large). The chickens are likely raised in crowded cages and, said Morrison, fed the cheapest grain feed available. They made for a pale-yellow,



\$5.69/dozen

HORIZON ORGANIC EXTRA-LARGE BROWN EGGS

Horizon's organic eggs come from cage-free chickens whose feed is devoid of animal by-products, pesticides, antibiotics, and synthetic fertilizer. All good things, said Morrison, though organic feed doesn't necessarily make for a nutritionally superior egg. (Plus they cost about 50 percent more than the America's



\$4.49/dozen

EGGLAND'S BEST LARGE CAGE-FREE EGGS

A lot of chicken feed is corn-based, which provides the birds with calories but very little nutrition. Eggland's Best supplements its feed with alfalfa and sea kelp, which makes for an egg higher in vitamin E and cardio-protective omega-3 fatty acids, and lower in saturated fat. They're cheaper than the Horizons, but



\$5.99/dozen

GOLD CIRCLE FARMS OMEGA-3 DHA EGGS

The best of the store-bought eggs. Weld praised their buttery flavor, Morrison their nutrition profile. The yolks are rich and dark, which indicates high levels of DHA (a type of omega-3 fatty acid), vitamin A, and other antioxidants. "The myth that egg yolks increase cholesterol has been debunked," said Morrison. "Unless you

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watery scramble. "This looks gross," observed Weld. And the taste was equally uninspiring.

Choice jumbos.) Weld wasn't blown away by the taste, calling them "bland."

scramble on the runny side. Okay for omelettes, in a pinch.

have diabetes, one to two eggs a day should not present any health problems."

THE GREENMARKET



\$4-\$7/dozen

STONE ARCH FARMS

Stone Arch's pastured chickens spend most of their time outdoors eating protein-heavy grasses, seeds, and bugs, in addition to the usual grain mix. "When chickens eat the food found where they're living, it changes the nutrition and flavor of the yolk for the better," said Morrison. Sure enough, the egg whites retain their shape when cracked, and the yolks are strong—perfect for poaching. Available Fridays and Saturdays.



\$6/dozen

FLYING PIGS FARM

Our Greenmarket winner. These pastured eggs carry all the nutritional benefits of the Stone Arch eggs, and they had the deepest, creamiest flavor of all those sampled. "They're so rich that using them for scrambled eggs could be kind of overwhelming," said Weld. "But if you're doing something special, like scrambled eggs for dinner or cooking an egg in a salad, they'd be amazing." Available Fridays and Saturdays.



\$10/dozen

VIOLET HILL FARM

Though shell color has zero effect on taste or nutrition, these eggs earn points for sheer attractiveness. Violet Hill crossbreeds its pastured chickens to create eggs with russet, olive-green, and even speckled shells. They taste as good as they look: "This has the best mouthfeel of all the eggs," said Weld. "It doesn't have a super-deep flavor, but I'd definitely call it a standout." Available Saturdays.



\$3.50-\$4.25/dozen

KNOLL KREST FARM

Knoll Krest feeds its chickens a grain mix with occasional carrot and spinach pulp left over from juicing, all of which boosts vitamin content. The yolks hold their dome shape well when cracked—another sign of a healthful egg. Weld was impressed: "I feel like I could hit these yolks with the spatula and they wouldn't break." Plus they're well priced for everyday frying. Available Wednesdays and Saturdays.

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