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DONNA ERICKSON'S BEST BITES

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Make Deviled Eggs for Fourth of July and Summer Gatherings

Nothing sparks memories of family picnics and barbecue get-togethers like a platter of bright yellow-and-white deviled eggs! Sometimes dressed up with a dusting of paprika and capers or fancy sprigs of garden dill and chives on top for the yum of it, they welcome all ages to the buffet table to taste and enjoy.

Deviled eggs are a homemade dish involving several steps. You may take a shortcut by buying precooked and peeled hard-boiled eggs at some markets, but for most families, the basics begin with boiling the eggs just right.

Here's my standard method for making perfect hard-cooked eggs: Place eggs in a medium saucepan and cover with cold water 1 inch above the eggs. Bring to a full rolling boil on medium-high heat (no lid). Turn off heat, cover the pan, and let eggs sit for 10 minutes.

Immediately plunge the eggs in a bowl of cold water (I add a few ice cubes) to chill them rapidly so that the eggs release easily from the shell when peeling. Remove from water. Refrigerate eggs, or peel for this recipe.

DEVILED EGGS

Makes 12

- 6 large hard-cooked eggs, peeled
- 3 tablespoons mayonnaise
- 2 teaspoons of prepared mustard

depending on taste, or 1/2 teaspoon dry mustard

- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon ground black pepper
- Paprika (optional garnish)
- Sprigs of parsley, chives, or finely chopped scallions (optional garnishes)

Cut eggs lengthwise in half and remove the yolks. Set whites aside on a serving platter. Mash the yolks in a mixing bowl with a fork or pastry blender. Stir in mayonnaise and seasonings, and continue to mix until smooth.

Spoon or pipe mixture with a star tip (for a fancy presentation) into the egg-white halves and dust with paprika, if desired. Let kids top with parsley, chives or scallions. Or create a unique garnish using family favorites, such as sliced grape tomatoes, bacon bits, smoked salmon, pickle relish, capers, or grated cheddar cheese.



Cook's Note: Substitute mayonnaise with 3 tablespoons plain hummus, or make a half-and-half mixture of sour cream and Greek yogurt. Add a few drops of Tabasco or vinegar for an extra kick.

Donna Erickson creates relationships and community through food and fun. Find more to nourish and delight you at www.donnaerickson.com.

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