

# Path to Healthy Living



## Keeping Your Mind & Body Going in the Cold Winter Months

As the weather gets colder it is often difficult to keep busy. The streets and sidewalks may be icy. It is cloudy and cold. Who wants to go outside? It is important to keep active in both mind and body to be sure we are ready to get out once the weather warms up. There is a lot we can do to keep going during the winter months. Here are some things to keep you and your friends busy until spring.

**Get Moving** When the weather is cold one of the best ways to spend the day is curled up with a good book or finding a good movie to watch. To keep from being sedentary, get up and move around the house at the end of each chapter or during commercials. Maybe go up and down the stairs or go to the other room to stretch. Even little things help to keep from being sedentary and keep those muscles moving. Or try more structured exercise by following an online walking video, chair exercises or yoga videos.

**Grow something green** Even when it is cold outside, there are plenty of plants that grow well indoors during the winter. It could be as easy as a quick trip to your local home and garden store on one of those nice days. Doing a bit of indoor gardening is a great way to relax while getting your muscles moving. You could even grow some herbs to use in your favorite meal.

**Challenge your friends to a board game!** On one of those cold days, how about an afternoon with friends rolling the dice and moving around the board. There is nothing like keeping your mind working while trying to figure out how to beat your friends. It could be something fun like a crazy game of Shoots and Ladders or really getting the brain working with a game of chess, Scrabble or Monopoly.

**Get crafty with your memories.** As we move through life, we tend to collect a lot of photos and mementos. How about spending time sifting through some of your most cherished memories and experiences while getting creative and putting it all together in a scrapbook that you can share with your family or friends.

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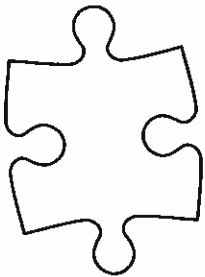
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**Color your world** Something that has grown in popularity in recent years is coloring books for adults. They can be found in a lot of places these days from the grocery store to your local bookstore. Grab some colored pencils or pens and make something beautiful. Coloring has been found to be a great stress reliever and helps to keep hand-eye coordination sharp.

**Write a letter** In these days of email and text messaging, sitting down and writing is something that is going the way of the VCR or cassette player. If you ask younger generations, they may not even know what these things are. Imagine their surprise if an old-fashioned letter from you showed up in the mailbox. Maybe you could even start writing regularly. Sitting down and putting words to paper, really thinking about what you want to say is a great way to focus your thoughts. If you really want a challenge do not correct anything but start over if the words do not land on the paper right.

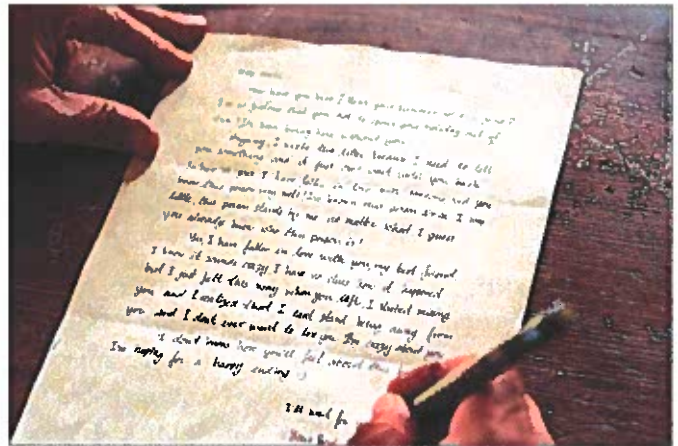


**Puzzle it out** Putting your mind to work on making all the pieces go can take up a lot of time and keep your mind busy during those cold winter months. Challenge yourself with difficult puzzles. Do not stop there though. Sudoku, word searches, and crossword are great also.

**Heat up the kitchen** How long has it been since you got into the kitchen and really went to town? Often times, for convenience and ease we tend to eat a lot of the same things over and over. One last suggestion for ways to keep yourself busy on those cold winter days is to challenge yourself with a new recipe. Break out an old cookbook

and find something new that will challenge you in the kitchen. Look around online for something you have never tried before. Treat your taste buds to something delicious.

**Keep on smiling!** The cold winter months can be kind of tough sometimes. We often just want to sit around and keep warm. By keeping yourself busy, keeping your mind working and your body moving you will find the winter goes a lot faster.



### Sources:

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By: Steve Gilmore, Dietetic Intern, Texas Tech University 2018

# Egg prices are high, could go higher

## Texas Crop and Weather Report – Jan. 24, 2023

For a year-to-year comparison, prices reached \$4.25 per dozen on average in December 2022 across the nation, according to a U.S. Department of Agriculture retail egg report. A dozen eggs was \$1.79 at the same time last year.

The previous peak price occurred in September 2015 – \$2.97 per dozen – and was also attributable to an avian influenza outbreak.

Anderson said he has been inundated with media requests on the subject as the topic of egg prices has become a major talking point among the consuming public.

“One reporter in Houston interviewed a backyard producer who told them this is the first time ever that it’s been cheaper to produce eggs than buy them at the store,” he said. “The situation with egg prices is something people are following now, but I think it is also something that happened over the course of time with several factors aligning.”

Avian flu driving egg prices upward  
Higher production and logistical costs like feed and fuel have contributed, but the top factor driving egg prices to record highs is an ongoing outbreak of avian influenza, Anderson said. The highly pathogenic viral disease hit the U.S. poultry industry in early 2022 and cases continue to pop up at poultry farms nationwide.



The USDA-Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA-APHIS, reported almost 58 million commercial poultry birds, including broiler and egg-laying chickens, turkeys and various fowl have been lost to the virus, now reported in 46 states.

The USDA estimated around 43 million egg-laying hens were cut from the U.S. flock through December. The disease hits egg-laying chicken flocks harder because birds are in production much longer than broiler chickens, which increases their risk of exposure to the pathogen.

Egg prices continue to set all-time per-dozen price records, and a Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service expert does not expect that trend to reverse in the near future.

David Anderson, Ph.D., AgriLife Extension economist, Bryan-College Station, said inflationary pressure and the worst avian flu outbreak in U.S. history have combined to send egg prices upward over much of the last year.

The losses resulted in U.S. egg inventories that were 29% lower than January 2022, according to the report.

Anderson said the avian flu struck at a time when egg layer numbers had already been reduced.

## Egg prices are high...Continued

There were 340 million table egg layer hens in the U.S. flock in December 2019. By December 2020, table layer numbers had been reduced by 13 million hens, to 327 million, as egg production responded to the COVID-19 pandemic and higher feed costs. The number of table layers remained static through December 2021, and then the avian influenza outbreak dropped the number of hens below 300 million by June.

Profit incentive has pushed poultry producers to restore flock numbers amid the outbreak, but egg-producing operations continue to be hit by the disease. USDA-APHIS disease control and containment protocol calls for euthanization and disposal of all birds in a house exposed to the disease.

“We’ve seen producers respond by building back the flock numbers, but farms are still getting wiped out,” he said. “They were up to 308 million by December 2022, but it’s two steps forward, one step back.”

Egg demand peaks around Easter

Wholesale prices continue to rise, which indicates retail egg prices have not peaked, he said. The teetering flock numbers couldn’t come at a worse time for consumers.

The January USDA egg report showed prices were steady to slightly lower than December, but yearly prices for eggs often peaks each spring due to Easter holiday egg hunts and baking, he said.

“We have a built-in holiday-driven demand for table eggs,” he said. “That demand bump is on the horizon, but the higher prices are also a signal to consumers to use less, so it will be interesting to see if there will be a demand adjustment this Easter.”

[Egg prices are high, could go higher - AgriLife Today \(tamu.edu\)](#)

**“100% or All-Natural”** – This means nothing was added to the egg (coloring, flavoring) and it does NOT indicate how the chicken was raised.

**“USDA Organic”** – Certified organic eggs are from uncaged hens that have free range of their houses and access to outdoor spaces. They are also fed an organic diet.

**“Vitamin Enhanced”** – Hens are given a special diet that helps them produce eggs with a higher vitamin content (e.g. Vitamin E).

**“Omega-3 Enriched”** – Hens are fed a diet that includes flaxseed, algae or fish oils to increase the Omega-3 fatty acid content of the eggs.

**“No Antibiotics”** – Hens are raised without any antibiotics of any type.

**“No added Hormones”** – NO eggs have added hormones (regardless of what the package says) because the use of hormones is NOT allowed in hog or poultry production. If you see “No added hormones” on a package, it must be followed by the statement: “Federal regulations prohibit the use of hormones”.

**“Free-range”** – Hens are cage free with continuous access to the outdoors during their laying cycle.

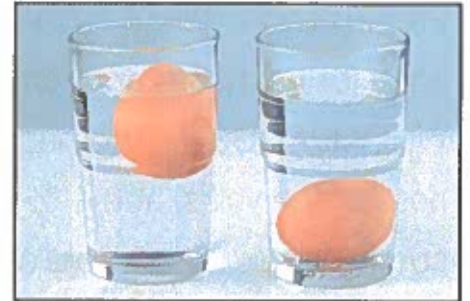
**“Cage-free”** – Hens are raised in an enclosed structure with unlimited access to food and water. They are NOT required to have access to the outdoors.



## The Sink or Float Test

This freshness test is not only simple but also can tell you the approximate age of the egg. All you need is the egg, a glass, and cold water. Fill the glass with enough cold water to completely cover the egg, then slowly and gently drop the egg into the glass of water. Don't let it hit the bottom.

Your egg can do one of three things and each will determine its freshness. If it sinks to the bottom, turns on its side, and stays there, it is very fresh. If the egg sinks but floats at an angle or stands on end, the egg is a bit older (a week to two weeks old) but still okay to eat.



If the egg floats, it's too old and should be discarded. (If you are looking for more of a cut-and-dry test, dissolve 2 tablespoons of salt in 2 cups of cold water. Put the egg in the water—if it sinks, it's good; if it floats, it's too old.)

The science behind this is that as eggs age, the shell becomes more porous, allowing air to flow through. The more air entering through the shell, the larger the air cell becomes (the pocket of air between the membrane and shell in the larger end of the egg). The air sac, when large enough, makes the egg float.

## Proper Egg Storage

Eggs should be stored in the refrigerator in the carton they came in.<sup>1</sup> The packaging helps keep out odors and flavors from other foods in the fridge and protects the eggs from breakage. Also, you can use the date stamped on the carton as a guide. Make sure to keep the eggs upright, so the larger end is facing up; the yolk is more prone to spoilage than the white, and this position keeps the air cell at the top, reducing the chances of harmful bacteria from making its way into the yolk.



# How to Freeze Eggs for Later Use

Freezing is a great way to preserve excess eggs and reduce the amount of food we waste. Here is a safe, quality tested way to do it from the National Center for Home Food Preservation:

**Preparation** – Select fresh eggs and break each separately into a clean saucer. Examine each for freshness and remove any pieces of shell before mixing with other eggs.

**WHOLE EGGS** — Thoroughly mix yolks and whites. Do not whip in air. To prevent graininess of the yolks, add 1-½ tablespoons sugar, 1-½ tablespoons corn syrup OR ½ teaspoon salt per cup whole eggs, depending on intended use. Strain through a sieve or colander to improve uniformity. Package, allowing ½-inch headspace. Seal and freeze.

Another method of freezing a whole-egg mixture is to use ice trays. Measure 3 tablespoons of egg mixture into each compartment of an ice tray. Freeze until solid. Remove frozen cubes, and package in moisture-vapor resistant containers. Seal and freeze. Three tablespoons of the egg mixture (one cube) equal one whole egg.

**EGG YOLKS** — Separate eggs. Stir yolks gently. To prevent graininess, add 1-½ tablespoons sugar, 1-½ tablespoons corn syrup OR ½ teaspoon salt per cup of egg yolks, depending on intended use. Strain through a sieve. Package, allowing ½-inch headspace. Seal and freeze. One tablespoon of the yolk mixture equals one egg yolk.

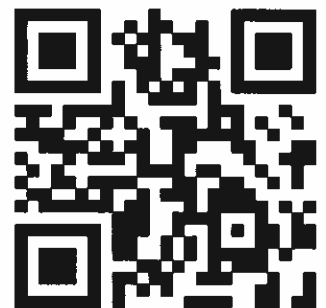
**EGG WHITES** — Gently mix whites; do not whip. Strain through a sieve. No sugar or salt is needed. Package, leaving ½-inch headspace. Seal and freeze. Two tablespoons of the egg-white mixture equal one egg white.

No matter which method of freezing you use, be sure to date the container with the date you made them.

**Dinner Tonight: Quick Healthy Cooking**



**@txdinner**



Scan QR Code for video on freezing eggs.

# GOOD RECORDS MAKE END OF YEAR EASIER

The end of the year brings a time of reflection about what has happened over the past 12 months. Many people start to wonder where their money went. Often, panic sets in because it's almost time to prepare tax forms. Susan Wright, Consumer Education Specialist with NMSU gives us these following tips. A box full of cancelled checks and some miscellaneous receipts is all that some people can find. If this is true about you, now is the time to turn over a new leaf regarding your financial record keeping.

An effective financial recordkeeping system will provide a way to organize and file receipts, canceled checks, income statements and financial papers, and a way to summarize information about income and expenses. The best recordkeeping system is one that works for the individual. Typically, this will be a simple system that allows easy access to information.

*Some popular, basic record-keeping methods are:*

- The receipt method that involves keeping, filing and sorting receipts according to categories of expense, such as food, rent, utilities or transportation.
- The envelope method that requires a set of envelopes – one for each category of expenses. A budgeted amount of money is placed in the envelopes each week or month. As the money is spent, the amount is recorded on the envelope.
- The ledger system that requires detailed entries for expenditures. Use a store-bought ledger or make one with a spiral notebook. Generally, entries are made each day.
- Computer software also is available for financial record keeping. It allows you to create a ledger with as many categories of expense as you require and expenses can be entered in each on a regular basis.

There are no secrets to record keeping. It is simply a matter of making an effort to keep up with it and the discipline to make the system work for you. It will be important to summarize the records on a weekly or monthly basis in order to determine how your money is being spent. If necessary, adjustments can be made in your spending plan.

When credit cards are used, the cardholder should record individual purchases in the appropriate categories of the record-keeping system. If the only record kept is the payment at the end of the month, it will be impossible to determine what was purchased.

By using a record-keeping system on a regular basis, you will know where your money goes each month. The task of filing your taxes at the end of the year will be easy, because you will have an orderly record of all expenditures. Now is the perfect time to start a New Year and develop these habits to free our lives of a little stress later on.

Source: Roosevelt County, NM Extension Home Economics Newsletter, Dec. 1999

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*The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating*

# TEXAS A&M AGRI LIFE EXTENSION

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## Path to Plate.....

## Black Bean Soup

### Ingredients

1 tablespoon olive oil  
1/2 cup yellow onion chopped  
1 cup carrots diced  
1/2 cup celery diced  
2 cloves garlic minced  
7 cups no salt added chicken stock  
2 cups black beans dry  
1/2 teaspoon chili powder  
1 teaspoon dried oregano  
1 avocado cut into 10 slices  
1/2 cup reduced fat shredded cheddar cheese

### Instructions

On the sauté function of an electric pressure cooker add the olive oil, onion, garlic, carrots, and celery to the inner pot and sauté for 5-7 minutes.

Add chicken stock, dried black beans, chili powder, and dried oregano. Stir to combine.

Place the lid on the electric pressure cooker. Set it to manual and set the time for 35 minutes. Once the time is up let the pressure cooker naturally release pressure for about 10 minutes.

Remove the lid and stir. Top each serving with 2 teaspoons of cheese and slice of avocado.

Serves 10



### Nutrition Facts

10 servings per container  
Serving size 1 Cup Soup, 2 tsp  
Cheese, 1/10 of  
avocado (264g)

Amount per serving	
<b>Calories</b>	<b>220</b>
	<i>% Daily Value*</i>
Total Fat 6g	8%
Saturated Fat 1.5g	8%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 5mg	2%
Sodium 135mg	6%
Total Carbohydrate 29g	11%
Dietary Fiber 8g	29%
Total Sugars 3g	
Includes 1g Added Sugars	2%
Protein 13g	
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 111mg	8%
Iron 2mg	10%
Potassium 954mg	20%

\*The % Daily Value tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.