

# Eggs en Cocotte

## Ingredients

2 large, fresh eggs  
about 1 oz (25 g) butter  
salt and freshly milled black pepper  
Pre-heat the oven to gas mark 4, 350°F (180°C).

## Equipment

You will also need two ramekins with a 3 inch (7.5 cm) diameter, 1½ inches (4 cm) deep, well buttered, and a baking tin measuring 11 x 8 inches (28 x 20 cm), 2 inches (5 cm) deep.

## Method

First boil some water. Break an egg into each ramekin, season, then put a knob of butter on top of each yolk. Place the dishes in the baking tin, then pop it on the centre shelf of the oven and pour enough boiling water into the tin to come halfway up the sides of the dishes. Now let the eggs bake for 15 minutes if you like them soft and runny, or 18 minutes if you like them more set. Either way, bear in mind that they go on cooking in the dishes as they leave the oven and reach the table.

The classic French name for this type of egg dish is oeufs en cocotte, and it is named after the dishes in which the eggs are cooked, which are called ramekins and look like mini soufflé dishes with enough space for baking one egg. The following recipe will give you the basic method for baking eggs in ramekins. There are several variations, too. Instead of a knob of butter, pour in a tablespoon of double cream, soured cream, crème fraîche or, for a lower-fat version, Greek yoghurt works superbly. In addition, you could sprinkle a dessertspoon of grated cheese on top of the cream. Other ingredients that can be included under the egg are lightly cooked asparagus tips or cooked, chopped leeks. You could also use chopped smoked salmon or lightly cooked flakes of smoked haddock.

