ORGANIC FREE RANGE EGGS – NOTHING ELSE IS REALLY AN EGG

Author : Peter Wright, NTP, CGP

When is an egg not an egg?

Eggs all look basically the same. Everyone knows an egg when they see one. Right? Here's a case where you "shouldn't judge a book by its cover". What's inside the egg shell depends not only on what the hens eat, but also on how the hen lives. Mother Earth News conducted a test on eggs from 14 separate flocks of free range hens. Free range means the hens had access to pasture or were in movable pens which had access to pasture. Six eggs from each flock were tested by an accredited lab and the results compared to the USDA's nutrient data for eggs. The results were dramatic!

Compared to regular supermarket eggs, free range eggs had;

- **1/3 less cholesterol**
- **1/4 less saturated fat**
- **2/3 more vitamin A**
- **2 times more omega-3 fatty acids**
- **3 times more vitamin E**
- **7 times more beta carotene**

Read more: http://www.motherearthnews.com/Real-Food/2007-10-01/Tests-Reveal-Healthier-Eggs.aspx

Why are the free range eggs so much more nutritious?

Free range hens eat a very different diet from caged, factory raised hens. Free range hens eat insects, worms, green plants, and seeds in addition to grain. Factory raised hens are fed the cheapest grain meal available which is laced with additives. It's simple really. What the hen eats ends up in the egg.

Caveat emptor – "Let the buyer beware"

Finding free-range eggs to buy is not that simple. You simply can't believe what you read. The USDA allows egg producers to label eggs as "free range" if the hens have access to the outdoors. All the producer has to do is leave a door open to qualify, even if the hen never goes outdoors! And the outdoors can be a concrete pad. I'm afraid even the organic label is not a guarantee of free-range eggs. USDA organic is the weakest organic certification on the market and hardly a challenge for manufacturers to circumvent. The best source for true free-range eggs is your local farmer or hobbyist. You should buy your eggs where you can see the hens and talk with the farmer.

You’re in for a treat!

Be forewarned; once you taste the real thing you’ll never go back. The taste difference is striking. Free-range eggs have a very dark yolk, which is often orange in color, and they taste so good! Regular eggs will taste completely bland after you’re used to free-range eggs, sort of like eating cardboard. Leave a comment and let us know your experiences with real eggs.This post is part of Fight Back Friday.

Photo 1 - Ceasar, S. (Photographer). (2009).Blue lace red wyandotte hen. [Web Photo]. Retrieved from https://picasaweb.google.com

Written by Peter Wright