



# CHUBBY HUBBY

RECIPES, TRENDS By AUN / 20 FEBRUARY 2009 @ 12:17 AM

## SLOW-COOKING AN EGG



**When I was a kid**, if I had had my way, I would have eaten eggs for breakfast every day. My mother, however, believed that too many eggs was bad for a growing child. Given that



cholesterol levels has been pretty much proven to be the myth that I always believed it was. Now, I can happily have eggs — soft-boiled, sunny-side up, scrambled, poached, baked, or even steamed in a custard — on any day of the week without fear. And at any time of the day. I could eat eggs for breakfast, lunch or dinner (although I will admit I wouldn't have them for all 3 meals in the same day — even for me, that would be a tad excessive).

I always enjoy ordering an interesting egg dish for lunch or dinner when dining out. One of the best I have ever had is Joel Robuchon's egg cocotte topped with a foamed mushroom cream and served over a parsley puree. A staple at Robuchon's many Ateliers, this fabulous little dish is elegantly served in a martini glass. Judging by the number of both traditional journalists and food bloggers who have raved about this dish, in print and online, I guess I'm not alone. For those of you who have yet to try this little taste of heaven, the egg is slow-cooked at a low temperature so that while the egg is indeed cooked, the white is just barely set and the yolk is runny. For years, I've wondered exactly what temperature and what techniques Monsieur Robuchon uses.

Recently, I've had the good fortune to meet not one but two chefs who have worked for Robuchon. Of course, I had to ask. While both chefs did agree on a few things (namely to cook the egg in whatever glass container you were going to serve it in and to put cling film over the top of the glass before cooking), unfortunately (and maddeningly) the cooking temperatures and times that I was told were different. One chef told me to cook the egg for 32 minutes at 58 degrees Celsius and then hold it indefinitely at 67 degrees Celsius until ready to serve. The other (whom I have to admit I kind of trust a little more) said to just cook it at 68 degrees Celsius at 25 minutes. He didn't mention anything about holding it but I'm assuming you would hold it at a slightly lower temperature. A little Googling also resulted in one food blogger stating that to make this dish, you would cook the eggs at 64.5 degrees Celsius for 45 minutes. What's also not mentioned is whether these are baked in the oven or cooked in a combi-steam oven. Another article I had read said that Chef Robuchon steamed his egg cocotte so I've taken that to mean that they were cooked in a combi-steam oven, i.e. an oven in which you can inject specific amounts of steam/humidity.



Fortunately, S and I have one. A domestic version nonetheless, but the Miele combi-steam oven is pretty darned amazing and fantastically accurate. Over the last few days, I've been experimenting with the oven in order to establish what cooking temperature and timing, and what holding temperature works for me.

At 58 degrees C with the combi set to 20% humidity, the egg never looked cooked, i.e. the whites remained translucent. But when I held it at 67 degrees C, the whites started to set, turning... well, white. But when held too long, the egg yolk hardened. I had read in Harold McGee's seminal **On Food and Cooking** that egg white begins to set at 63 degrees C while egg yolk begins to set at 65 degrees C. So, I tried cooking the egg at 64 degrees C, hoping for semi-set whites and runny yolk. But after 40 minutes, the textures



increased the time to 30 minutes and got better results. I then tried holding the egg at 64 degrees C. I figured if I held it at this temperature, the yolk wouldn't harden. That worked when holding for 20-30 minutes; in fact, the texture was really nice. But when holding for more than that, the yolk started to harden. I then decided to hold the egg at a temperature below 63 degrees C, which seems to be working pretty well. Of course, not all ovens are the same, so please don't take my word that these temperatures and times will work for you on your own equipment. Do what I did and test your oven. If you don't have a combi-steam oven, you can bake your eggs in a water bath or in a traditional steamer – although the timings and temperatures for these are again completely different.

For these experiments, I've cooked the egg with just a touch of Tetsuya Wakuda's Truffle Salsa. I should also say I was working with room temperature eggs.

Now that I've (kind of) figured this out, I'm going to start experimenting with different sauces and other items to mix with the egg. I've made an oxtail ragu which should work well. I'll also try Chef Robuchon's traditional parsley puree and mushroom cream. Speaking of Robuchon's original egg dish, for those of you without a combi-steam oven, I've found a recipe for the dish in which you can cook the eggs through a simple stove-top steaming technique. I've reproduced it below for your pleasure.

## **Eggs Cocotte with Mushrooms and Parsley Puree**

### **Recipe by Joël Robuchon**

6 ounces flat-leaf parsley, leaves only  
1/2 pound white mushrooms, coarsely chopped  
1 tablespoon vegetable oil  
Salt and freshly ground pepper  
2 tablespoons water  
1/2 cup heavy cream  
2 tablespoons unsalted butter  
1 small shallot, thinly sliced  
1/4 pound small chanterelles or other wild mushrooms, sliced 1/4 inch thick  
4 large eggs



puree. Scrape the puree into a bowl. Clean out the food processor.

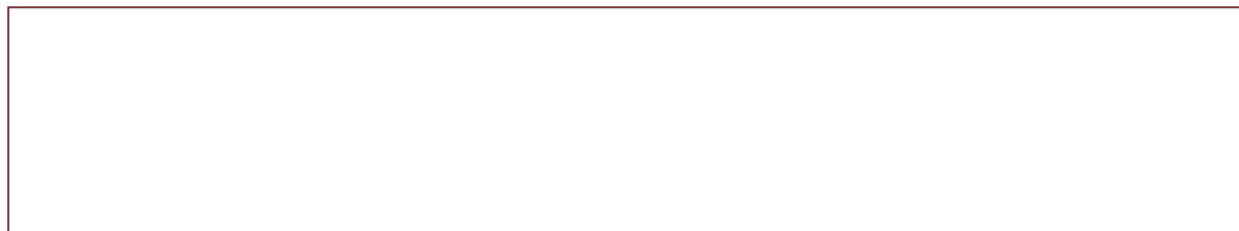
Add the white mushrooms to the food processor and pulse to mince. In a large nonstick skillet, heat the oil. Add the minced mushrooms, season with salt and pepper and cook over high heat until the liquid has evaporated, about 5 minutes. Add the water and stir to scrape up any browned bits. Add the cream, cover and simmer over low heat for 10 minutes. Strain the mushroom cream through a fine strainer into a small saucepan, pressing on the solids. Simmer the cream over moderately high heat until reduced to 1/3 cup, about 2 minutes. Season with salt.

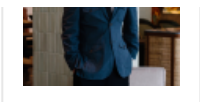
In a large skillet, melt the butter. Add the shallot and cook over moderately high heat until softened, 2 minutes. Add the chanterelles, season with salt and pepper and cook over moderate heat, stirring occasionally, until browned, 10 minutes.

Set a round rack in a large, wide pot. Add enough water to reach just under the rack without touching it. Cover the pot and bring the water to a boil. Butter four 1 1/4-cup heatproof porcelain bowls, about 4 1/2 inches wide at the top tapering down to 2 inches wide at the bottom. Alternatively, use ramekins. Spoon the parsley puree into the bowls. Crack 1 egg into one of the porcelain bowls; season with salt and pepper. Repeat with the remaining eggs. Cover each bowl with plastic wrap. Carefully set on the rack in the pot, cover and steam over low heat until the whites are firm and the yolks are runny, about 12 minutes. Discard the plastic wrap.

Reheat the mushroom cream and chanterelles. Spoon the cream over the eggs, top with the chanterelles and serve.

The recipe can be prepared through Step 3 one day ahead. Refrigerate the parsley puree, mushroom cream and chanterelles separately. Reheat gently.





Aun has always loved food and travel, passions passed down to him from his parents. This foundation, plus a background in media, pushed him to start Chubby Hubby in 2005. He loves that this site allows him to write about the things he adores-- food, style, travel, his wife and his three kids!

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**Charmaine** on 20 February 2009 at 5:47 am **Reply**

Interesting, I never thought about creating eggs cocotte so that they took on such a consistency – I'd compare it to the soft poach approach for **onsen tamago** (hot spring eggs) where the egg whites are just creamy and set and the yolk is still runny... in the cheat's method I simply wrapped an egg in paper towel and set it on a bed of just cooked rice (in a rice cooker) that had switched to the 'keep warm' function. I wonder if eggs cocotte can be done this way, as well? Though of course the thickness of the container its held in would probably prevent it from cooking/it would take forever.

Oh, what we do for such ethreal silky eggs 😊

2

**SoniaK** on 20 February 2009 at 7:30 am **Reply**

This reminds one of onsen tamago, of course. Traditionally served in rural Japan at hot springs (onsen) they were cooked in the same water guests were soaking



miserably. But armed with this new information I will try again with 147 degrees Fahrenheit. I actually own an onsen tamago 'maker' that a dear friend sent me as a consolation gift, because she couldn't find anyone to tell her precisely how to make onsen tamago. Unfortunately, the maker had no instructions!! btw, I love the concept of truffle salsa with this. mmmmmm

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**Fred Lin** on 20 February 2009 at 9:50 am [Reply](#)

I'm gonna be an ass here....but isn't that alot of work for 'Singapore style' poached eggs... 😊

4

**Chubby Hubby** on 20 February 2009 at 10:34 am [Reply](#)

Hi Charmain and SoniaK. I love authentic onsen tamagos. Was lucky enough to devour several on a trip through Japan last year. What I was told then was that the onsen water that the eggs are cooked in are kept around 42-45 degrees C and that the eggs are left in the water (in their shells) for at least a day. The texture was beautiful.

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**Paula Maack** on 20 February 2009 at 4:46 pm [Reply](#)

Wow! This looks wonderful!! Stunning photos!

Cheers,

~ Paula

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**Rachel** on 20 February 2009 at 11:53 pm [Reply](#)

'A little Googling also resulted in one food blogger stating that to make this dish..'

I should think it is basic net etiquette and manners to link and credit where you got the information.

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**maazza** on 21 February 2009 at 12:29 am [Reply](#)

to all you chubbyhubby fans who can access uk mags....i wrote about the hongkong special food article in the observer sunday food supplement....it is this coming sunday 22 feb

**maazza** on 21 February 2009 at 12:36 am [Reply](#)



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**Laura** on 21 February 2009 at 9:59 am [Reply](#)

Wow, you are very dedicated to this egg dish! I share your obsession with **eggs**, and also eat them pretty much every day for breakfast. Maybe I'll save this one for a weekend.

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**Chubby Hubby** on 21 February 2009 at 1:54 pm [Reply](#)

Rachel: While Googling, aside from the recipe printed above, the only reference I could find to how the eggs were cooked was a one-liner in a forum on Atelier de Robuchon. One person posted pictures of his or her entire meal. When mentioning the egg cocotte, s/he described it as an egg cocotte that has been cooked at 64.5 degrees C for 45 minutes. That was it. I don't think this warrants a hyperlink. If you take the time to go through my site, you'll see I always hyperlink to fellow bloggers when appropriate.

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**jt** on 22 February 2009 at 4:26 am [Reply](#)

have you tried using the sous vide method? it might come out superb!!

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**Tim** on 22 February 2009 at 8:31 pm [Reply](#)

did u check the actual temp of the egg? check this out.

[http://www.starchefs.com/events/studio/techniques/Joel\\_Robuchon/index.shtml](http://www.starchefs.com/events/studio/techniques/Joel_Robuchon/index.shtml)

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**Chubby Hubby** on 23 February 2009 at 3:46 pm [Reply](#)

Boy, am I a dunce. One of the Robuchon chefs just sent me this note: "The secret is that the egg is cooked in the shell before cracking and putting it in cocotte. We don't do that dish where I work but I believe that's how its done in the other L'Ateliers. My procedure is, I take the eggs out of fridge, let them come to room temp, pre-heat my combi to 68C on full steam (it's either full steam or convection nothing in between percentage wise. My guess would be that it's at around 98% humidity.) Place the eggs on perforated hotel pan. Cook at 68C for 25 minutes. Crack one on plate and look for small amount of albumen to run off. If too liquidy I cook at same temp again for 4 min to get exact structure. Then I cool with cold water. Then hold for service in water around 35C. We use our eggs in a Spag Truff dish and an egg Zalogg dish."

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**Emily (La Dernière Miette)** on 24 February 2009 at 11:41 pm [Reply](#)





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**pearlyn** on 24 February 2009 at 11:48 pm **Reply**

hey! i have been reading yor blog for months. they are really interesting! keep it up~ and cant wait to try this egg recipe in the weekends.

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**catherine at unconfidentialcook.com** on 26 February 2009 at 11:52 am **Reply**

Amazing! If they're anywhere near as good as Robuchon's unforgettable mashed potatoes, they're well worth the effort. Thank you!

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**w.** on 26 February 2009 at 4:47 pm **Reply**

I too was wondering if you'd ever tried the sous vide method for cooking eggs – I once ate an egg that was cooked for an hour (or so the menu said), and it had the most delightful texture I've ever eaten! Since that meal, I've done a little research and apparently the timing and temperatures for sous vide egg cookery are 45minutes at 64.5C.

Obviously, since you have access to a steam oven, that method will probably serve you better, but I would love to know if you ever give the sous vide egg a shot and how you find the results, as compared to these.

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**Chubby Hubby** on 26 February 2009 at 5:06 pm **Reply**

W: I don't have the right sous vide equipment... yet.

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**w.** on 27 February 2009 at 10:34 pm **Reply**

Haha! I've been biting back but it's probably only a matter of time before I take the plunge too. Chances are you'll get there before I do, though, seeing as how little space I have right now! So will just have to be satisfied living vicariously through you(r kitchen)!

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**Marco Veringa** on 15 March 2009 at 12:49 am **Reply**

Sorry cant be bothered to read all comments, so maybe you have heard this already.....water, 65 degrees celsius.....put whole eggs in the shell in it, you can keep them like that for hours on a time, te yolks wont get over cooked ad the whites actually dont set at all.....which is great cause when you break the eggs you can take the yolks, discarding the whites and shell.....and use the yolks as a soup garnish etc.....its really quite great!



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**Martin** on 30 May 2011 at 4:01 am [Reply](#)

The glass jar you've got there is absolutely wonderful. Does the lid fit so tight that you can immerse it completely into the water (or is this where the cling film you mention comes into play?). And – have you come across other examples of sous vide containers that are fit for serving?

Oh – and BTW, regarding egg yolk and temperature – the mystery has been solved now. See <http://blog.khymos.org/2011/04/18/perfect-egg-yolks/> and <http://blog.khymos.org/2011/04/23/perfect-egg-yolks-part-2/>

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**Chef Andi** on 29 August 2011 at 7:01 am [Reply](#)

ChubbyHubby:

I was searching the internet trying to find the exact information you are blogging about here. I saw the “sous vide” equivalent for a egg on a show recently and wanted to try it at home. As a chef, we are always curious about new methods or trendy preparations. Thanks for the info. I actually started a food blog today in an effort to help others find the information I was looking for today. FYI: been practicing all day, on attempt #5, the method working for me is water in a pot on the stove held between 140-145 degrees F for 27 minutes. When you crack the egg open there will be some watery run-off from the egg white that should be discarded. I will be trying mine over white rice with a little soy and rice wine! Check out my blog at <http://chefandisaks.blogspot.com/>.

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**Foodnetwork – The Blogosphere: Obama Food, Frugal Delights, Italy's Pride and More** on 1 May 2014 at 11:34 am [Reply](#)

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**The Blogosphere: Obama Food, Frugal Delights, Italy's Pride and More | FoodNetwork** on 3 May 2014 at 4:15 am [Reply](#)

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