



"The Only Right Thing to Do"



For all day parts and service venues, nothing outperforms a fresh pasteurized shell egg, according to Chef John Biswanger, Director – Food & Nutrition Services at Lakeland Regional Medical Center (Lakeland, FL). A Certified Executive Chef (CEC) and Certified Master Foodservice Executive (CMFE), Chef John is not only a culinary perfectionist; he takes the safety factor seriously.

"Statistically, one egg in every palette could contain dangerous Salmonella, so why take chances?" asks Chef John. Having used pasteurized shell eggs for six years now, he says the product justification was easy. "I just asked my vice president—What will it cost the hospital if just one patient gets sick from Salmonella? What will a lawsuit cost?"

Sometimes a foodservice director serving highly susceptible patients will choose pasteurized shell eggs only for undercooked applications—like eggs over easy or poached—and use ordinary shell eggs for the rest, says Chef John. But this is reckless, he feels. "Whether fresh eggs are going to be fully cooked or not, I won't bring ordinary shell eggs into my operation," he explains, adding, "There's too great a risk of cross contamination. Making patients sick is not what we're about. Using pasteurized shell eggs is the only right thing to do."

"Fresh eggs are the cheapest entrée you can prepare — with the best margins."

Comfort Food Meets Room Service

"Real eggs are an amazing comfort food," he points out, "and that's true at any time of day." In fact, the Lakeland Food & Nutrition team, which boasts Press Ganey satisfaction scores in the 99th percentile, takes pride in its fresh, made-to-order room service success. "There's magic in giving patients what they want, when they want it," says Chef John. He offers eggs 24 by 7. Explaining the appeal, he says: "Especially for a first meal after being NPO, most patients don't want meatloaf and potatoes." In fact, patients are asking for eggs at all times of day, so much so that fresh eggs represent 7% of room service orders.

The most popular room service egg entrée is an omelet made to order, he says. And yes, in his experience, even eggs over easy can succeed beautifully in room service, with delivery under a hot dome. The secret, he says, is to cook to a slightly runny white, which continues to cook a little bit in transit. "We do a wonderful job with fresh eggs, and our patients really enjoy the classic comfort." Tantalizing patients' taste buds, Chef John also stars on the Cooking Channel on the in-house patient television network. "It's like room service on steroids," he says. "Whatever we make, patients can call and order."

A Recipe for Revenue

As for Lakeland's bustling retail operations, Chef John points out, "Fresh eggs are the cheapest entrée you can prepare—with the best margins." Shell eggs factor into 38% of grill orders at breakfast, he says, and this also translates into excellent profit margins. Directors who study the value-added food cost for pasteurized shell eggs often miss the rest of the equation, he notes. His overall food cost differential for using pasteurized shell eggs is modest. Meanwhile, a standard markup percentage applied to a higher priced, premium value ingredient equals several times that figure in added profit, he explains.

Operational Snapshot

Average patient census:	700
Retail breakfast grill:	1,000 customers daily
Eggs in retail breakfast:	38% of grill orders
Eggs in room service:	7% of orders
Retail patrons:	30% destination dining
Patient meal service satisfaction:	99 th percentile (Press Ganey)
Food cost benchmark:	99.6 th percentile (Synergy Corp.)
Safest Choice™ Pasteurized Shell Eggs used/yr:	4,550 dozen

Menu Winners

Chef John points to versatility, too. Retail menu winners:

- Breakfast bowls blending convenience and labor economy with classic flavors. Chef John's newest feature mimics Eggs Benedict in a bowl: toasted English muffin croutons, cubed Canadian bacon, scrambled eggs, and hollandaise sauce.
- Half portions, which are popular among healthy eaters who otherwise might skip a breakfast entrée.
- Breakfast sandwiches built on a bagel, croissant, or hard roll and featuring add-ins like cheese, sausage patties, bacon, or Canadian bacon.

Labor Savings

Two secret ingredients to retail profitability, says Chef John, are these labor-saving innovations:

- Selling breakfast sandwiches cold, which boosts their versatility and sales counts. Employees take them to patient floors to microwave in pantries; cafeteria patrons can also use one of five microwaves in the dining area.
- Frying eggs in a Rational combi-oven with a shallow muffin pan. Cooks break whole eggs into the wells and batch cook patties for sandwiches.



He also promotes the operation's Safest Choice™ for customers with retail signage expressing a commitment to safety. "We tell patrons they can order eggs any way they want with total safety," says Chef John. "They think we're wonderful! And our commitment definitely drives sales."

"Using pasteurized shell eggs is the only right thing to do."

The Food Cost Equation

Chef John is just as comfortable whipping up a budget analysis as he is an egg white, and serves as a mentor to his peers in the US, as well as healthcare foodservice visitors from abroad. One reason is the operation's reputation with food cost control, running above the 99th percentile for food cost in 2010. "We feel it's a feather in our cap," he says, "that we can provide exceptional quality at one of the lowest costs in the country."



Pasteurized Shell Eggs drive profit in retail grill operation



Bill Causewell, Star Grill Cook

Fast Facts: Salmonella

- 2 of every 3 Salmonellosis cases stem from food eaten away from home
- 4 of every 5 Salmonella enteritidis cases come from shell eggs
- 1 in 6 people gets foodborne illness every year
- Salmonella foodborne illness causes more hospitalizations and deaths than any other foodborne pathogen

Sources: USDA, CDC

