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KITCHEN GARDEN

IT'S TIME TO...

- **Sow** courgettes, pumpkins, cauliflowers, carrots, French and runner beans, lettuces, peas, spinach, sweetcorn and chard.
- **Harden off** veg sown earlier indoors, by leaving it outside in daytime and bringing it in at night.
- **Earth up** potatoes (leafy shoots to be mounded around with soil to their full height).
- **Harvest** delicious asparagus and broad beans.
- **Put netting** over developing soft fruit and pick s-shaped sawfly larvae off gooseberries.

Photographs VASYLYNA MAKSYMOVYCH/EYEM, DONALD CROSSLAND, SEAN GLADWELL, A. MARTIN UW PHOTOGRAPHY, WILLIAM ANDREW/GETTY IMAGES, ISTOCK/GETTY IMAGES PLUS

SMALL CHANGES, BIG IMPACT



THE TRUTH ABOUT EGGS

Our sustainability champion **Lulu Grimes** explains why one size fits all in the kitchen

Did you know an egg yolk is often the same size in any size of hen's egg? If yolks are your favourite bit, the smaller the egg, the more likely you are to get more yolk. According to the British Hen Welfare Trust (*bhwt.org.uk*) smaller eggs are generally laid by younger birds and taste better. They're also much easier for the hen to lay.

Eggs can be bought in boxes of mixed sizes at some supermarkets (some egg producers only sell mixed-sized packs) and it benefits the farmer if you buy them this way as, currently, less popular smaller eggs are turned to liquid for food service. That, in turn, means that on a per unit basis, they're sold more cheaply.

Many recipes, including some of our own, list large eggs, but we've chosen not to do this anymore unless it is vital. A large egg weighs 63g with the shell on; so, if one of our older recipes lists large eggs, then use as many eggs that roughly equal the same weight instead. If you're eating eggs on their own, cook two small ones instead of one large.

In the UK, you can tell how your egg was produced by the number on the shell stamp (0 for organic, 1 is free range, 2 is barn-raised and 3 means caged). Yes, hens are still kept in cages in the UK, but the EU law stipulates that hens kept in cages must have the potential to nest, roost, scratch around and stretch.

It's important to differentiate between free-range eggs and organic, which are both produced by hens that are free to move around outside, and barn-egg hens which do actually live inside barns. There are degrees of desirability within free-range as well – hens like places to hide, like woodland.

Overall, hen welfare in the UK is ranked among the highest in the world, which is good news. Most eggs carry the British Lion mark, too, indicating that they're safe for vulnerable groups as outlined by the Food Standards Agency. These eggs are produced to the highest standards of safety, have been vaccinated against salmonella, and the hens, eggs and feed are traceable.