

Meaning of Egg

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Source:

Eggs are (in many traditions) a part of the first meal a grieving family eats after the funeral, but the specific symbolism seems to differ depending on the source. Eggs symbolize life: Why do we eat eggs? Eggs are an obvious symbol of life. At the seder table on Pesach, a joyous occasion, they are dipped in salt water to acknowledge that life sometimes brings tears and pain. And, at the Seudat Havra'ah, a time of grief, we eat hard-boiled eggs to affirm hope in the face of death. As eggs harden the more they are cooked, so we eat hard-boiled eggs to symbolize our determination to be resilient in the face of tragedy. [1] Eggs symbolize rebirth: At the first meal after the funeral, mourners eat a hard-boiled egg and something round to indicate that life is like a circle and the mourners have no words to describe their loss. [2] It is a Jewish custom to include round foods such as hard-boiled eggs, symbolizing eternal life or the cyclical nature of life. [3] Eggs symbolize a mourner's inability to speak: 3. The meal consists of bread, hard boiled (peeled) eggs or cooked lentils as a symbol of mourning (eggs do not have an opening, to show that the mourner is unable to speak) and some wine. They may then continue with meat, wine, etc. (they should not drink a lot of wine). [4] Eggs symbolize the circle of life and rebirth: It often consists of bread and hard boiled eggs. Eggs represent the circle of life, the cycle of birth and death. Ashes are often sprinkled on the egg to represent grief and loss.[5] These symbolic interpretations of eggs are particularly compelling because they contain explanations. After searching for a while, I have found no explicit mention of eggs as a symbol of death in Jewish culture except in the sense of rebirth (frequently described as "life and death"), e.g.: During the Middle Ages, as eggs gained wider convention in the Ashkenazic kitchen, they also took on various symbolic meanings and usages. In Jewish tradition, eggs are cited as the only food that becomes harder as it is cooked, while the eggshell is noted as being, paradoxically, both resilient and fragile. Thus eggs are symbolic of Jewish history, as well as of fertility and life and death. [6] While I'm sure that if you ask enough Jewish people, you will find someone who can provide a well-reasoned explanation for why they view eggs as a symbol of death, it doesn't seem that eggs are generally viewed in this light. [1] <http://www.jewishfunerals.com/ht...> (a synagogue in upstate NY discusses Jewish funeral traditions) [2] Jewish Funeral and Mourning Customs (Ahavat Israel, a Jewish organization based in Jerusalem) [3] Shiva Traditions and Customs (Chicago Jewish Funerals) [4] <http://www.chevrakadisha.com/law...> (A Jewish mortuary in L.A.) [5] Death and Mourning in Judaism (A Jewish cultural organization - Memorial Foundation Board Briefings) [6] Encyclopedia of Jewish Food (Encyclopedia of Jewish Food by Gil Marks)