

EGG LABELS, DECODED

BROWN eggs are no different from white eggs—they're just from a different breed of hens. They're slightly more expensive because brown egg-layers are bigger birds and require more food.

CERTIFIED HUMANE eggs come from uncaged hens raised in barns or warehouses but still able to nest, perch, and dust-bathe. Density and other conditions are regulated; compliance is verified by third-party auditing.

FREE-RANGE (and free-roaming) eggs come from uncaged hens with "regular outdoor access." These terms are defined by the USDA for some poultry products but not for eggs, and there is no third-party auditing. (Cage-free is not a USDA designation; it means hens are not raised in battery cages.)

OMEGA-3 eggs are laid by hens fed a special diet containing omega-3-rich flaxseed or marine algae, providing 33 percent more omega-3s than a regular egg. Total fat and cholesterol content remain about the same.

CERTIFIED ORGANIC eggs come from hens fed only organic, all-vegetarian grains and raised without hormones or antibiotics. Hens are uncaged inside barns or warehouses and have outdoor access, though that access remains undefined. Compliance is third-party audited.