

Supersize servings lead to supersize waistlines. So scale down!

Photos, Ross Whitaker. Styling, Kathy Inisay. Hair and makeup, Margret Avery.

size matters

new portion-control diet

Be size-wise! Don't choose jumbo anything. You'll get and stay slimmer.

test

Do you know **how much food** the portions below really contain?

1 A typical deli/bakery bagel is equal to approximately _____ slices of bread.
a. 2 b. 3 c. 5 d. 8

2 A Double Gulp, 64-oz soda, is equal to:
a. 1 cup b. a pint c. a quart d. a half gallon

3 A pretzel from a street vendor is equivalent to:
a. 6 bread slices
b. 6 small bags (1 oz) pretzels
c. 18 cups of popcorn d. any of the above

4 A medium popcorn at the movie theater contains: a. 4 cups b. 7 cups c. 12 cups d. 16 cups

5 Many steaks at a steak house are 24 oz (18 oz cooked) and contain how many meat servings?
a. 3, one day's worth b. 4 c. 6, at least 2 days' worth d. 10

6 How many standard servings does a typical restaurant entrée contain? a. 2 b. 4 c. 6 d. 8

Answers: 1c, 2d, 3d, 4d, 5c, 6c

The supersizing of American food has caused many of us to suffer from "portion distortion." We've all become so accustomed to gargantuan servings that the terms *small*, *medium* and *large* make no sense anymore. We no longer have any way to judge how much we eat.

American portion distortion is clear when you compare U.S. portions to

their European counterparts. Pasta is usually an appetizer in restaurants in Italy, where several swirls of a fork will finish off an entire plate of fettuccine. Cappuccino can be found in only one small size.

In the United States, *bargain*, *value size* and *family size* portions are



about the author

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Reality check: what you may really be eating

It's easy to lose track of calories when grabbing ready-made foods and drinks. Here's how the regular and jumbo sizes of some common choices add up.

Sources: Food Manufacturers; CSPI, USDA

Food	Calories/Regular	Calories/Jumbo
Coca-Cola , bottle	100 cal/8 oz	250 cal/20 oz
McDonald's french fries	210 cal/small	540 cal/large
Burger King hamburger	320 cal/hamburger	920 cal/Double Whopper
Mars M&M's	240 cal/regular size	770 cal/movie megasize
Starbucks Frappuccino	180 cal/Tall	300 cal/Vente
Häagen-Dazs ice cream, vanilla	270 cal/1 scoop	810 cal/3 scoops
TCBY frozen yogurt	110 cal/kiddie cup	350 cal/large cup
Movie popped popcorn (in oil)	400 cal/small	1160 cal/large
Cinnabon cinnamon bun	300 cal/Minibun	670 cal/Cinnabon

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everywhere. Fast-food employees are coached to suggest larger sizes and all the trimmings to patrons. Prepackaged supermarket foods and restaurants regularly use value as a way of pushing more food on easily-tempted customers.

The "bigger is better" motto that has taken over the food industry has affected the size of our waistlines.

Why We Overdo

An important study conducted by Pennsylvania State University researchers shows that we eat more when larger food portions are plunked down on the table. Exactly how much

more do we eat? It turns out to be 30 to 50 percent! That means when we sit down and are given a huge amount of food that's too large to eat in one sitting, we routinely eat 30 to 50 percent more than we would if we were handed a smaller plate. What's even more surprising is that even though we eat more, we don't feel any fuller.

It's interesting that when the researchers conducted similar studies with toddlers, they found that three-year-old children stopped eating when they were full. But as soon as a child reaches five, he will continue to eat, even after being full, just like an adult. Clearly, there is a pattern of overeating when presented with more food that begins in childhood. Parents, take note.

The Calorie Explosion

Here's the bottom line: No matter what you eat, no matter how healthful it is, no matter what the label says (dietetic, low-fat, no-carb), the bigger the size, the more calories it has. And if you eat more calories than you burn, you gain weight. It doesn't matter if you eat low-fat, fruit-sweetened bran

What equals a baseball?

It's easy to identify the amounts of food you're eating by associating food portions with the size of common objects:



Cold cereal, berries, popcorn:
1 cup = baseball

Meat or poultry; fish, such as tuna or salmon steak: 3 oz = 1 deck of cards



Peanut butter:
2 Tbsp = walnut in the shell



Rice, cooked:
1/2 cup = 1/2 baseball

Pasta, cooked:
1/2 cup = 1/2 baseball

Tomato sauce:
1/2 cup = 1/2 baseball

Fleshy white fish, such as flounder, sole, etc:
3 oz = checkbook



Olive oil or salad dressing:
1 tsp = standard cap on a 16-oz water bottle

Lighten Up

If you want to eat less, add a little air. Pennsylvania State University researchers examined appetites of men given milk shakes whipped to varying degrees of frothiness. They found that those who had milk shakes whipped twice as much ate 12% less.

Photos: Michael Kraus

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Hard cheese:
1 oz = 4 dice

**Cheese slice,
sandwich meat:**
1 oz = diameter of a CD

Pancake/waffle:
4-in. diameter = diameter of a CD

Bread (1 oz):
1 slice = CD case

Pretzels (1 oz):
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup = tennis ball

Salad dressing:
2 Tbsp = shot glass

Butter or margarine:
1 tsp = standard
postage stamp

muffins until the cows come home; if you're eating 10 of them every day, you're going to gain weight.

Expanding portion sizes are the primary reason that we are facing an obesity epidemic. Calories add up quickly when the portion sizes are so large. Nutrition authorities recommend

that we eat approximately 2,000 to 2,600 calories per day to stay the same weight, while

older, sedentary women and young children should have a bit less, and active men and teenage boys a bit more. To put this in perspective, a breakfast bagel and a slice of pizza add up to nearly half of the calories recommended for an entire day. Once you add the cream cheese, a soda, and dinner at a Chinese restaurant, your calorie count for the day can easily top 3,000.

But who can look at food and know how many calories are in it? Nobody, not even the experts. I was asked by the Center for Science in the Public Interest, a consumer advocacy group in Washington, D.C., to study how accurately dietitians are able to judge the calorie content of different restaurant meals. We

showed 200 dietitians five plates of food that are typically served in restaurants. We asked the dietitians to tally up the damage, and guess what? They had no idea how many calories were in these foods. Some underestimated the calories by as much as half.

Whether you eat home-cooked meals or fast food, becoming knowledgeable about the proper portion size can help you keep calories under control.

Become a "Portion Teller"

Do you know that a deck of cards is the size of approximately 3 ounces of meat, chicken or fish (such as salmon), which is one standard serving, or is this still something you have to think about?

Once you have a certain degree of portion-size awareness, ask yourself whether you are putting your knowledge into action. Perhaps you thought that a portion the size of a deck of cards was all you were supposed to eat, and said, "Forget it, I can't go on that diet." Or maybe you read that a bagel is equivalent to five slices of bread, and you thought you had to cut out bagels forever. Remember, this is not the case. There is no such

Sneaky ways to eat more and cut calories! Make these simple substitutions and you will be eating the same amount in terms of servings per food group, but you get a lot more food for a similar nutrient value. In other words, a lot more volume in each serving—not a bad deal!

● Switch from 1 serving of cheese (1½ oz) to 1 serving yogurt (one 8-oz container)

● Switch from 1 serving of bread (1 slice) to 1 serving mini rice cakes (5 rice cakes)

● Switch from 1 serving of pretzels ($\frac{3}{4}$ cup) to 1 serving of popcorn (3 cups)

● Switch from 1 serving of meat (3 oz) to an equivalent meat alternative such as lentils (1 cup)

● Switch from 1 serving of juice (6 oz) to 1 serving of cantaloupe (1 cup cubed melon)

● Switch from 1 serving of dried fruit ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup) to 1 serving of berries (1 cup)

Photos: Michael Kraus

How to still enjoy your favorite foods

Ask yourself this question: What is my favorite food? Whatever your answer, there's a good chance that its average portion is too large. Many people eat too much of the same foods, over and over again: pasta, meat entrées, bagels and muffins. Let's zero in on some of our favorite foods and determine how to move from hefty portions to smart-size portions.

Food	Hefty Portion
Bagel	5-7 oz (giant size)
Muffin	6-8 oz (larger size)
Cookie	4 oz (single serving)
Steak	24 oz (restaurant entrée)
Chicken/fish entrée	7-8 oz (restaurant entrée)
Pasta	3 cups (restaurant entrée)
Rice	pint/2 cups (Chinese takeout)
Roast beef/turkey/tuna sandwich	6-8 oz (local deli)
Pizza by the slice	14 oz (2 slices)
	14-16 oz (2 slices, extra cheese)
	16 cups (medium at theater)
	6 oz (hot pretzel from street vendor)
	64 oz (Double Gulp)
	32 oz (large)
	16 oz (pint)
	2½-5 oz (king or giant size)
	20 oz (vending machine size)
	24 oz (large can)
Popcorn	
Pretzels	
Soda (fountain)	
Soda (fast-food)	
Orange Juice	
Chocolate bar	
Soda bottle	
Beer	

Smart-Size Portion

Eat ½ or scoop out the center
 Muffin top (3 oz)
 1-2 Oreo size (½-1 oz)
 1½ decks of cards (4.5 oz)
 1½ decks of cards (4.5 oz)
 1½ baseballs (1½ cups)
 1 baseball (1 cup)

½ sandwich or 1½ decks of cards (4 oz)
 1 slice (7 oz)
 5-7 oz, 1 regular slice
 3 baseballs (3 cups)
 1-oz bag
 8 fl. oz (1 cup or ¼ Big Gulp)
 12 oz (child size)
 7-oz bottle
 2 squares
 8-oz bottle
 12-oz can

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thing as one portion size that is right for everybody. It's O.K. for you to pick and choose your portion, just as long as you understand how much food you can have during the day. You can include the occasional bagel, and you don't have to have a puny 3-ounce steak all

the time. It's awareness of what you're eating that matters.

Eat Smarter

Don't want to feel deprived? Pump up the volume of food you eat! It's O.K. to add volume to your diet, as long as you know which foods add bulk without adding too

many calories. The key is to fill up on more water-rich foods. Increase fresh veggies, fruits and veggie-based soups. Top sandwiches with salad greens, have half a sandwich plus a nice-size salad for lunch, add baby carrots as a snack, top your cereal or yogurt with berries or sliced bananas. For dessert at a restaurant, order fresh berries and a cappuccino made with skim milk and allow yourself a few bites of your dinner companion's dessert. Start your dinner with a tossed salad or a veggie-based 'soup, especially when at a restaurant. By doing so, you will be less likely to eat from the bread basket.

Portion shockers!

Here's how portions have grown through the years.

	Common Portion Size (in oz or fl. oz, unless noted)	
	1960	2000
Bagel	2-3	4-6
Muffin	2-3	5-7
Coca-Cola bottle	6.5	20
Chocolate bar	1	1.5-8
Potato chips, bag	1	2-4
McDonald's burger	1.5	1.5-8
McDonald's soda	7	12-42
McDonald's fries	2.4	2.4-7.1
Pasta entrée	1.5 cups	3 cups
Beer can	12	12-24

No-food zone

If you can't sit in front of the TV without constantly munching on snacks and loading up on drinks, declare a No-Food Zone on particular nights. If, say, Thursday is the night of your favorite TV lineup, it may be must-see TV night, but it's also must-stop-snacking-in-the-No-Food-Zone night! Tell yourself: You'll miss out on must-see TV shows if you're too busy eating. **FC**