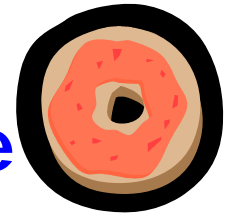




# Serving Size vs. Portion Size



The Food Guidance System lists and explains nutritional recommendations by the kinds and amounts (or servings) of food to eat each day.

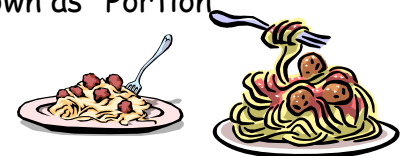
- The problem is that a **servicing size** and a **portion size** are different.

## What is a Serving?

It is probably smaller than you realize! For example:

- 1 cup of rice or pasta - is the size of a tennis ball or ice cream scoop. 1 cup of rice or pasta equals **TWO** servings.
- 3 ounces of meat - is the size of a deck of cards or cassette tape.
- 1 ounce of cheese - is the size of a pair of dice.
- 1 cup of ice cream - is the size of a large scoop or the size of a baseball.
- 1 teaspoon of butter or margarine - is the size of a postage stamp.
- 2 tablespoons of salad dressing - is the size of a ping pong ball.

If you are like most people, the recommended serving sizes are much smaller than the portions of food you eat. This phenomenon has become known as "Portion Distortion."



## What is Portion Distortion?

Simply put, the portions of food we eat are much larger than recommended serving sizes. This makes it more likely that we underestimate the amount of food that we eat and the calories we consume every day.

## Why Have Portion Sizes Changed?

We love value for our money. A large portion of food at a low cost makes people feel like they are getting a good deal. This creates a demand for larger portion sizes to draw consumers, and customers begin to expect larger and larger portions.



# Portion Size

If you think food portions are bigger than they used to be, you're right. Take a look at how "typical" restaurant portion sizes have grown over the past 20 years:

Food	Portion Size	
	Was	Now
 Soda	6 ounces (85 calories)	20 ounces (300 calories)
 Bagel	3-inch diameter (140 calories)	5 to 6 inches (350 calories or more)
 Chips	1 oz. bag (150 calories)	1.75 oz. "Grab Bag" (about 260 calories)
 Pasta	2 cups (280 calories without sauce or fat)	4 cups or more (560 calories or more without sauce or fat)
 Burger	2 oz. patty + bun (270 calories)	4 oz. patty and bun (430 calories)
 French Fries	2 ounces (210 calories)	5 ounces (540 calories)
 Dinner Plate	10-inch diameter	12-1/2 inch diameter

(Developed by the Children's Nutrition Research Center)

According to the National Restaurant Association's Dinner Decision Making study, most consumers rank portion size as one of the 10 "hallmarks of a great place."



# What is Portion Distortion?

The portions of food we eat are much larger than recommended serving sizes.

- Restaurant serving sizes have doubled in the past 20 years.
- Carbonated beverage bottles are up to 5 times their original serving size.
- Fast food drink and french fry portions are up to 4 times larger than their original size.
- Home cooks are serving larger portions to their families.
- Cookbook editors are changing the number of servings per recipe to account for the larger portions families are eating.



According to statistics from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the average number of calories Americans eat each day has risen from 1,854 to 2,002 over the last 20 years. This equals 148 calories per day. If these extra calories per day are not accounted for, they could add up to approximately 15 pounds every year.

