

Measurement Basics for Food and Nutrition

Understanding how to measure food accurately helps you get the right nutrition and follow recipes more easily. This guide explains why standard measurements matter, how to use common measuring tools, and tips for getting the most accurate results. Whether you're cooking at home or tracking what you eat, these basics can help you stay on track.

Why Standard Measurements Matter

Measuring food the right way is an important part of understanding nutrition and keeping a healthy weight.

Quick Guide to Measuring Tools

Unit	What it Means	Tips
c = cup	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 cup liquid = 8 oz or 240 mL (milliliters) 1 dry cup = the weight varies by food 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use dry measuring cups for solids, and liquid cups for fluids (see page 2)
oz = ounce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 ounce = 28.4 grams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a food scale to measure dry foods
Tbsp = tablespoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Tbsp = ½ oz or 15 mL or 14 g 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 tsp = 1 Tbsp Use labeled spoons
Tsp = teaspoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 tsp = 4.93 mL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use level measuring spoons
pc = piece	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pc = 1 piece, pcs = multiple pieces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use for whole items, like crackers or cookies

Measuring Tips

- Don't guess – use a measuring tool! It is easy to think you're eating less than you are.
- Use the right tool:
 - Dry food: Use a food scale and measure in grams (g)
 - Liquids: Use a clear measuring cup. Liquid is measured most accurately with a clear glass or plastic measure.



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- **Stick with U.S. serving standards** for consistency (unless otherwise labeled).
- **Serving size is not the same as portion size:**
 - A portion is how much you eat.
 - A serving is what’s listed on the nutrition label for a specific amount in that container.
- **Measure carefully.** When you’re measuring dry ingredients like rice or flour, use a knife to level it off (see picture on the right).
- **Read the nutrition label every time.** The same type of food may have different serving sizes depending on the package.
- Portion Size is the number of standardized servings you’ve taken or been provided which may be ½ serving, 1 serving, 1.5 servings, 2 servings, etc.



Measuring a level cup of flour

Measuring Tools

Measuring Cups – Dry



Liquid Measuring Cup



Measuring Spoons

3 teaspoons (tsp) = 1 tablespoon (tbsp)



Food Scale

Most accurate for dry foods—measure in grams (g)

