

Serving Sizes Made Simple

A fun, practical, and ink-friendly guide to common food-group equivalents



FOOD GROUP	WHAT COUNTS	VISUAL REMINDER
 VEGETABLES	1 cup raw or cooked vegetables 2 cups raw leafy greens	Fist or baseball = about 1 cup
 FRUITS	1 cup fruit or 100% fruit juice 1/2 cup dried fruit	Fist or baseball = about 1 cup
 GRAINS	1 slice bread; 1 cup ready-to-eat cereal 1/2 cup cooked rice, pasta, or cereal	Cupped hand = about 1/2 cup
 PROTEIN FOODS	1 oz meat, poultry, or fish; 1 egg 1/4 cup beans; 1 Tbsp peanut butter	Palm = about 3 oz for a meal portion
 DAIRY	1 cup milk, yogurt, or fortified soy milk 1 1/2 oz natural cheese	Fist = about 1 cup; cheese = 4 dice
 NUTS, SEEDS & SPREADS	1/2 oz nuts or seeds = 1 oz-eq protein 1 Tbsp peanut butter = 1 oz-eq protein	Thumb tip = about 1 Tbsp

YOUR PORTABLE PORTION GUIDE

 **FIST**
about 1 cup

 **CUPPED HAND**
about 1/2 cup

 **PALM**
about 3 oz

 **THUMB TIP**
about 1 Tbsp

PORTION vs. SERVING

A serving is a standard reference amount.
A portion is the amount you choose to eat.
They may be the same, smaller, or larger.

MEASURE ONCE, REMEMBER

Hand and object comparisons are estimates.
Compare your own hand, baseball, and tennis ball
with measuring cups before teaching the activity.

REFERENCES

1. USDA MyPlate: <https://www.myplate.gov/>
2. Oklahoma State University Extension, USDA MyPlate Plan: <https://extension.okstate.edu/fact-sheets/usda-myplate-daily-checklist>
3. Visual comparisons are educational estimates, not USDA measurements.
Daily needs vary by age, sex, height, weight, activity level, and health needs. This handout is for general education.