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## How Much Do I Need

### Quantity planning for appetizers and drinks

As you determine the appetizer quantity, consider what purpose the appetizers will serve. If you're serving appetizers before a main meal, you don't need as many as you do if the appetizers are the meal itself. Because appetizers are different from other food items, how much you need depends on several factors. Appetizers don't lend themselves to a quantity chart, per se, but let the following list guide you:

- **For appetizers preceding a full meal**, you should have at least four different types of appetizers and six to eight pieces (total) per person. For example, say you have 20 guests. In that case, you'd need at least 120 total appetizer pieces.
- **For appetizers without a meal**, you should have at least six different types of appetizers. You should also have 12 to 15 pieces (total) per person. For example, if you have 20 guests, you need at least 240 total appetizer pieces. This estimate is for a three-hour party. Longer parties require more appetizers.
- **The more variety you have, the smaller portion size each type of appetizer will need to have.** Therefore, you don't need to make as much of any one particular appetizer.
- **When you serve appetizers to a crowd, always include bulk-type appetizers.** Bulk-type foods are items that aren't individually made, such as dips or spreads. If you forgo the dips and spreads, you'll end up making hundreds of individual appetizer items, which may push you over the edge. To calculate bulk items, assume 1 ounce equals 1 piece.
- **Always try to have extra items, such as black and green olives and nuts, for extra filler.** When appetizers precede the meal, you should serve dinner within an hour. If more than an hour will pass before the meal, then you need to increase the number of appetizers. Once again, always err on the side of having too much rather than too little. Concerning drinks, let the following list guide you:
  - **Soft drinks:** One to two 8-ounce servings per person per hour.
  - **Punch:** One to two 4-ounce servings per person per hour.
  - **Tea:** One to two 8-ounce servings per person per hour.
  - **Coffee:** One to two 4-ounce servings per person per hour.
  - **Water:** Always provide it. Two standard serving pitchers are usually enough. Again, err on the side of having too much. If people are eating a lot and having fun, they tend to consume more liquid.

## Quantity planning for soups, sides, main courses, and desserts

The following tables can help you determine how much food you need for some typical soups, sides, main courses, and desserts. If the item you're serving isn't listed here, you can probably find an item in the same food group to guide you.

You may notice a bit of a discrepancy between the serving per person and the crowd servings. The per-person serving is based on a plated affair (where someone else has placed the food on the plates and the plates are served to the guests). In contrast, buffet-style affairs typically figure at a lower serving per person because buffets typically feature more side dish items than a plated meal does. Don't use the quantity tables as an exact science; use them to guide you and help you make decisions for your particular crowd. If you're serving a dish that you know everyone loves, then make more than the table suggests. If you have a dish that isn't as popular, you can get by with less.

### Soups and Stews

<b>Soup or Stew</b>	<b>Per Person</b>	<b>Crowd of 25</b>	<b>Crowd of 50</b>
Served as a first course	1 cup	5 quarts	2-1/2 gallons
Served as an entree	1-1/2 to 2 cups	2 to 2-1/2 gallons	4 gallons

### Main Courses

<b>Entree</b>	<b>Per Person</b>	<b>Crowd of 25</b>	<b>Crowd of 50</b>
Baby-back ribs, pork spareribs, beef short ribs	1 pound	25 pounds	50 pounds
Casserole	N/A	2 or 3, 9-x-13-inch	4 or 5 9-x-13-inch
Chicken, turkey, duck (boneless)	1/2 pound	13 pounds	25 pounds
Chicken or turkey (with bones)	3/4 to 1 pound	19 pounds	38 pounds
Chili, stew, stroganoff, and other chopped meats	5 to 6 ounces	8 pounds	15 pounds
Ground beef	1/2 pound	13 pounds	25 pounds
Maine lobster (about 2 pounds each) <sup>1</sup>		25	50
Oysters, clams, and mussels (medium to large)	6 to 10 pieces	100 to 160 pieces	200 to 260 pieces
Pasta	4 to 5 ounces	7 pounds	16 pounds
Pork	14 ounces	22 pounds	44 pounds
Roast (with bone)	14 to 16 ounces	22 to 25 pounds	47 to 50 pounds
Roast cuts (boneless)	1/2 pound	13 pounds	25 pounds
Shrimp (large: 16 to 20 per pound)	5 to 7 shrimp	7 pounds	14 pounds
Steak cuts (T-bone, porterhouse, rib-eye)	16 to 24 ounces per person		
Turkey (whole)	1 pound	25 pounds	50 pounds

## Side Dishes

<b>Side Dish</b>	<b>Per Person</b>	<b>Crowd of 25</b>	<b>Crowd of 50</b>
Asparagus, carrots, cauliflower, broccoli, green beans, corn kernels, peas, black-eyed peas, and so on	3 to 4 ounces	4 pounds	8 pounds
Corn on the cob (broken in halves when serving buffet-style)	1 ear	20 ears	45 ears
Pasta (cooked)	2 to 3 ounces	3-1/2 pounds	7 pounds
Potatoes and yams	1 (medium)	6 pounds	12 pounds
Rice and grains (cooked)	1-1/2 ounces	2-1/2 pounds	5 pounds

## Side Salads

<b>Ingredient</b>	<b>Per Person</b>	<b>Crowd of 25</b>	<b>Crowd of 50</b>
Croutons (medium size)	N/A	2 cups	4 cups
Dressing (served on the side)	N/A	4 cups	8 cups
Fruit salad	N/A	3 quarts	6 quarts
Lettuce (iceberg or romaine)	N/A	4 heads	8 heads
Lettuce (butter or red leaf)	N/A	6 heads	12 heads
Potato or macaroni salad	N/A	8 pounds	16 pounds
Shredded cabbage for coleslaw (heads)	N/A	6 to 8 cups (1 large head)	12 to 16 cups (2 large)
Vegetables (such as tomato and cucumber)	N/A	3 cups	6 cups

## Breads

<b>Bread</b>	<b>Per Person</b>	<b>Crowd of 25</b>	<b>Crowd of 50</b>
Croissants or muffins	1-1/2 per person	3-1/2 dozen	7 dozen
Dinner rolls	1-1/2 per person	3-1/2 dozen	7 dozen
French or Italian bread	N/A	Two 18-inch loaves	Four 18-inch loaves

## Desserts

<b>Dessert</b>	<b>Per Person</b>	<b>Crowd of 25</b>	<b>Crowd of 50</b>
Brownies or bars	1 to 2 per person	2-1/2 to 3 dozen	5-1/2 to 6 dozen
Cheesecake	2-inch wedge	Two 9-inch cakes	Four 9-inch cakes
Cobbler	1 cup	Two 9-x-9-x-2-inch	Four 9-x-9-x-2-inch
Cookies	2 to 3	3 to 4 dozen	6 to 8 dozen
Ice cream or sorbet	8 ounces	1 gallon	2 gallons
Layered cake or angel food cake	1 slice	Two 8-inch cakes	Four 8-inch cakes
Pie	3-inch wedge	Two or three 9-inch pies	Four or five 9-inch pies
Pudding, trifles, custards, and the like	1 cup	1 gallon	2 gallons
Sheet cake	2-x-2-inch piece	1/4 sheet cake	1/2 sheet cake