



# PORTION CONTROL

Uttering the term “portion control” (especially in a month like January) usually conjures up thoughts of dieting and deprivation to lose a few pounds. But the need to practice proper portion control goes beyond squeezing back into your “skinny” jeans, to an issue that is affecting our planet on a global scale – food waste.

Practicing portion control doesn't necessarily mean eating less, it means planning, shopping and cooking smarter so that less food ends up in the trash and more money stays in your wallet.

Portion sizes are a notoriously tricky thing to understand, especially when restaurant portions continue to rise, skewing our understanding of what's “ideal.”

When it comes to portion sizes -- and plenty of other things -- bigger is not in fact better. Better is better. Better tends to look like food raised in a way that's more sustainable for both people and planet.

A standard dinner plate size is nine inches across. With that set, you can now use proportions to understand better how much of each food group you need. Veggies, like little potatoes, leafy greens, broccoli, cauliflower, and squash (to name a few) should take up about half of your plate. For the remaining half, one quarter of that should be grains (rice, quinoa, pasta, etc.) and the other one quarter should be your protein source....

Household refrigerators in North America look like commercial ones in Europe. Filling up those massive refrigerators means buying more food, despite household size shrinking in the last five years. Shopping carts in supermarkets have grown 20% in the last 20 years. And most of shopping baskets are on wheels today so they are easier to roll after you buy food that you actually don't need. The Super Packs, Mega Packs and quantity discounts are useful, if you end up using all the food, but mostly it's yet another food waste trap.

With that in mind, here are five tips that you can use to minimize food waste in your life:

## Plan wisely before cooking

Most adults eat around 750 grams (1.65 pounds) of food per meal, including bread. When we cook at home, we tend to make much more food than people can actually eat because we fear not having enough food for the family or guests. To avoid cooking too much food, always cook 30% less than you usually do, it will target just the right amount of food for your guests.

## Choose smaller shopping carts and shopping baskets

In the supermarket, make sure to choose smaller shopping cars when possible to avoid buying too much. If the shopping basket is on wheels, it may make sense to still carry it by hand. The bigger the shopping cart and shopping basket is, the more you will be tempted to fill it up with food that you don't actually need. The same holds true with your refrigerator, but that is harder to change!

## Ask yourself if you really need those Mega Packs and bulk discounts

If you have a large family or are hosting a large gathering, they may make sense. Otherwise, it might not be the best idea. And all of that money saved from buying in bulk disappears when you don't eat a significant amount of those foods.

## Use smaller plates and dishes

A [Danish survey](#) shows that if the plate size is reduced by just 9%, the food waste can be reduced by over 25%. Further justification for smaller plates: American researcher [Brian Wansink](#) found that we don't even notice when we eat portions that are 20% smaller. Meanwhile, we tend to like our plates to be fairly full. By reducing the size of the plate, you ensure that you don't overfeed yourself or the trash bin.

## Order the right amount for you

Oftentimes in a café or restaurant, we cannot predict how much food will arrive. Thus, it's a good idea to ask the waiter about the portion sizes. If the amount seems like more than you can or want to eat, it may make sense to share it, or order two starters. And asking for a doggy bag for those good leftovers is always the smart solution to restaurant excess.



Fortunately, the "less is more" trend is gaining steam in the food world. Many people are starting to eat more wisely. There are several trends at play here: food waste awareness, global population and focus on the world's resources are all increasing. People will change their behavior as they become aware that they are spending huge amounts of money and time to feed their trash bins.

The focus on food waste is finally spreading all over the world: from the [United Nations](#) to [Canada](#) to ordinary consumers around the globe. The anti-food waste revolution has begun and everybody can join in. It's in your control. All you have to do is become the food activist in your kitchen -- starting right when you finish this article. Now!

[Huffington Post Article: How to Control Portions and Reduce Food Waste. By Selina Juul- Founder of Stop Wasting Food movement, Food Waste Expert, Food Activist, Author, International Keynote Speaker, TEDx Speaker](#)