

How Much to Cook When You Cook for a Crowd

Part of the [Cooking For Crowds For Dummies Cheat Sheet](#)

When you're cooking for a crowd, knowing how much to cook is your biggest concern. The following tables help you determine how much food you need to prepare — everything from appetizers through desserts — for your big gatherings:

Appetizers

Type of Appetizer	Number of Different Appetizer Types	Per Person	Crowd of 25	Crowd of 50
Appetizers preceding a full meal	At least 4	6 to 8 pieces	150 to 200 total appetizers	300 to 400 total appetizers
Appetizers without a meal	At least 6	12 to 15 pieces	300 to 375 total appetizers	600 to 750 total appetizers

Drinks

Type of Drink	Per Person
Soft drinks	1 to 2 eight-ounce servings per hour
Punch	1 to 2 four-ounce servings per hour
Tea	1 to 2 eight-ounce servings per hour
Coffee	1 to 2 four-ounce servings per hour

Soups and [Stews](#)

Soup or Stew	Per Person	Crowd of 25	Crowd of 50
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

Entree	Per Person	Crowd of 25	Crowd of 50
Baby-back ribs, pork spareribs, beef short ribs	1 pound	25 pounds	50 pounds
Casserole	N/A	2 to 3 13-x-9-inch casseroles	4 to 5 13-x-9-inch casseroles

Chicken, turkey, or 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)	1	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	16 to 24 ounces per person	16 to 24 ounces per person
Turkey (whole)	1 pound	25 pounds	50 pounds

Side Dishes

Side Dish	Per Person	Crowd of 25	Crowd of 50
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

Desserts

Dessert	Per Person	Crowd of 25	Crowd of 50
Brownies or bars	1 to 2 per person	2 1/2 to 3 dozen	5 1/2 to 6 dozen
Cheesecake	2-inch wedge	2 9-inch cheesecakes	4 9-inch cheesecakes
Cobbler	1 cup	2 9-x-9-x-2-inch pans	4 9-x-9-x-2-inch pans
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	2 8-inch cakes	4 8-inch cakes
Pie	3-inch wedge	2 to 3 9-inch pies	4 to 5 9-inch pies
Pudding, trifles, and the like	1 cup	1 gallon	2 gallons
Sheet cake	2-x-2-inch piece	1/4 sheet cake	1/2 sheet cake