

# Crediting Legumes in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

This guidance applies to meals and snacks served in child care centers, family day care homes, emergency shelters, at-risk afterschool care centers, and adult day care centers that participate in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).



Legumes include cooked dry beans and peas, such as black beans, black-eyed peas (mature, dry), edamame (soybeans), garbanzo beans (chickpeas), kidney beans, lentils, navy beans, soy beans, split peas, and white beans. CACFP facilities may credit legumes as the vegetables component or the meat/meat alternates component, but not both in the same meal. Menu planners must determine in advance how to credit legumes in a meal. A  $\frac{1}{4}$ -cup serving of legumes credits as either  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of the vegetables component or 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component.

CACFP facilities may credit legumes as either component in different meals. For example, lentils may credit as the vegetables component at one lunch and as the meat/meat alternates component at another lunch. If a meal includes two servings of legumes, the CACFP facility may choose to credit one serving as the vegetables component and one serving as the meat/meat alternates component. For example, garbanzo beans in a salad may credit as the vegetables component and kidney beans in chili may credit as the meat/meat alternates component.



## Crediting Legumes as Vegetables

Foods in the vegetables component credit based on volume, not weight. For example, a  $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup serving (8 tablespoons) of legumes credits as  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of the vegetables component. The minimum creditable amount for the vegetables component is  $\frac{1}{8}$  cup (2 tablespoons). A food must contain the minimum required amount of legumes, excluding added ingredients. For example, a serving of baked beans must contain  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of beans, excluding added ingredients such as sauce and pork fat, to credit as  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of legumes.

The menu planner must round down the amount of legumes in the serving to the nearest  $\frac{1}{8}$  cup (2 tablespoons). For example, a recipe with  $2\frac{1}{2}$  tablespoons of kidney beans per serving credits as  $\frac{1}{8}$  cup of the vegetables component. If the menu item contains less than the full serving of the vegetables component, the meal must include additional vegetables to provide the full serving for each grade group.

The USDA's *CACFP Best Practices* recommends at least one weekly serving each of the five vegetable subgroups, including legumes. For more information, see the CSDE's handout, *Vegetable Subgroups in the CACFP*.

# Crediting Legumes in the CACFP

## Crediting Legumes as Meat/Meat Alternates

Legumes credit as the meat/meat alternates component based on volume. A ¼-cup serving (4 tablespoons) of legumes credits as 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component. The minimum creditable amount of legumes is 1 tablespoon (¼ ounce). If a legume menu item contains less than the full serving of the meat/meat alternates component, the meal must include another meat/meat alternate to provide the full serving for each age group. At lunch and supper, CACFP facilities must serve the meat/meat alternates component as the main dish, or as the main dish and one other food item.

The CACFP breakfast meal pattern does not require the meat/meat alternates component. CACFP facilities may substitute the meat/meat alternates component (including legumes) for the entire grains component at breakfast up to three times per week. For more information, see the USDA's handout, [Serving Meat and Meat Alternates at Breakfast in the CACFP](#).

The menu planner must round down the amount of legumes to the nearest ¼ ounce of the meat/meat alternates component. For example, a recipe that contains 2½ tablespoons (0.625 ounce of meat/meat alternates) of kidney beans per serving rounds down to 0.5 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component. Table 1 shows the serving size (volume) of legumes that equates to ounces of the meat/meat alternates component.

<b>Serving size (volume)</b>	<b>Meal pattern contribution (ounces)</b>
8 tablespoons (½ cup)	2
7 tablespoons	1¾
6 tablespoons (¾ cup)	1½
5 tablespoons	1¼
<b>4 tablespoons (¼ cup)</b>	<b>1</b>
3 tablespoons	¾
2 tablespoons (⅓ cup)	½
1 tablespoon (⅙ cup)	¼ (minimum creditable amount)

# Crediting Legumes in the CACFP

## Roasted or Dried Legumes

Menu planners may credit roasted or dried legumes, such as garbanzo beans (chick peas) and soy beans, as either the meat/meat alternates component or the vegetables component, but not both in the same meal.



- **Meat/meat alternates:** Roasted or dried legumes credit as the meat/meat alternates component the same as nuts and seeds, which credit based on weight (ounces). A 1-ounce serving of roasted or dried legumes provides 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component. At lunch and supper, roasted or dried legumes cannot credit for more than half of the meat/meat alternates component. Menu planners must combine roasted or dried legumes with another food from the meat/meat alternates component to meet the full requirement for each age group.
- **Vegetables:** Roasted or dried legumes credit as the legumes subgroup of the vegetables component based on volume (cups). For example,  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of roasted or dried legumes credits as  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of the vegetables component.

**Note:** To prevent the risk of choking, the USDA recommends that CACFP facilities consider participants' age and developmental readiness when deciding whether to offer roasted or dried legumes. This consideration is especially important when serving young children, older adults, and participants with disabilities.

# Crediting Legumes in the CACFP

## Crediting Legumes in Recipes

A recipe's crediting information depends on whether the menu planner credits the legumes as the vegetables component or the meat/meat alternates component. To determine the crediting information for a recipe, the menu planner must first determine the total volume (cups) of legumes in the recipe.

- **Vegetables:** The minimum creditable amount of the vegetable component is  $\frac{1}{8}$  (0.125) cup. To determine the number of  $\frac{1}{8}$ -cup servings of legumes in one serving of the recipe, divide the total cups of legumes in one serving of the recipe by 0.125, then round down to the nearest  $\frac{1}{8}$  cup. Table 2 shows an example of how to calculate the vegetables contribution of legumes in a recipe.
- **Meat/meat alternates:** A  $\frac{1}{4}$ -cup (0.25) serving of legumes provides 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component. To determine the ounces of the meat/meat alternates component in one serving of the recipe, divide the total cups of legumes in one serving of the recipe by 0.25, then round down to the nearest  $\frac{1}{4}$  ounce. Table 3 shows an example of how to calculate the meat/meat alternates contribution of legumes in a recipe.

For assistance with recipe calculations, use the equivalent volume measures in the ICN's *Basics at a Glance Portion Control Poster* and the decimal fraction equivalents chart (table 6) in the "Introduction" section of the USDA's *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* (FBG). For information on standardized recipes, see section 2 of the CSDE's guides, *Meal Pattern Requirements for CACFP Child Care Programs* and *Meal Pattern Requirements for CACFP Adult Day Care Centers*, and the CSDE's handout, *Standardized Recipe Form for the CACFP*.



## Crediting Legumes in the CACFP

**Table 2. Calculating the vegetable contribution of legumes in a recipe**

A recipe provides 50 servings and contains 1 gallon and 1 quart of chickpeas. How many cups of vegetables (legumes subgroup) does the recipe provide per serving?

1. Determine the total cups of legumes in the recipe: Use the ICN’s *Basics at a Glance Portion Control Poster* to convert larger measurements to cups. Use the decimal fraction equivalents chart (table 6) in the FBG’s “Introduction” section to convert fractions to decimals.

**A**    **20**    cups

1 gallon (16 cups) plus 1 quart (4 cups) of chickpeas equals 20 cups of chickpeas.

2. Number of servings in the recipe:

**B**    **50**    servings

3. Determine the cups of legumes per serving: Divide the total cups of legumes (A) by the number of servings in the recipe (B).

**C**    **0.4**    cups per serving \*

20 cups of chickpeas divided by 50 servings equals 0.4 cup of chickpeas per serving.

**\*Note:** If the decimal amount for the cups of legumes per serving (C) converts to an **even multiple of 1/8 cup**, such as 0.5 (1/2) cup, 0.25 (1/4) cup, or 0.125 (1/8) cup, this is the final meal pattern contribution for the legumes subgroup of the vegetables component. **Do not complete steps 4 and 5.**

4. Determine the number of 1/8-cup servings (minimum creditable amount) of legumes in one serving of the recipe: Divide the cups of legumes per serving (C) by 0.125.

**D**    **3.2**    servings of 1/8 cup

0.4 cup of chickpeas per serving divided by 0.125 equals 3.2 servings of 1/8 cup.

5. Round down the number in D to nearest 1/8-cup serving.  
3.2 servings round down to 3 servings of 1/8 cup (or 3/8 cup).  
One serving of the recipe contains 3/8 cup of the vegetables component.

**E**    **3**    servings of 1/8 cup

**Meal pattern contribution:** 3/8 cup of the legumes subgroup

## Crediting Legumes in the CACFP

**Table 3. Calculating the meat/meat alternates contribution of legumes**

A recipe provides 50 servings and contains 1 gallon and 1 quart of chickpeas. How many ounces of the meat/meat alternates component does the recipe provide per serving?

- |  |  |          |                                 |
|--|--|----------|---------------------------------|
| <p>1. Determine the total cups of legumes in the recipe: Use the ICN’s <i>Basics at a Glance Portion Control Poster</i> to convert larger measurements to cups. Use the decimal fraction equivalents chart (table 6) in the FBG’s “Introduction” section to convert fractions to decimals.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">1 gallon (16 cups) plus 1 quart (4 cups) of chickpeas equals 20 cups of chickpeas.</p> | <table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="background-color: #800040; color: white; padding: 5px;"><b>A</b></td> <td style="background-color: #fff9c4; padding: 5px;"><b>20</b> cups</td> </tr> </table>                  | <b>A</b> | <b>20</b> cups                  |
| <b>A</b>   | <b>20</b> cups   |          |                                 |
| <p>2. Number of servings in the recipe:</p>  | <table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="background-color: #800040; color: white; padding: 5px;"><b>B</b></td> <td style="background-color: #fff9c4; padding: 5px;"><b>50</b> servings</td> </tr> </table>              | <b>B</b> | <b>50</b> servings              |
| <b>B</b>   | <b>50</b> servings   |          |                                 |
| <p>3. Determine the cups of legumes per serving: Divide the total cups of legumes (A) by the number of servings in the recipe (B).</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">20 cups of chickpeas divided by 50 servings equals 0.4 cup of chickpeas per serving.</p>   | <table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="background-color: #800040; color: white; padding: 5px;"><b>C</b></td> <td style="background-color: #fff9c4; padding: 5px;"><b>0.4</b> cups per serving</td> </tr> </table>     | <b>C</b> | <b>0.4</b> cups per serving     |
| <b>C</b>   | <b>0.4</b> cups per serving  |          |                                 |
| <p>4. Determine the ounces of meat/meat alternates per serving: Divide the cups of legumes per serving (C) by 0.25 (1 ounce = ¼ cup (0.25) of legumes).</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">0.4 cups of chickpeas per serving divided by 0.25 equals 1.6 ounces of meat/meat alternates. *</p>  | <table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="background-color: #800040; color: white; padding: 5px;"><b>D</b></td> <td style="background-color: #fff9c4; padding: 5px;"><b>1.6</b> ounces per serving *</td> </tr> </table> | <b>D</b> | <b>1.6</b> ounces per serving * |
| <b>D</b>   | <b>1.6</b> ounces per serving *  |          |                                 |
| <p>5. Round down the number in D to the nearest ¼ ounce equivalent.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">1.6 ounces rounds down to 1.5 ounces of meat/meat alternates. One serving of the recipe contains 1.5 ounces of the meat/meat alternates component. *</p>  | <table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="background-color: #800040; color: white; padding: 5px;"><b>E</b></td> <td style="background-color: #fff9c4; padding: 5px;"><b>1.5</b> ounces per serving *</td> </tr> </table> | <b>E</b> | <b>1.5</b> ounces per serving * |
| <b>E</b>   | <b>1.5</b> ounces per serving *  |          |                                 |

**Meal pattern contribution:** 1.5 ounces of the meat/meat alternates component \*

# Crediting Legumes in the CACFP

## Pasta Products Made of Legume Flours

CACFP facilities may credit pasta products made of legumes flours as either the vegetables component or the meat/meat alternates component, but not both in the same meal.

- **Meat/meat alternates:** Crediting pasta products that contain legume flours as the meat/meat alternates component is the same as crediting legumes as the meat/meat alternates component. A ½-cup serving of cooked pasta made of 100 percent legume flours credits as 2 ounces of the meat/meat alternates component. **Note:** The pasta must be offered with additional meat/meat alternates, such as tofu, cheese, or meat. The USDA's intent for this requirement is to ensure that CACFP facilities offer meat/meat alternates in a form that is recognizable to students. The USDA emphasizes the importance of the nutrition education aspect of the CACFP, which includes the goal of helping participants easily recognize the key food groups that contribute to a healthy meal.
- **Vegetables:** Pasta products that contain vegetable flours from one vegetable subgroup may credit toward the appropriate vegetable subgroup. For example, ½ cup of pasta made of 100 percent red lentil flour credits as ½ cup of the legumes subgroup.

Alternatively, manufacturers and CACFP facilities may credit legume flour pasta using the bean flour yield information on page C-1 of [Appendix C](#) of the FBG, or with appropriate documentation on the manufacturer's PFS. For more information, see the USDA's resources, *Product Formulation Statement for Meat/Meat Alternates* and *Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer's PFS*.

## Resources

Appendix C: Food Items for Further Processing, Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):

[https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/files/Reports/USDA\\_FBG\\_FoodItemsForFurtherProcessing\\_YieldTable.pdf](https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/files/Reports/USDA_FBG_FoodItemsForFurtherProcessing_YieldTable.pdf)

CACFP Best Practices (USDA):

[https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/cacfp/CACFP\\_bestpractices.pdf](https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/cacfp/CACFP_bestpractices.pdf)

Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternates in the CACFP (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/CreditMMA.pdf>.

Crediting Foods in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers (CSDE webpage):

<http://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-CACFP-Adult-Day-Care-Centers>

Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE webpage):

<http://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-CACFP-Child-Care-Programs>

Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-for-child-nutrition-programs>

## Crediting Legumes in the CACFP

Meal Patterns for CACFP Adult Day Care Centers (CSDE webpage):

<http://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-CACFP-Adult-Centers>

Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE webpage):

<http://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-CACFP-Child-Care-Programs>

Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Menu-Planning>

Product Formulation Statement for Meat/Meat Alternates (USDA):

[https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS\\_Documenting\\_Meat\\_Meat\\_Alternate\\_Nov\\_2019.pdf](https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS_Documenting_Meat_Meat_Alternate_Nov_2019.pdf)

Product Formulation Statement for Vegetables and Fruits (USDA):

[https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS\\_Documenting\\_Vegetables\\_Subgroups\\_Fruits.pdf](https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS_Documenting_Vegetables_Subgroups_Fruits.pdf)

Reviewer's Checklist for Evaluating Manufacturer Product Formulation Statements for Meat/Meat Alternates (USDA):

[https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/reviewer\\_checklist.pdf](https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/reviewer_checklist.pdf)

Sample Completed Product Formulation Statement for Fruits (USDA):

<https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFSsamplefruits.pdf>

Sample Completed Product Formulation Statement for Vegetables (USDA):

<https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFSsamplevegetables.pdf>

Serving Meat and Meat Alternates at Breakfast in the CACFP (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/tn/CACFPMeatAlt.pdf>

Standardized Recipe Form for the CACFP (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/StdRecipeCACFP.doc>

Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement (USDA):

<https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/manufacturerPFStipsheet.pdf>

USDA Memo SP 26-2019, CACFP 13-2019 and SFSP 12-2019: Crediting Pasta Products Made of Vegetable Flour in the Child Nutrition Programs:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/crediting-pasta-products-made-vegetable-flour-child-nutrition-programs>

Using Product Formulation Statements in the CACFP (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/PFSscacfp.pdf>

Vegetable Subgroups in the CACFP (CSDE):

<http://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/VeggroupCACFP.pdf>



## Crediting Legumes in the CACFP



For more information, visit the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) and [Crediting Foods in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers](#) webpages, or contact the [CACFP staff](#) in the CSDE's Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841.

This handout is available at <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CreditLegumesCACFP.pdf>.

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- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

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