

Crediting **Fruits** in the **Child Nutrition Programs** Tip Sheet



Fruits are a required component for reimbursable meals in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), the School Breakfast Program (SBP), the Preschool lunch meal pattern, and the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) lunch and supper meals. However, this requirement can also be met with a vegetable (with the exception of NSLP). Fruits may be served as part of a reimbursable meal to fulfill the combined fruits and vegetables requirement for Preschool and CACFP breakfasts, as well as in the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). They may also be served as one of the two required meal components for a reimbursable snack in all Child Nutrition Programs.

Fruit Requirements



- Fruits may be fresh, frozen, dried, canned (packed in water, fruit juice, or light syrup), and/or pasteurized, full-strength fruit juice, referred to as 100% juice. Examples of creditable fruits can be found in the "Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs" (FBG) at <https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/>.
- The minimum creditable serving size for fruit is $\frac{1}{8}$ cup. **Note:** Minimum creditable amounts do not apply to the infant meal pattern.



- Pureed fruits credit as juice when served in a smoothie.



- Fruits credit toward a meal based on the volume served (except for dried fruit).
 - Whole dried fruit and whole dried fruit pieces credit at twice the volume served in school meal programs and CACFP.
 - Example: $\frac{1}{8}$ cup of dried cranberries credits as $\frac{1}{4}$ cup fruit.
 - $\frac{1}{8}$ cup of any fruit is the minimum serving size that may be creditable. For example, although dried fruit credits as twice the volume served, $\frac{1}{16}$ cup (1 Tbsp) of dried fruit cannot be offered to count as $\frac{1}{8}$ cup, because $\frac{1}{16}$ cup is less than the minimum serving size that may be creditable.
 - **Note:** In SFSP and NSLP afterschool snack service (NSLP afterschool snacks), dried fruit credits as volume served. Dried fruit credits as twice the volume served in NSLP afterschool snacks by no later than July 1, 2025.



- Menu items in school meal programs and CACFP that are mixtures of fruits and vegetables (e.g., fruit salsa made with peaches and red peppers), must be credited separately for the fruits and the vegetables components.

More training, menu planning, and nutrition education materials can be found at TeamNutrition.USDA.gov.

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Coconut Credits in Child Nutrition Programs

- Coconut (fresh or frozen) credits as a fruit based on the volume served.
- Like other dried fruit, dried coconut credits at twice the volume served in school meal programs, CACFP, and NSLP afterschool snacks (by July 1, 2025).
- Coconut water, **labeled as 100% juice**, credits as fruit juice per volume served.

Products that Do Not Contribute Toward the Meal Pattern Requirements

- ✗ Snack-type foods made from fruits (e.g., fried banana chips, fruit drops, fruit strips)
- ✗ Freeze-dried fruits (unless rehydrated)
- ✗ Pickle relish, jam, jelly, or other condiments
- ✗ Home-canned products (for food safety reasons)
- ✗ Coconut flour, coconut milk, and coconut oil

Fruit Juice

- Pasteurized, 100% fruit juice (in either liquid, gelled, or frozen form) may be used to meet the fruits requirement of reimbursable meals or snacks.
- Juice concentrates can be used only when reconstituted to 100% juice, and can be served either as liquid, gelled, or frozen juice.
- Juice may be used as one component of a snack when the other component **is not** a beverage (e.g., fluid milk).
- Juice does not credit when used as an ingredient in another food or beverage product, with the exception of smoothies.



Serving Fruit and Fruit Juice in Child Nutrition Programs

NSLP Afterschool Snack Service

- 100% fruit juice may count toward the entire fruits component.*
- Juice may not be served when milk is served as the only other component.

Summer Food Service Program

- Fruit or vegetable juice must be full-strength for breakfast and snacks.
- For lunch and supper, 100% vegetable or fruit juice may be counted to meet not more than 1/2 of the vegetables or fruits requirement.

CACFP – Infants

- Fruit and vegetable juices must not be served.
- A serving of fruit is required when the infant is developmentally ready to accept it.

CACFP – Children and Adults

- Pasteurized, 100% juice may only be used to meet the vegetables or fruits requirement at one meal per day, including snack.**
- At breakfast, either vegetables, fruits or portions of both may fulfill the combined vegetables and fruits requirement.
- At lunch and supper, a vegetable may be used to meet the entire fruits requirement.

School Meal Programs (NSLP and SBP)

- No more than 1/2 of the total weekly fruits offered may be met with 100% fruit juice.
- For breakfast, vegetables may be substituted for fruits. If vegetables are substituted 2 or more days a week, then at least two vegetable subgroups must be offered.

Preschool

- Pasteurized, 100% juice may only be used to meet the vegetables or fruits requirement at one meal per day, including snack.**
- At breakfast, either vegetables, fruits, or portions of both may fulfill the combined vegetables and fruits requirement.
- At lunch, a vegetable may be used to meet the entire fruits requirement if two different vegetables are served.

*Effective July 1, 2025, no more than 1/2 the total weekly fruits offered may be met with 100% fruit juice for NSLP afterschool snacks.

**Juice limit is measured by program. For example, if a school serves lunch to preschoolers under NSLP and a snack through CACFP, the school can serve juice at both lunch and snack, though it is best practice to serve no more than once daily.



Test Your Skills!

True or False

Select the correct answer.

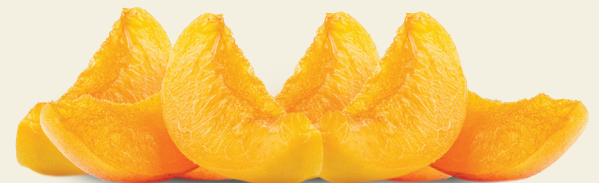
- School meals can offer up to half the weekly fruits as 100% juice.
 True False
- The minimum creditable serving size for fruit is ¼ cup.
 True False
- Mixed fruit and vegetable menu items must credit separately as a fruit and a vegetable and each component must contain a minimum of ⅓ cup for school meal programs and CACFP.
 True False
- Organic fried banana chips are creditable.
 True False
- A smoothie that contains 8 fluid ounces of fat-free milk, ½ cup blueberry puree, and 4 oz low-fat yogurt can credit as ½ cup 100% fruit juice.
 True False
- Students can take ½ cup of apricots to meet the minimum fruits requirement for a reimbursable lunch meal.
 True False

How Much?

You've decided to add peaches to the salad bar. You're using 20-pound bags of frozen peaches. According to the FBG, one 20-pound bag of sliced frozen peaches provides 147.40 quarter-cup servings of thawed frozen peaches with the liquid. Use the FBG entry below to answer the questions.

1. Food As Purchased, AP	2. Purchase Unit	3. Servings per Purchase Unit, EP	4. Serving Size per Meal Contribution	5. Purchase Units for 100 Servings	6. Additional Information
Peaches, frozen <i>Sliced, Sweetened or Unsweetened, Includes USDA Foods</i>	20 lb Bag	147.40	1/4 cup thawed, fruit and liquid	0.68	20-lb Bag = about 36-7/8 cups thawed peaches and liquid

- How many half-cup servings will one 20-pound bag of thawed peaches with the liquid provide? _____
- If you want to serve 110 quarter-cup servings of peaches, thawed with fruit and liquid, how many pounds of frozen peaches will you need? _____



- School meals can offer up to half the weekly fruits as 100% juice.
True: Up to half of the fruits offered at school can be in the form of 100% juice.
- The minimum creditable serving size for fruit is $\frac{1}{4}$ cup.
False: The minimum creditable serving size for fruit is $\frac{1}{8}$ cup.
- Mixed fruit and vegetable menu items must credit separately as a fruit and a vegetable and each component must contain a minimum of $\frac{1}{8}$ cup for school meal programs and CACFP.
True: For both school meal programs and CACFP, fruits and vegetables present in the same dish must credit separately for the fruits or vegetables component and contain a minimum of $\frac{1}{8}$ cup fruit or $\frac{1}{8}$ cup vegetable.
- Organic fried banana chips are creditable.
False: Snack-type foods made from fruits, such as fried banana chips do not contribute to the meal pattern requirements.
- A smoothie that contains 8 fluid ounces of fat-free milk, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup blueberry puree, and 4 oz low-fat yogurt can credit as $\frac{1}{2}$ cup 100% fruit juice.
True: Fruit served in a smoothie credits based on the pureed volume, in its thawed state, if frozen. The pureed fruit in a smoothie credits as 100% fruit juice.
- Students can take $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of apricots to meet the minimum fruits requirement for a reimbursable lunch meal.
True: In order for a lunch to be reimbursable, the daily minimum amount of fruit offered must be $\frac{1}{2}$ cup for students in Kindergarten through 8th grade and 1 cup for students in grades 9 through 12. Under Offer versus Serve, students must take $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit or vegetable plus two other meal components at lunch in order for the meal to be considered reimbursable.

How Much?

You've decided to add peaches to the salad bar. You're using 20-pound bags of frozen peaches. According to the FBG, one 20-pound bag of sliced frozen peaches provides 147.40 quarter-cup servings of thawed frozen peaches with the liquid.

- How many half-cup servings will one 20-pound bag of thawed peaches with the liquid provide?

73 half-cup servings

One 20-pound bag of frozen peaches provides 147.40 quarter-cup servings thawed fruit with liquid. We know that 2 quarter-cup servings equal 1 half-cup serving ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup + $\frac{1}{4}$ cup = $\frac{1}{2}$ cup). Therefore, if we divide the number of quarter cups by 2, we will get the number of half-cup servings:

147.40 quarter-cup servings \div 2 = 73.7 half-cup servings, which rounds down to 73 half-cup servings.

- If you want to serve 110 quarter-cup servings of peaches, thawed with fruit and liquid, how many pounds of frozen peaches will you need? **15 pounds**

If there are 147.40 quarter-cup servings in a 20-pound bag, then the desired number of quarter-cup servings must be divided by 147.40 to calculate the portion of the (20-pound) bag that will be needed:

110 quarter-cup servings \div 147.40 quarter-cup servings = 0.7463 of a 20-pound bag.

Then, calculate the weight of the needed portion of the 20-pound bag:

0.7463 x 20 pounds = 14.93 pounds, which rounds up to 15 pounds