

Standardized Recipes

A **recipe** is a written record of the ingredients and preparation steps needed to make a particular dish. Recipes used at home can follow any format that helps the cook prepare the dish. But recipes for institutional use, or **standardized recipes**, must follow a format that is clear to anyone who uses them. A standardized recipe lists the ingredients first, in the order they are to be used, followed by assembly directions or the method for putting the ingredients together.

Standardized recipes are critical tools that play an important part in a successful professional kitchen. Control of costs, quality, and consistency of product are no less important to the success of a restaurant than the preparation and service of great looking and tasting food. Consistent production of good food is the result of following a clear standardized recipe.

A standardized recipe includes the following information:

- **Name:** This is the title of the recipe.
- **Ingredients:** This is the food needed to make the recipe, usually listed in the order in which they are used. This makes it easier to follow the recipe and not forget any ingredient. Each ingredient must be clearly defined. For example, stating “onion” provides many choices such as yellow, red, white, green, or pearl.

Amounts of each ingredient are also given. Avoiding terms such as “to taste” and “as needed,” makes it more likely the finished product will be what was intended by the creator of the recipe.

In commercial recipes, weight is generally the preferred method for measuring ingredients, rather than using other customary measurements such as cups or quarts or stating “one onion” or “a large apple,” because weight is more accurate:

- **Yield:** This is the number of servings or the amount the recipe makes. This information is used to determine how much of the recipe quantity is needed. **Yield** is critical to understanding how much it will cost to produce the recipe.
- **Portion size:** This is the individual amount that serves a person.
- **Temperature, time, and equipment:** This includes size and type of pans and other equipment needed, the oven temperature, cooking time, and any preheating instructions.
- **Step-by-step directions:** This is how and when to combine the ingredients.
- **Nutrition information:** This is not essential, but useful. Nutrition information may include amounts of fat (saturated and unsaturated), carbohydrates, protein, fiber, sodium, vitamins, and minerals.

The recipe is a road map for the cook. To get good results, follow it carefully:

- Read the recipe completely.
- Gather and “*mise en place*” all ingredients as specified. *Mise en place* is French for “to put in place.” It means the preparation and assembly of ingredients, pans, utensils, and equipment or serving pieces needed for a particular dish or service.
- Measure carefully.
- Follow the instructions for preparation.

Once the recipe has been made as written, then the cook can decide if the end product is of the right quality and taste. Follow the recipe, and when it is clear what the recipe produces, evaluate the result and make changes if desired. In a recipe, each ingredient and method of preparation affects the final product.

The standardized recipe is a critical tool in the restaurant. The functions of standardized recipes include the following:

- Ensuring consistency of quality and portion size
- Helping purchasers to understand what to purchase
- Allowing cooks to understand what to prepare and how much of each ingredient is necessary
- Reducing waste, because no one is guessing amounts
- Helping servers to communicate accurate information to guests, such as dishes with potential allergens
- Meeting customer expectations for consistent dishes
- Helping managers to determine a dish’s costs, which helps to control these costs

Big or Small Portions

Surprisingly, food can be the least expensive part of a restaurant's costs, so serving big portions can help a restaurant stand out from the competition and attract new and returning diners. This has been key to the success of restaurants throughout the United States. But not only do many restaurants pride themselves on hefty portions, many customers associate "good value" with "lots of food." So why are so many nationally known restaurants beginning to offer smaller portions of their most popular dishes?

Diners are increasingly drawn to healthier eating habits, with mounting concerns over obesity. But as the saying goes, "People eat with their eyes." In other words, new research suggests that people will eat what is put in front of them—no matter how big the portion! Accordingly, offering smaller portions of popular items can attract consumers who want to eat less but still enjoy a satisfying meal, without alienating long-term diners who seek comfort in the familiar. This benefits restaurants because customers ordering these smaller items often spend more money overall. Guests perceiving that they have "saved" calories are more likely to order dessert!

Converting Recipes

Convert a recipe when the yield of the recipe (the amount it provides) is not the same as the amount of product needed. For example, suppose a recipe produces 96 portions, but a chef needs 250 portions for a function. It is necessary to convert the recipe from a recipe for 96 portions to one for 250 portions, as shown in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9: Converting the Yield from 96 Brownies to 250 Brownies

Figuring the Conversion Factor					
Desired Yield = 250					
Original Yield = 96					
Conversion Factor: $250 \div 96 = 2.6$					
Ingredients	Amount for 96 pieces		Conversion Factor		Amount for 250 pieces
Unsweetened chocolate	1 lb = 16 oz	×	2.6	=	41.6 oz = 2 lb 10 oz
Butter	1 lb 8 oz = 24 oz	×	2.6	=	62.4 oz = 3 lb 14 oz
Eggs	1 lb 8 oz = 24 oz	×	2.6	=	62.4 oz = 3 lb 14 oz
Sugar	3 lb = 48 oz	×	2.6	=	124.8 oz = 7 lb 13 oz
Vanilla	2 tbsp	×	2.6	=	5.2 tbsp
Cake flour	1 lb = 16 oz	×	2.6	=	41.6 oz = 2 lb 10 oz
Baking soda	1.5 tsp	×	2.6	=	4 tsp
Chopped walnuts/pecans	1 lb = 16 oz	×	2.6	=	41.6 oz = 2 lb 10 oz