

Measuring Tools and How to Use Them

No one likes to waste food and the time it takes to prepare a recipe so it is important to measure ingredients carefully. Understanding recipe measurements and measuring ingredients accurately are important to ensure a successful cooking experience.

Measuring Equivalents and Equipment

Many recipes will use abbreviations to identify the amount of an ingredient. The base unit of measure in cooking is the teaspoon. Most larger measures are equivalents of smaller measures. This means you can use the base of the smaller teaspoons and Tablespoons to measure out the equivalent amount of cups and ounces in recipes. See the table below.

Common Abbreviation	Dry Measure Equivalents	Liquid Measure Equivalents
Tablespoon = Tbsp. = T.	3 teaspoons = 1 Tablespoon	1 cup = 8 fluid ounces
Teaspoon = tsp. = t.	4 Tablespoons = $\frac{1}{4}$ cup	1 cup = $\frac{1}{2}$ pint
Pound = lb.	5 Tablespoons + 1 teaspoon = $\frac{1}{3}$ cup	2 cups = 1 pint
Ounce = oz.	8 Tablespoons = $\frac{1}{2}$ cup	4 cups = 2 pints = 1 quart
Cup = C = c.	10 Tablespoons + 2 teaspoons = $\frac{2}{3}$ cup	4 quarts = 1 gallon
	12 Tablespoons = $\frac{3}{4}$ cup	16 ounces = 1 pound
	16 Tablespoons = 1 cup	
	2 Tablespoons = 1 fluid ounce	

Using the Correct Measuring Equipment

Accurate measuring devices help you achieve the same results every time you use a recipe.

Measuring liquid ingredients (examples include water, milk, vegetable oil, syrup)

- Use a 1-cup liquid measuring cup that is see-through and marked for smaller measurements.
- Pour the liquid into the cup and check at eye level to make sure the correct amount is measured.
- Use 2-cup and 4-cup liquid measuring cups for larger amounts.



Measuring small amounts of ingredients (salt, baking soda, spices, flavorings)

- Amounts less than $\frac{1}{4}$ cup are usually measured using spoons.
- A standard spoon set of $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$, 1 teaspoon and 1 Tablespoon is used for both dry and liquid ingredients.



Measuring dry ingredients (flour, sugar, corn meal, solid shortening, peanut butter)

- Use a set of four graduated measuring cups: $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{3}$, $\frac{1}{2}$, and 1 cup measures.
- Stir or fluff flour or powdered sugar before measuring.
- Spoon the dry ingredient into a measuring cup that holds the amount that you need when filled to the rim.
- Level off the dry ingredient with the flat side of a knife or spatula.



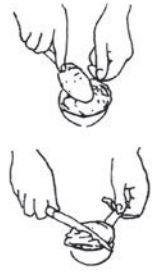
Measuring Ingredients

Measuring Shortening

Liquid shortenings, such as salad oil and melted butter or margarine, can be measured in the same way as liquids. Measure shortenings such as lard, vegetable shortening, or even peanut butter as shown to the right.

Pack in the shortening firmly, to the top of the measuring spoon or graduated cup.

Level off the shortening with the flat side of a table knife.

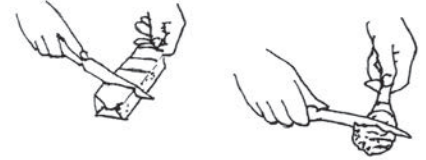


Measuring Butter or Margarine

Each ¼-pound stick of butter or margarine measures ½ cup. The wrapping is usually marked off in Tablespoons for measuring smaller amounts.

With a sharp knife, cut off the number of Tablespoons needed, following the guidelines on the wrapper.

For butter or margarine not wrapped this way, measure and level off as solid shortening.

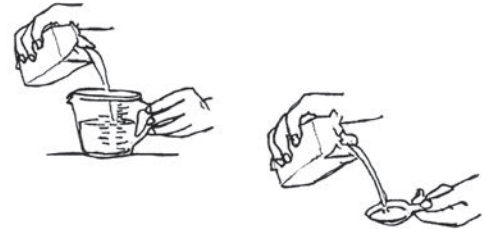


Measuring Liquids

Always read the line on a measuring cup at eye level when checking the volume of liquid in a cup.

If using measuring spoons, pour the liquid just to the top of the spoon without letting it spill over.

With the liquid measure on a level surface, slowly pour the liquid into the cup until it reaches the desired line.



Measuring Sugar

Lightly spoon sugar into a graduated measuring cup and level off with a straight edge or spatula.

Brown sugar: Pack the sugar into the cup with the back of the spoon, then level off. It should hold its shape when inverted from the cup.



Measuring Flour

These directions apply to flours being measured and used straight from the package or canister, without sifting.

Lightly spoon flour into a graduated measuring cup or measuring spoon; never pack flour down or shake or tap the side of the measuring cup. Level off the dry ingredient with flat side of a knife.



Author

Lisa J. Martin, MPH, RD, LD

County Extension Agent, Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program,
K-State Research & Extension-Shawnee County

Publications from Kansas State University are available at:
www.bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu

Contents of this publication may be freely reproduced for educational purposes. All other rights reserved. In each case, credit Lisa Martin, *Cooking Basics: Measuring Tools and How to Use Them*, Kansas State University, May 2020

**Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station
and Cooperative Extension Service**

K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer. Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension Work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, as amended. Kansas State University, County Extension Councils, Extension Districts, and United States Department of Agriculture Cooperating, J. Ernest Minton, Director.

MF3518 May 2020