

Quick Bites

Unit Pricing: Compare Apples to Apples

Figuring out Unit Pricing

What is unit pricing? It is a method to show exactly how much a food costs per ounce, pound, quart, gallon, etc. The unit price can be used to figure out which brand or size is a better buy for you. Unit prices are usually located on the shelf right below the food item.

Unit Price

Sometimes foods sold in the “giant” or “family” size may seem like the best buy. You may think that buying one large container will cost less than two or three smaller packages. But larger containers do not always end up costing you less in the long run. The big, economy size is not a good buy if you cannot store it properly, or if the food expires before you are able to use it. If you find you are wasting a lot of the economy-size foods, you may actually save money by purchasing smaller packages and reducing waste.

Unit pricing can help you decide which brand to buy. Store brands and off-brands often cost less than national brands. The look of off-brand products may be the only difference. Check the Nutrition Facts panel on the food label to see



if the nutrients are the same. Sometimes these foods may vary in size, color or texture more than the national brands. For example, if you want a perfect peach half, you may want to pay the price of a national brand. If you want sliced peaches to serve your child or as a quick snack, it may not matter if each slice is the same. You can save money when you compare the unit price of each brand of canned peaches before you make your choice.

Doing the math...

Unfortunately, not all grocery stores provide unit price labels or the unit types do not match from item to item. But, it is easy to figure out the unit price yourself, so always keep a cheap calculator with you. Below is an example of how to calculate the unit price on your own. Say we are given the following labels:

Item Price \$3.99	Unit Price 3.99 Per Gallon
Apple Juice 1 gallon	

Item Price \$2.88	Unit Price .09 Per ounce
Apple Juice 32 ounces	

Convert

It is difficult to compare prices of gallons and ounces, but the chart below can help. It tells you that there are 128 ounces in 1 gallon. Changing the units of measurement helps us compare amounts expressed in different units. The chart also has other information to help you make unit pricing conversions.

Divide

Use simple division to calculate the difference in price for each unit.

$$\text{\$3.99} \div \text{128 ounces} = \text{\$0.03 per ounce (best)}$$

$$\text{\$2.88} \div \text{32 ounces} = \text{\$0.09 per ounce}$$



Compare

We see that the gallon (128 ounces) of juice is the best deal when comparing unit prices, since it costs only 3¢ per ounce compared to 9¢. Use the following chart to convert different measurements when comparison shopping to get the best deal for your money.

Grocery Store Unit Measurement Conversion Guide

When You Know	Multiply By	To Get
fluid ounces (fl oz)	29.57	grams (g)
ounces (dry)	28.35	grams (g)
grams (g)	0.0353	ounces (oz)
grams (g)	0.0022	pounds (lb)
kilograms (kg)	2.21	pounds (lb)
pounds (lb)	453.6	grams (g)
pounds (lb)	0.4536	kilograms (kg)
quarts (qt)	0.946	liters (L)
liters (L)	1.0567	quarts (qt)
gallons (gal)	3.785	liters (L)

Other Measurement Equivalents

- 8 fluid ounces (fl oz) = 1 cup
- 1 pint (pt) = 2 cups
- 1 quart (qt) = 2 pints or 4 cups
- 1 gallon (gal) = 4 quarts or 128 ounces
- 16 ounces (oz) = 1 pound (lb)
- 14 fluid ounces (oz) = 1¾ cups



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