Choose container sizes from the portions you actually pack

Measure the portions you really pack, then compare each one with the containers you own or are considering. The size comparison table has one row per portion: portion, volume, shape, candidate container, its capacity and whether it fits with the lid closed.

What you need

- The portions you usually pack (a meal, a snack, a side)
- Measuring jug or measuring cups
- Ruler
- Your existing containers and lids
- Pen and the printed size comparison table

1. Measure each typical portion

Spoon each portion you usually pack into a measuring jug or cups and write its volume on the table. Note its shape too: liquid, loose leaves, or solid pieces, because the same volume can need a different container shape. 1 cup is 8 fl oz if a capacity is given in ounces.

2. List candidate containers

For each portion, write a container you own or are considering and its stated capacity. Check whether advertised set counts include lids. Measure the inside depth so you know how much headroom is left below the lid.

3. Mark what fits

A container fits when the portion goes in with the lid closing fully and without pressing on the food. Tick Yes or No on the table. Also check the outside footprint against your bag, cooler or cupboard shelf.

4. Check the use directions

For each container you keep, read the base and lid directions for refrigerating, freezing, microwaving and washing; bases and lids often have different limits. For leftovers, FDA advises dividing large amounts into shallow containers for quicker cooling.

Important

A stated capacity may be the brim-full volume, so judge fit with the food in and the lid closed: leave headroom so the lid closes without pressing on the food.

Choose container sizes from the portions you actually pack

Print at 100% on plain paper. 1 cup = 8 fl oz.

Where it must fit (bag, cooler or shelf) and its inside size: _____

Portion	Volume	Shape	Candidate container	Capacity	Fits: yes	Fits: no
					☐	☐
					☐	☐
					☐	☐
					☐	☐
					☐	☐
					☐	☐
					☐	☐
					☐	☐
					☐	☐
					☐	☐
					☐	☐
					☐	☐

Shape: write liquid, loose leaves or solid pieces. Fits: the portion goes in and the lid closes fully without pressing on the food.

Containers to keep and their directions

Container	Fridge	Freezer	Microwave (base / lid)	Dishwasher

Choose container sizes from the portions you actually pack

Tips and disclosures

- Fill gaps in your set first; you may only need one or two new sizes.
- Shallow containers help large amounts of leftovers cool more quickly in the refrigerator (FDA).
- Use suitable containers you already own; follow each container and lid manufacturer’s directions.

Notice: AI concept illustration

Original AI editorial illustration of containers, lids and a measured food portion; it is not a photograph of a tested result or specific product.

Sources

Main source: FDA: Safe Food Handling

FDA: Safe Food Handling
https://www.fda.gov/food/buy-store-serve-safe-food/safe-food-handling

Source note: FDA recommends dividing large amounts of leftovers into shallow containers for quicker cooling. The portion comparison is FigureNook guidance; 1 US cup equals 8 US fluid ounces.