

USDA A La Carte Standards (Effective July 1, 2016)

FOODS

General Eligibility Requirements

ALL FOODS must be/contain at least one of the following to be eligible to be sold:

- Be a whole grain rich product
 - Must include 50% or more whole grain by weight or have whole grain as first ingredient
- Have as the first ingredient a fruit, vegetable, dairy product or protein food (meat, beans, poultry, etc.)
- Be a combination food with at least ¼ cup fruit and/or vegetable
 - Combination foods contain two or more components
 - Examples: Yogurt parfait, hummus and vegetables

Nutrition Requirements

Nutrient requirements are based on whether a food is an “entree” or “snack or side”

- Foods must contain a meat/meat alternate to count as an entrée and can be a combination food or a meat/meat alternate alone
- Exceptions are yogurt, low-fat or reduced fat cheese, nuts, seeds and nut or seed butters and meat snacks (such as dried beef jerky or meat sticks) – these are all considered snacks, NOT entrees

Nutrition Requirement	Entrees	Snacks/Sides
Calories	≤ 350 Calories	≤ 200 Calories
Total Fat Calories	≤ 35% of calories	≤ 35% of calories
Saturated Fat Calories	< 10% of calories	< 10% of calories
Trans Fat	Zero grams	Zero grams
Sugar by Weight	≤ 35% of weight from total sugars	≤ 35% of weight from total sugars
Sodium	≤ 480 mg	≤ 200 mg

BEVERAGES

USDA has size limits on the types of beverages that can be sold to students, and restricts some beverages to only being allowed in high schools.

Beverage Type	Nutrition Rules	Size Limits By Grade Level		
		Elementary School	Middle School	High School
Water	Plain, with or without carbonation	No limit	No limit	No limit
Milk	Unflavored low fat or fat free, or flavored fat free	8 fl oz	12 fl oz	12 fl oz
Juice	100% fruit or vegetable, or 100% fruit or vegetable diluted with water, with or without carbonation, no added sweeteners	8 fl oz	12 fl oz	12 fl oz
Other Beverages	Flavored and/or carbonated labeled to contain < 5 calories per 8 oz or ≤ 10 calories per 20 oz	Not allowed	Not allowed	20 fl oz
Other Beverages	Flavored and/or carbonated labeled to contain ≤ 40 calories per 8 oz or ≤ 60 calories per 12 oz	Not allowed	Not allowed	12 fl oz