

COOKING MADE EASY

from Chef Julio Camberos, Jr.



USE SOME BASIC MATH...

Being a chef can be a rewarding career that allows you to make others feel happy, along with giving yourself self-satisfaction. But it requires a lot more than just the desire to make you feel good and to please others. It takes many years of experience and some basic math skills.

Let's say you have to cook for 150 people. The menu consists of grilled flank steak with béarnaise sauce, sautéed green beans and a baked potato. Now, you will need 6 ounces of flank steak, 2 ounces of béarnaise sauce, 4 ounces of green beans and 1 potato per person.

How do you figure out how much raw meat to buy? How many pounds of green beans to order? How much béarnaise sauce to make? All without having too much waste, or not enough food to feed your guests, leaving you embarrassed. Here are a few tips on planning your next large dinner party. First, determine how much usable meat you will yield from 1 pound of raw flank steak. For example, after trimming and cooking, 1 pound of meat will only leave you with about 12 ounces of usable meat. That will give 2 portions per pound of steak, or $75 \times 2 = 150$. You will need to buy at least 75 pounds of flank steak to feed 150 and that's if no one else shows up, so always have just a little more. Next, always portion control amount of sauce. You will need 2 ounces of béarnaise sauce per person or 300 ounces. Now, do the math: 300 ounces divided by 128 ounces in a gallon will give you 2.34 gallons. A 6-egg yolk béarnaise sauce will take 12 ounces of clarified butter and yield about 16 ounces. So, you're going to have to multiply your recipe 19 times to have enough sauce. You will need 4

ounces of cleaned green beans per person, or 4 people per pound: $38 \text{ pounds} \times 4 \text{ oz.} = 152 \text{ people}$. Now, I hope we can all count baked potatoes! You'd be surprised at the culinary geniuses I've worked with in my experience who have failed to apply these very basic steps.

Yes, being a chef can be very rewarding and make others very happy, especially when you apply basic math. You'll execute your party like a master and be left with the self-satisfaction of knowing you can plan and cook for as few as 15 people or as many as 150.



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