

How Much Are You Eating?

Lesson In a Box

Updated 5/3/10



Cornell University
Cooperative Extension
New York City

Advancing New York City Through Research

Nutrition and Health Program
<http://nyc.cce.cornell.edu>

Cooperative Extension in New York City provides equal program and employment opportunities.

How Much Are You Eating?

Lesson In a Box

Core Message:

- Be thoughtful about how much you are eating.

Suggested Recipes:

- Mixed Bag

Suggested Incentives

(Choose **1** if not providing the suggested recipe):

- Measuring Cups
- Measuring Spoons

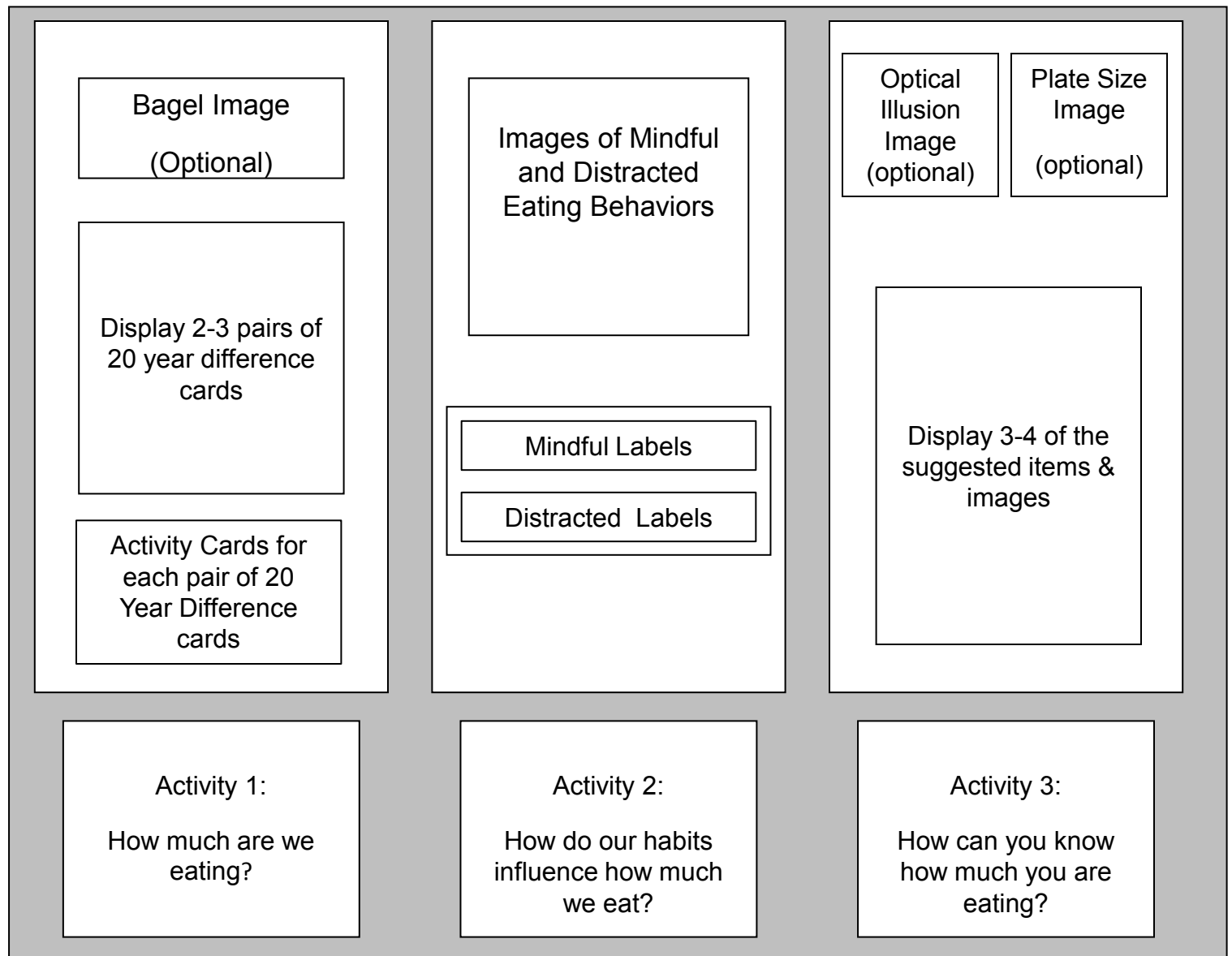
How Much Are You Eating?

Table Layout



“Don’t Be Fooled by
Portion Sizes” Poster

(optional)



List of Supplies

Table Set-Up:

- Table Cloth(s)
- MyPyramid Poster
- How Much Do YOU Eat? Poster
- CUCE Nutrition & Health Sign
- How much are you eating? Lesson In a Box Sign

Activity 1:

- Activity Sign (“How much are we eating?”)
- 20 Year Difference Cards (8 sets total)
- Activity cards (8 total)
- “1 Bagel = 5 Slices of Bread” Sign (OPTIONAL for table decoration)
- “Don’t be Fooled by Portion Size” Poster (OPTIONAL)

Activity 2:

- Activity sign (“How do our habits influence how much we eat?”)
- Images of mindful vs. distracted eating behaviors
- “Mindful” and “Distracted” labels to place on images

Activity 3:

- Activity sign (How can you know how much you are eating?)
- Brown Paper Lunch Bag (or Image of lunch bag)
- Measuring Cup
- Measuring Spoon
- Image of people splitting a dessert
- A serving spoon (real or laminated image of serving spoons)
- Image of calorie information on a fast food menu
- A snack sized Ziploc® bag
- Image of nutrition facts label
- Image of people using to-go containers
- Large and small paper plate
- Image of people preparing a healthy meal
- Plate size image(OPTIONAL)
- Portion size optical illusion image (OPTIONAL)

Activity 1:

How much are we eating?



Directions for Activity:

“The 20 Year Difference”

- Set up 2-3 pairs of 20 Year difference cards on the table using the velcro and wooden blocks. NOTE: The “Today” card should have the “???” side facing participants (“Today” cards have velcro on both sides).
- Have participants guess how many calories are in the “Today” version of the given food. Allow for several guesses before turning the “Today” card over to reveal the answer on the other side.
- Discuss the activities required (from the corresponding activity card) to use up the **extra** calories in the “Today” vs. “20 Years Ago” version of the food or drink.

NOTE: When presenting to a group of participants who are mostly just “passing by,” have the “Today” card for the food already turned around to reveal its calorie content, as opposed to having people guess from the “???” side.

Activity 1

How Much Are You Eating?

Open Ended Questions:

- Think about the last [insert food/drink from 20-Year Difference card (bagel, hamburger, etc.)] you ate? How many calories do you think were in it? How does it compare to the [insert food] from 20 years ago?
- What surprised you about this information?
- Why do you think the amount people are served affects the amount they eat?
- Why might we be more likely to overeat when we eat out as opposed to when we prepare our food ourselves?
- How often do you ask to look at the nutrition information or ingredients for fast food items?
- How might increased portion sizes lead to weight gain?
- In what ways do you think eating out makes us less aware of how much we are eating?

Message:

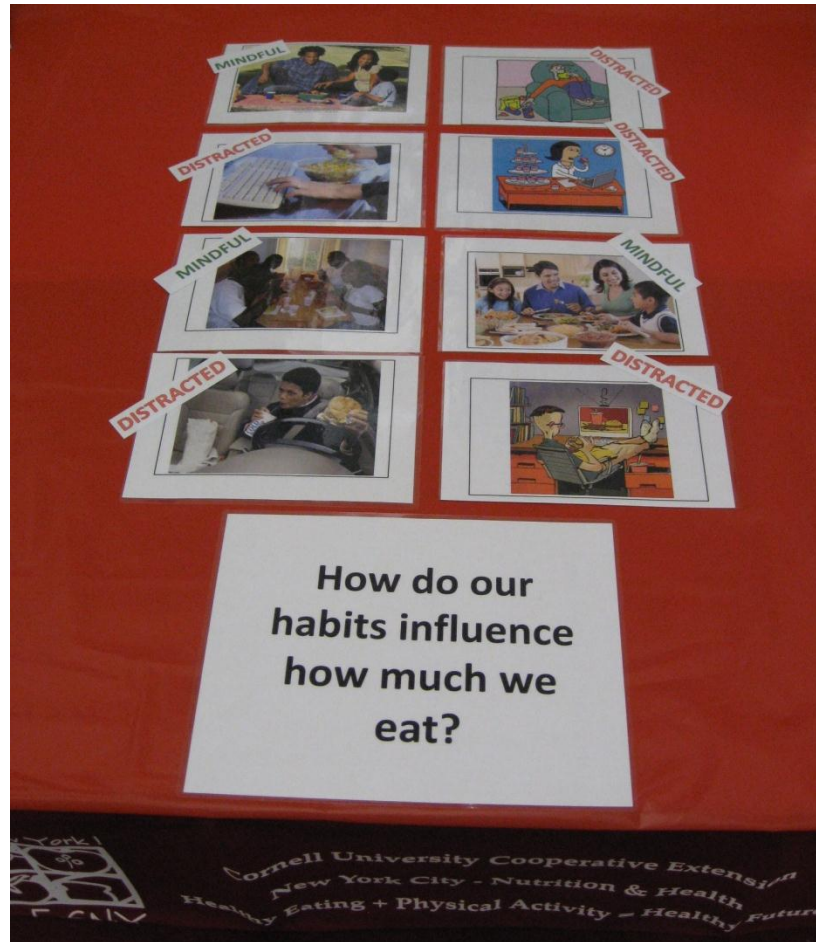
- When we eat at restaurants or fast food establishments we tend eat more than we need to because portions are often much larger than what we would prepare for ourselves at home
- The more food we are served, the more we will usually eat.
- Calories are our bodies' energy source, and even a small amount of extra, unused calories can lead to weight gain.
- When we become aware of just how much physical activity is needed to burn off a small amount of calories, we start to be more mindful of what an appropriate portion really is.
- Portion sizes served at restaurants have increased dramatically in the past 20 years, and we are often given more food than we need. So, it is important to be mindful about how much food is on our plate and how much we actually need to be satisfied, rather than automatically eating whatever is put in front of us.

Additional Information:

- Just 100 extra, unused calories each day (think: 1 can of soda or a couple of cookies) can lead to a weight gain of 10 lbs. a year. If we eat more food without engaging in additional physical activity, our bodies have more energy than they need, and will store food as fat.
- Everyone's individual calorie needs differ based on age, gender, height, and the level of physical activity. In general, most healthy adults require around 2,000 calories per day, though many people need either more or less than 2,000 calories per day.

Activity 2:

How do our habits influence how much we eat?



Directions for Activity :

“Identifying Mindful vs. Distracted Eating Habits and Behaviors”

- Set up all 8 images , which represent both mindful and distracted eating behaviors and habits.
- Use the “mindful” and “distracted” labels to have participants identify which of the images portray mindful eating habits and which portray examples of distracted eating.

NOTE: When presenting to a group of participants who are mostly just “passing by,” have the “mindful” and “distracted” labels already on the appropriate images.

Mindful :

- Family eating dinner together
- Family enjoying a picnic meal
- People sitting down to a relaxed breakfast

Distracted:

- Eating in front of the computer
- Eating while driving
- Snacking in front of the TV
- Eating salad at desk while typing
- Eating cupcakes at work

Activity 2

How Much Are You Eating?

Open Ended Questions:

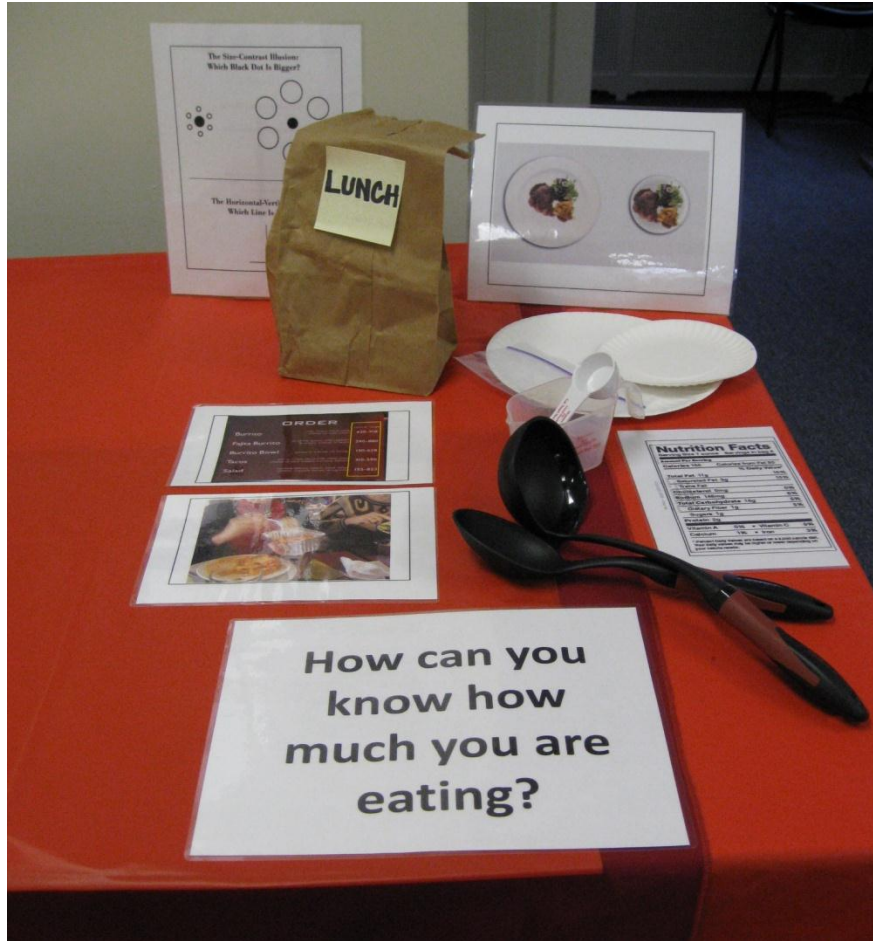
- Which eating habits are likely to distract us from how much we are eating?
- Why might eating while distracted lead to overeating?
- What does it mean to eat mindfully?
- What are some examples of mindful eating behaviors?
- How does eating mindfully help us to be aware of how much we are eating?
- In what ways is eating food prepared outside the home, such as fast food, a form of distracted eating?
- Describe what you would consider to be the elements of both a mindful and a distracted meal.

Message:

- Even though it can be difficult to make mealtimes a priority, we should be relaxed and undistracted while we eat and be mindful of how much we are eating.
- Overeating often occurs when we are eating while doing other things (e.g. watching television, driving, doing homework, etc.) and are not being mindful of how much we have eaten.
- **Mindful Eating** includes:
 - Eating slowly
 - Eating without the television, computer, or any other distractions
 - Pre-portioning out food rather than eating from the original large containers
 - Making mealtimes relaxing and enjoyable
 - Taking an active role in the purchasing and preparation of the foods we eat
- People eat out more and more and cook at home less and less. This is a form of distracted eating as we have decreased our involvement in the food preparation and are less aware of exactly what is in our food and how much of it we are being served.
- When we eat “on the go,” such as when driving, on the train, or walking from one place to another, we are not paying attention to how much we are eating and may not realize how much we have eaten.

Activity 3:

How can you know how much you are eating?



Directions for Activity :

“What can YOU do?”

- Set up 3-4 of the suggested items/images on the table.
- Have participants explain how each of those items could be used to help them know how much they are eating & how each item therefore can contribute to more mindful eating habits.
- After participants have discussed the items provided, encourage them to provide additional things they can do to make them more aware of how much they are eating.

Suggested items & images:

A brown paper lunch bag (real or image)
A measuring cup & spoon
Image of people using to-go containers
Image of people splitting dessert
A large and small paper plate

Serving spoon (real or image of several)
Image of calorie information on a menu board
A snack-sized Ziploc® bag
Image of Nutrition Facts label
Image of people cooking

Activity 3

How Much Are You Eating?

Open Ended Questions:

- How can these items help us to know how much we are eating?
- Why is it important to be aware of just how much food we eat?
- What other things can you do to help you know the amount of food you are eating?
- What are the benefits of being more mindful about what we eat?
- What habits do you think are most helpful in trying to avoid overeating?

Message:

- There are many different things we can do to become more mindful about how much we are eating.
- Eating the amount that is right for YOU is easier when we take a more active role in our food choices and meal preparation.
- Simple changes in our habits can have a big influence on how much we eat, for example, portioning out snack items or packing a lunch ahead of time.
- Be mindful about your food choices by reading labels, looking at the calorie information on menu boards, packing your own lunches (will save \$ too)!, splitting large meals with someone else, etc.
- We often eat more than we need to because we do not pay attention to what or how much we eat.
- Factors that we sometimes cannot control, such as the size of the plate or glass we are given at a restaurant or the size of the scooping utensil at a buffet have a big impact on how much food we will eat, so it is important to be aware of these factors.

Activity 3

How Much Are You Eating?

Explanations for *how* each suggested image/item can help you be more mindful about how much you are eating:

A brown paper lunch bag (real or image): Packing your own lunch & snacks allows you to know what's in your food as opposed to purchasing lunch from somewhere else. Also, since you'll have your food with you all day, you'll be less likely to make hasty choices out of hunger.

A measuring cup & spoon: When preparing food, using exact measurements, you know precisely how much of every ingredient will be in the final product. Measuring cups & spoons can also be used to measure out snacks.

Image of takeout containers: When eating at a restaurant, you can pack up half of a very large meal to bring home and eat at another time, which will prevent you from overeating at that meal.

Image of people splitting dessert: Splitting dessert or a large meal of any kind with someone else is a great way to eat what you want without overdoing it.

A large and small paper plate: Eating off of smaller plates helps us not to serve ourselves too much food at one time. The more food that is in front of us, the more we will tend to eat.

Serving spoon (real or image of several): The larger the spoon or utensil we use to serve ourselves, the more food we will put on our plates, and therefore the more we will eat.

Image of calorie information on a menu board: Calorie information provides us with information about how many calories are in the foods we purchase & can help us to make more informed choices about what to order and how much to eat at a meal.

A snack-sized Ziploc® bag: Rather than eating foods straight from their original container (such as sitting down on the couch with a full box of cookies), we should pre-portion out an appropriate amount to eat.

Image of Nutrition Facts label: The information on the label can help us to know how many suggested servings are in one container and the number of calories, fat, sugar, etc. that are in a given amount of that item.

Image of people cooking: Cooking and preparing our own meals allows us to know exactly what ingredients and how much of them are in a dish, giving us greater power over what we eat.

Additional Information:

- According to the research of Cornell University professor, Brian Wansink, in his book *Mindless Eating: Why We Eat More Than We Think*, the best tips for mindful eating are “personalized and tied to your diet danger zone -- meal stuffing, snack grazing, party binging, restaurant indulging, and desktop dining.”
- The larger the plates, bowls, and serving spoons we use to portion our food, the more we will eat. MyPyramid.gov recommends using the size of our serving spoons, plates, cups, and bowls as a guide for how much we are actually eating.
- Additionally, we are more likely to pour ourselves more of a beverage if we are using a short, wide glass, rather than a tall, thin one because our eyes interpret the shorter glass as holding less even if both glasses hold the same amount of liquid.

References

The following links were last accessed in December 2009:

- <http://www.mypyramid.gov/STEPS/howmuchshouldyoueat.html>
- <http://hp2010.nhlbihin.net/portion/>
- <http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/>
- <http://www.mindlesseating.org/book.htm>
- www.Mypyramid.gov

Recipe:

- Mixed Bag. Nutrition and Health Program Recipe Collection. Cornell University Cooperative Extension New York City

Activity 1 Images:

- 20 Year Difference Card Food Images[Online Image]. (n.d.). Retrieved December 2, 2009, from hp2010.nhlbihin.net., <http://hp2010.nhlbihin.net/portion/>
- Activity cards for the 20 Year Difference Activity. (2009) Created by Cornell University Cooperative Extension Employee, Alyssa Gianotti
- Bagel [Online Image].(n.d.). Retrieved December 3 2009, from plus.maths.org, http://plus.maths.org/latestnews/sep-dec04/bagel/iStock_bagel_small.jpg
- Bread Slices [Online Image]. (n.d.). Retrieved December 3, 2009, from just2good.files.wordpress.com, <http://just2good.files.wordpress.com/2009/01/cottage-cheese-bread.jpg>
- Don't be Fooled by Portion SizesPoster. Accessed December 2, 2009, from NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, nyc.gov,<http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/csi/obesity-wallPoster-9.pdf>

Activity 2 Images:

- Eating at Computer [Online Image]. (n.d.). Retrieved December 2, 2009, from nextnewnetworks.com, <http://www.nextnewnetworks.com/post/14476/where-tv-ads-really-resonate>
- Eating While Driving [Online Image]. (n.d.). Retrieved Decembber 2, 2009, from smugbaldy.com<http://www.smugbaldy.com/2009/07/21/our-10-most-dangerous-foods-to-eat-while-driving/>
- Eating at Work [Online Image]. (n.d.). Retrieved December 2, 2009, from workitmom.com, http://workitmom.com/bloggers/problemsolved/files/2008/10/eating-at-work_small.jpg
- Mindless Eating [Online Image]. (n.d.). Retrieved December 2, 2009, from loopland.net, [http://www.loopland.net/uploaded_images/\(c\)-Allan-Sanders-2009-DM-Cake-768306.jpg](http://www.loopland.net/uploaded_images/(c)-Allan-Sanders-2009-DM-Cake-768306.jpg)
- Family Eating at the Table [Online Image]. (n.d.) Retrieved December 2, 2009, from thechefalliance.com,<http://www.thechefalliance.com/cms/39>
- Sitting Down to Eat Breakfast [Online Image]. (n.d.) Retrieved December 3, 2009 from churchhillacademy.org,http://www.churchhillacademy.org/files/images/Students%20Eating%20Breakfast_preview.JPG
- Eating in Front of TV[Online Image]. (n.d.). Retrieved December 2, 2009, from bloaterblog.com, http://www.bloaterblog.com/images/couch_potato.gif
- Family Picnic [Online Image]. (n.d.). Retrieved December 3, 2009, from i.ehow.com, http://i.ehow.com/images/GlobalPhoto/Articles/2042700/picnic-main_Full.jpg

Activity 3 Images:

- Brown paper lunch bag. MICROSOFT OFFICE 2007 CLIP ART
- Serving Spoons [Online Image]. (n.d.). Retrieved December 2, 2009, from imghost.indiamart.com, http://imghost.indiamart.com/data/1/V/MY-17003/marronhandlekitchentool_250x250.jpg
- Calorie Information on Menu Board[Online Image]. (n.d.). Retrieved December 2, 2009, from nycitynewsservice.cohttp://nycitynewsservice.com/wp-content/plugins/yet-another-photoblogcachecalorie_1.c0k5uhrmegg8kgw4oso408s.a9sxxja1njkswwcs400wcc4cg.th.jpeg
- Packing a Doggie Bag [Online Image]. (n.d.). Retrieved December 2, 2009, from 4.bp.blogspot.http://4.bp.blogspot.com/_C_dw0NF2IAQ/Su3HzXCbN8I/AAAAAAAAEWg/v1eRa2rHe0E/s400/Doggy+Bag+Doings+After+Lunch+1.jpg
- Nutrition Facts Label [Online Image]. (n.d.). Retrieved December 2, 2009, from 3.bp.blogspot.com, http://3.bp.blogspot.com/_N7HrBEuDjgl/SnGzw9GYgyl/AAAAAAACyA/uQTUICGbb_M/s400/nutrition-label1224.jpg
- Sharing Dessert [Online Image]. (n.d.). Retrieved December 2, 2009, from dostgeorge.com<http://www.dostgeorge.com/st-george-utah-restaurants.html>
- Preparing a Meal [Online Image]. (n.d.) Retrieved December 2, 2009 from sefton-careers.co.uk, <http://www.sefton-carers.co.uk/images/dp1pic-3.jpg>
- Plate Size Optical [Online Image]. (n.d.). Retrieved December 2, 2009, from wisebread.com<http://www.wisebread.com/optical-illusions-that-make-you-fatter-and-your-wallet-lighter>
- Plate & Glass Size Optical Illusion [Online Image]. (n.d.). Retrieved December 2, 2009, from mindlesseating.org, <http://www.mindlesseating.org/teachers.htm>