Rules of Thumb for Estimating Quantities for Scaling (for Entertaining)

Before you begin, get a good estimate on how many will be attending your event and if they are beer and wine drinkers. If you know that they are white or red drinkers, or they prefer a particular type or brand of beer that is also helpful and should influence what you buy. Also find out if they have any food issues. All of this will help with writing the menu and deciding how much food, beer and wine to buy.

Beer and Wine
For wine: There are roughly 5 pours (glasses) of wine in a bottle. The average estimate is 2 ½ glasses per person. So – a bottle for 2 people. This is an average knowing that some people will drink more and some people less. If you are offering a variety of wines to choose from consider what you know about their preference. But increase the number to 4 people per bottle. Remember that people drink more white wine in the Summer and more red wine in the Winter.

For beer: We usually estimate 2 beers per person. This is an average knowing that some people will drink more and some people less. Always have some non-alcoholic beer on hand. If you are offering a variety of beers use the knowledge you have to increase or decrease the amount you buy of each type.

Note for both: There are many liquor stores that will take returns on cases of beer and wine. This is a great thing if you’re doing a large event and don’t want to run out.

Appetizers:
The more appetizers you have, the fewer you will need of each.
For a party of 20 to 25 people – estimate 3 appetizers and 5 for each person attending or estimate 5 appetizers and do 3 for each person attending. Take into account the length of time you will be offering the appetizers and what you are serving for your actual meal. You may want to limit the quantities so people are still hungry enough to enjoy their dinner.

Salads:
Estimate 1 cup of lettuce per person. Try to visualize how many people for each item you are including in the salad. For example if you have a medium sized cucumber - estimate 4 people per cucumber. If you have hard boiled eggs - estimate 2 people per egg, etc. Estimate 1 cup of dressing per 6 people.
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Pasta:
Generally unless you are only serving pasta, estimate 4 ounces of pasta per person for a main dish and 2 ounces per person as a side dish.

Anything sliced:
Estimate 1 serving per person unless you know they won’t eat it.

Proteins:
Regardless of what they are, we estimate 4 – 6 ounces per person (meat eaters or vegetarian/vegan).

Dessert:
For any dessert that is served, such as a cake or pie, one serving per person. For miniature cupcakes, bars, or small individual desserts – estimate 2 or 3 per person.