Go-Go Bento!

What is bento?

"Bento" is a Japanese term that simply refers to a boxed meal. Bento can be extremely simple, containing few ingredients, or very elaborate, multi-layered containers with food artfully decorated to represent characters, animals, or flowers. Bento can readily be purchased at Japanese convenience stores for a quick, healthy lunch!
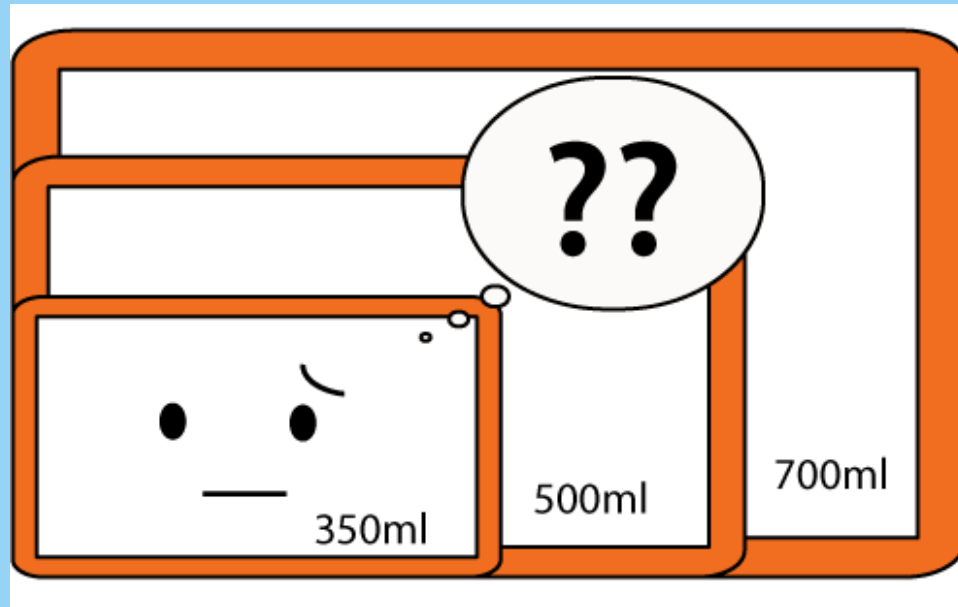
Brief History/Examples

What's the difference between bento and Western fast food for lunch?

Bento is generally considered a very healthy option as the ultimate goal is to create a balance between grains, fruits, vegetables, and meat (though many vegetarian and vegan options exist!) for optimal caloric intake based on age and activity level. It sounds complicated, but, really, it is just portion control and choosing healthier sides. Western fast food usually contains a lot calories (especially from fat) but little nutrition.
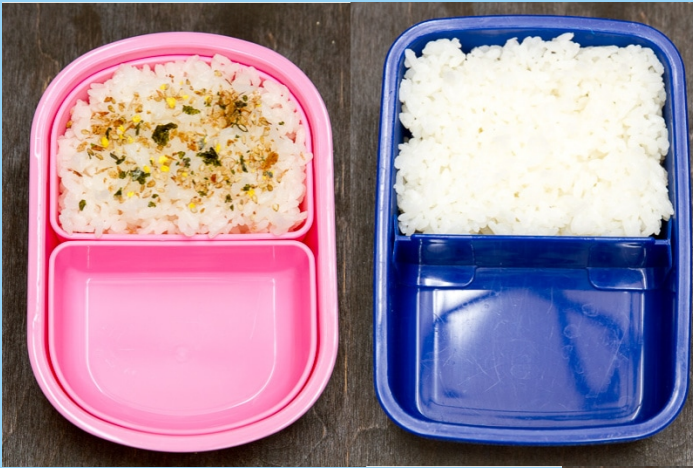
Wow...this container is...small.

Image courtesy of: https://justbento.com

You don't need anything fancy to make bento! You can pack a bento-style lunch in any container and take it with you :) If you choose to buy an actual bento, they are available in different sizes based on your needs. Some retailers now list ounces for Western consumers, but mL is still the most common for volume. If you buy a multi-tier, the volume for each tier should be listed and is usually the same. Outside dimensions can usually also be found. Packing bento is both a skill and an art form. You can "Tetris" a LOT of food into the limited space with practice!

How To Pack!

Handy Guide!

Traditional Bento Recipes

Fancy Cutting

Onigiri
Lesson

Chopstick
Chronicles

Recipe Tin Japan

Modern Bento Recipes

Hustle and Hearts

20 Healthy Ideas For Kids

Collection of Recipes

Bento Expo
Courtesy of NHK