

Bead Math

When I first started beading it often puzzled me how to tell if I had enough of any kind of beads to do a project. I didn't have a scale; most new beaders don't. My local shops might or might not put the number of grams on the bag or container of beads they sold me. If I had half of a 6-inch tube of 11o beads, did that contain enough beads for my project?

Here's a useful table of information based on the ubiquitous teaspoon, a measuring amount that all cooks (and most women) are personally familiar with. This method is not scientific, but practical. I obtained these numbers by weighing my own beads and counting numerous samples. You could do the weighing and counting yourself, or you could just do the math.

Teaspoon to Grams

One gently rounded teaspoon of the following beads equals between 7 and 7.5 grams: 11o, 8o, 15o, and 2mm and 1.5mm cubes.

If your project calls for 14 grams of any of these beads, two teaspoons should do the job. Extrapolating, a rounded 1/4 teaspoon would yield just under 2 grams.

Gram to Beads

Another approach is that one gram yields a certain number of beads, and this amount varies widely.

- One gram of 8o beads contains between 37 and 42 beads.
- One gram of 11o beads contains 110-120 beads.
- One gram of 15o beads contains 250-260 beads.
- One gram of 1.5mm cubes contains 100-110 beads.
- One gram of 2mm cubes contains 48-52 beads.
- One gram of 3mm cubes contains about 20 beads.

if you need 250 11o beads, 2 grams (or 1/4 teaspoon) should do the trick. If you have a teaspoon of 11° beads, (see Teaspoon to Grams above) you will have 7 grams, which multiplied by 110 gives you a generous calculation of 770 beads.

This turned out to be so handy that I lifted an old set of measuring spoons from the kitchen, and they've become part of my beadwork tools.

