

## At Au Bon Pain, petite is au courant

By Jenn Abelson

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It's like the anti-supersize. Au Bon Pain, the Boston bakery chain, is serving up the latest in meal control: Portions, a line of 14 dishes all 200 calories and under.

The small plates can be mixed and matched and the concoctions include everything from hummus and cucumbers to Thai peanut chicken to Brie, fruit, and crackers.

The portions may be small, but the price isn't: Au Bon Pain says two or three Portions dishes, which each retail for \$3.49 with meat and \$2.99 without makes a meal. That amounts to \$5.98 to \$10.47.

This compares to about \$6 for an average sandwich or salad at Au Bon Pain.

The portions concept addresses a growing consumer demand for smaller, lower calorie meals, the company says. And it follows Quizno's introduction in January of 200 calorie flatbreads known as Sammies. The Balsamic Chicken and Black Angus Sammies retail for just \$2 at the sandwich chain.

Au Bon Pain says it is expecting big things from its small meals. At Au Bon Pain's International Place location, 120 Portions were recently sold during the first day of the Portion's launch, far exceeding sales target of 250 servings per cafe per week.

The Portions line has been in tests throughout Greater Boston since the fall, and the concept will be rolled out to all of the chain's 182 stores nationwide this month.

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