

Making Wise Food Selections on the Road



Making wise food selections is important for athletes because doing so can positively impact training and competitive performance. However, traveling can often make it difficult to consistently make the right food choices.

Eating on the road can pose a challenge for athletes striving to maintain a training diet that has adequate energy, carbohydrate, protein and fluids. Here are some guidelines for choosing high-performance foods and fluids while traveling.

Fluids

It's easy to become dehydrated while traveling, especially on airplanes. To prevent dehydration:

- Drink at regular intervals throughout the day
- Carry sports drinks and water with you
- Limit caffeinated and alcoholic beverages

Pack It!

Take nutrient-dense foods along for the trip. This is especially important when traveling to a foreign country, where familiar foods may be harder to find and food-borne illness may be a concern. Pack:

- Sports bars, granola bars
- Dried or regular fruit, nuts and trail mix
- Pretzels or baked chips
- Nutrition shakes
- Whole-grain crackers, bagels, breads, rolls, muffins
- Peanut butter and jelly
- Cans/packets of tuna or chicken

Make a trip to the local grocery store

Meals can be made in a hotel room if there is a microwave and refrigerator available. Some easy-to-prepare meals are:

Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bowl of cereal, milk and a banana• Bagel with peanut butter, orange juice• Cottage cheese, canned peaches, orange juice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Turkey sandwich, apple, oatmeal raisin cookies, and milk• Peanut butter and jelly sandwich, baby carrots, granola bar, cranberry juice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Roast beef and cheese sandwich, chocolate chip cookie, juice• Cheese/chicken quesadilla with salsa, lemonade• Salad with romaine, tomatoes, carrots, tuna, cheese, apple and milk

What about low-carbohydrate choices?

Low-carb foods are everywhere – from restaurants to grocery stores to health clubs. However, these foods are usually not the best choice for athletes. Significantly cutting carbohydrates hurts performance by reducing speed, strength and stamina.

Quick tips:

- Athletes should fuel their bodies two to three hours before practices, events and games with a high-carbohydrate meal or snack.
- Team leaders can organize pre-game meals for the whole team, including high-energy foods like breads, bagel, pasta or rice.
- Athletes should fill 2/3 of their plates with high-carbohydrate options for quick energy—and the rest with high-protein, low-fat items such as grilled chicken, turkey or lean roast beef.
- When eating at a restaurant, athletes should look carefully at the menu to see how food is prepared. Words such as fried, crispy, creamed and au gratin all suggest high-fat content. Better choices are steamed, broiled, stir fried and poached.

Food Choices

Breakfast		Lunch and Dinner			
<p>Look for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pancakes, french toast, waffles • English muffins, bagels, toast with jam, low-fat cream cheese or peanut butter • Scrambled eggs, soft-boiled egg, breakfast burrito • Cereal (hot or cold) • Lean meats such as Canadian bacon, ham, turkey or veggie sausage • Low-fat yogurt, cream cheese and cottage cheese • Low-fat muffins, fruit/oatmeal bar • Skim or 1% milk • Fresh fruit, fruit juice, smoothie 		<p>Look for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sandwiches with turkey, ham, roast beef, chicken • Wraps with chicken, shrimp, fish, veggies, tofu • Salads/salad bars – include veggies and fruit for carbohydrate. For protein include cheese, nuts, seeds, eggs, kidney beans, garbanzo beans, cottage cheese or plain tuna • Light/fat-free mayo, light/fat-free salad dressings 			
<p>Limit/Avoid:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-fat meats such as sausage, bacon, corned beef hash • Hash browns • Gravy • Donuts, biscuits or croissants 		<p>Limit/Avoid:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sandwiches made with high-fat meats such as salami or bologna or with tuna salad • Regular "mayo," "special sauces," regular salad dressings • Mayonnaise-based potato or pasta salads, macaroni and cheese • Fried chicken wings, nuggets 			
Asian		Italian		Mexican	
<p>Look for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chicken chow mein, chop suey, rice noodles • Steamed vegetables and rice • Stir-fry vegetables with shrimp/ chicken/pork/beef, tofu • Hot-and-sour soup, Wonton soup • Fresh spring rolls 		<p>Look for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vegetarian antipasto • Low-fat sauces such as marinara, marsala, tomato or red clam sauce • Grilled vegetables • Pizza with veggies, chicken, Canadian bacon • Salads (chicken, shrimp, mixed greens, spinach) • Spinach, mushroom tortellini • Minestrone soup and bread sticks 		<p>Look for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chicken, shrimp, beef, pork, bean burritos, soft tacos, fajitas, enchiladas, tostados or quesadillas • Salsa, baked tortilla chips • Gazpacho soup, tortilla soup • Spanish rice • Vegetarian refried beans, black/ red beans 	
<p>Limit/Avoid:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep-fried items such as egg rolls, wontons, sweet-and-sour pork or shrimp • High-fat meats such as spare ribs • Fried chow mein noodles, fried rice • High-fat sauces such as peanut, coconut, lobster sauce 		<p>Limit/Avoid:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-fat meats such as pepperoni or sausage • High-fat sauces such as alfredo, gorgonzola and pesto • Garlic or cheese bread 		<p>Limit/Avoid:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taquitos (deep fried) • Nachos • Cream-based sauces (pollo a la crema) • Guacamole, sour cream • Refried beans with lard 	

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