

FUEL *for* YOUR RIDE



Bicycling

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Feed Your Performance

From lighter bikes to aero helmets to interval-heavy training programs, cyclists look for every edge to get faster. The irony is, they often overlook the one thing that delivers performance benefits without so much as a single crank of the pedals: food.

Sure, food fuels you through your workouts. But beyond delivering calories, it offers a spectrum of ride-boosting benefits spanning everything from livelier muscles to faster recovery between workouts—even improved speed. “Food truly can be a performance enhancer,” says Iñigo San Millán, PhD, nutritionist and director of the Exercise Physiology and Human Performance Lab at the University of Colorado in Denver. No matter how well trained you are, your endurance is limited by the depletion of your stored glycogen. When this happens, you become light-headed, dizzy, and fatigued. While sports drinks and energy bars can help, sometimes you want something—well, a little less boring.

Before the Ride

Too many cyclists skimp on fuel before their rides, which prevents them from getting the maximum training benefit from the workouts. “It’s important to have good glycogen stores to begin with,” says San Millán. That’s because when these stores are low, the body breaks

down muscle protein for fuel. “In a way, the muscles are actually eating themselves to feed themselves,” he says. Ride hungry too often, and you’ll end up overtrained: When exercise-stressed muscles routinely don’t get fuel when they need it, they grow weaker, not stronger.

An adequate fuel-up begins early in the day, says Robert Kunz, MS, cofounder of sports-nutrition company First Endurance and a coach whose clients have included multi-time Tour of California winner Levi Leipheimer. Try these out-of-the-gate meals, geared to specific types of rides.

[Best Breakfasts]

You’ve heard a gazillion times that breakfast is the most important meal of the day, and sports nutritionists agree that whether you want to burn fat, ride fast, or both, front-loading your day is essential. But plenty of cyclists disagree on the particulars of a smart morning meal: Fat-phobic bonk trainers

suggest skipping it until after you ride, long riders fuel up like lumberjacks, and racers search endlessly for the perfect winning fuel.

What you eat depends largely upon what kind of ride you’re going to be doing. The idea is to keep your muscles energized, your brain focused, and the rest of your systems firing on

all cylinders no matter what. “You first need to look at the duration and intensity of the ride ahead,” says Florida-based sports nutritionist Barbara Lewin, RD, who works with cyclists and triathletes at [Sports-Nutritionist.com](https://www.sports-nutritionist.com). “Then you need to take in foods that give you the fuel to perform your best.” Here’s how.

Before an Easy Spin

Calories 200 to 300

Strategy You don't need much for a sub-2-hour ride. But don't skip breakfast. "You'll go into deprivation mode and risk overeating later," says Lewin. Just 200 to 300 calories about 30 to 45 minutes beforehand will replace the glucose you lost while you slept and let you ride longer. Exercisers who eat a small breakfast are able

to work out 16% longer before tiring, according to one study. Include foods with fiber. "Fiber can also increase the amount of fat you burn during exercise," Lewin says. It slows digestion, so your glycogen is harder to access, which forces your

body to pull energy from your fat stores.

Meal Plan 1 cup oatmeal and ½ banana



Before a Time-Trial, Crit, or Cyclocross Race

Calories 400

Strategy Most racers take in too many calories from the wrong places, Lewin says. A little fiber is okay, but too much can slow you down and make you sick. Aim for less than 2 g by eating foods like bagels and white bread about 2 hours before the race. "Watch for fat as well," she warns. "Many athletes eat peanut butter, thinking they're getting protein and not realizing that it's 70% fat. Then they feel weighed down and can't race well."

Meal Plan 2 slices white bread with jam, 6 oz fat-free vanilla yogurt, 1 small banana, and ½ cup orange juice (eat an energy gel or block 15 minutes before the start.)



Calories 400

Strategy Opt for a smoothie, which helps riders by delivering fast energy. The fruit delivers antioxidants that protect muscles from inflammation and carbs for anaerobic bursts. Add coconut water, which provides electrolytes and energy-stoking medium-chain triglycerides.

Meal Plan Recipe at right

Before an Interval Workout

Coconut-Blueberry Smoothie

- 12 oz coconut water
- 1 Tbsp coconut butter
- 1 cup frozen blueberries
- 1 small banana
- 1 scoop protein powder (brown rice, pea, or hemp)
- 1 Tbsp honey

Process all ingredients in a blender until smooth.

MAKES 1 SERVING

Per serving: 390 calories, 6 g fat, 83 g carbs, 13 g fiber, 8 g protein, 390 mg sodium

Before a Hard Shop Ride

Calories 600

Strategy A 2- to 3-hour hammerfest will burn more carbs than a long recreational ride or even a 1-hour race. Consume about 1 g of carbohydrates per pound of body weight 3 hours before the start. The harder you ride, the more glycogen (carbs) you require. "You need plenty of energy, which means more food and calories, so eat early enough that your body has time to fully digest them," says Lewin. "Top off with a gel or a few bites of a bar right before you start to ride."

Research shows that athletes following this eating strategy

can push 20% harder near the end of rigorous exercise than those who don't eat before and 10% harder than those who have just a snack. **Meal Plan** 1 bowl oatmeal, 1 slice toast with 1 Tbsp nut butter, 1 cup yogurt, and 1 glass orange juice (Have a gel, a few bites of bagel, or some sports drink 30 minutes before the start.)

Peanut Butter Oatmeal

- ½ cup quick-cooking oats
- ¾ cup light vanilla soy milk
- 2 Tbsp creamy peanut butter
- ¼ tsp ground cinnamon

Stir oats and milk together in a small microwavable bowl. Microwave at 1-minute intervals, stirring between intervals, until oatmeal reaches desired consistency. Stir in peanut butter and cinnamon.

MAKES 1 SERVING

Per serving: 441 calories, 21 g fat, 51 g carbs, 7 g fiber, 17 g protein, 221 mg sodium

Bagel It

Choose the right toppings and you can create the perfect combination of peride fuel. Plus, the bagel's portability makes it an easy grab-and-go on rushed mornings.

Don't slather it with cream cheese, or you'll create a fast-burning breakfast that will leave you crashed. Instead, look for a smaller size bagel (about 3") and swap the cream cheese for peanut butter and sliced banana. The banana is king of sustained energy release (with a low glycemic index).



Before a Century

Calories 400 to 500

Strategy Century riders are often tempted by a Denny's All-American Slam (at 1,000-plus calories). It's better to have half that amount—about 500 calories—a couple of hours before the start and then eat

throughout the day for an even stream of energy. Because you likely won't go full throttle, you can eat a wider variety of foods. Lewin suggests a breakfast rich in mixed carbohydrates, plus a little protein and healthy

fat. This will give you an energy boost for the start of the ride but will prevent bonking before the first food station.

Meal Plan 2 pancakes, ½ cup berries, 1 cup fat-free yogurt, and 1 slice Canadian bacon or scrambled egg

Oatmeal Buttermilk & Berry Pancakes

- 1¼ cups quick-cooking oats
- ½ cup whole wheat flour
- 3 Tbsp sugar
- ½ tsp baking powder
- ¼ tsp baking soda
- ⅛ tsp salt
- 1 cup low-fat buttermilk
- 1 egg
- 1 egg white
- 1 Tbsp unsalted butter, melted
- 1 tsp grated fresh lemon peel
- 1 cup fresh blueberries
- ½ cup maple syrup

1. In a large bowl, combine oats, flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda, and salt.

2. In a small bowl, combine buttermilk, egg, egg white, butter, and lemon peel. Pour buttermilk mixture into oat mixture, stirring until just moistened. Gently fold in blueberries with a rubber spatula. Refrigerate for 30 minutes.

3. Preheat oven to 250 °F. Coat a large nonstick skillet with cooking spray and heat over medium heat. Spoon four quarter-cupfuls of batter into the skillet and cook until tops begin to bubble slightly, about 2½ to 3 minutes. Turn pancakes and cook 2½ to 3 minutes longer, until golden and cooked through. Transfer to a baking sheet and keep warm in oven. Repeat with remaining batter. Divide maple syrup over pancakes.

MAKES 12 PANCAKES

Per pancake: 130 calories, 2 g fat, 25 g carbs, 2 g fiber, 4 g protein, 101 mg sodium

Quinoa with Fruit & Nuts

- ½ cup cooked quinoa
- ⅛ cup almonds, chopped
- ⅛ cup raisins
- ⅛ cup sunflower seeds
- ¼ pear or apple, diced
- ½ Tbsp hemp seeds

- ½ Tbsp raw pumpkin seed oil
- ½ Tbsp raw honey, maple syrup, or agave nectar
- ⅛ cup 2% milk

Combine all ingredients in a bowl.

MAKES 1 SERVING

Per serving: 530 calories, 27 g fat, 58 g carbs, 8 g fiber, 14 g protein, 115 mg sodium

Try Quinoa Instead of Oatmeal

Quinoa contains branched-chain amino acids to help metabolize glycogen. "Plus, its 4-to-1 ratio of carbs to protein is perfect for the endurance athlete," says Adam Kelinson, nutrition consultant and author of *The Athlete's Plate: Real Food for High Performance*. "And as a whole grain, quinoa is digested slowly, so it delivers sustained energy and doesn't spike insulin levels."

Eating on the Bike

In most recreational sports, eating is something you do afterward and, occasionally, beforehand. But in cycling, eating is often an important part of the activity. Food is fuel,

and you need to keep your tank full. You burn energy while riding. Every time you eat, your body takes the food's carbohydrates (starches and sugars) and stores them as fuel (glycogen) in your muscles and

liver. You have enough stored glycogen to provide energy for 2 to 3 hours of riding. After that length of time, you need to eat, or you could start to feel weak and dizzy—known in cycling as the bonk.

[Convenience Foods]

While far from nutritional nirvana, quickie marts offer more than sugary snack cakes, super-size sodas, and hot dogs on rollers. "With scrutiny, it's possible to make smart choices," says sports dietitian Molly Morgan, RD. When a

convenience store is your only option for midride fuel, here's how to weed out the junk.

Fig Newtons

These are a surprisingly good choice for midride fuel. They're low in fat and fiber, which makes digestion easy and prevents stomach issues. These cookies balance their carb content with dried figs, which deliver a range of key cycling nutrients including sodium, calcium, vitamin K,

iron, and potassium. For rides with about 60 to 90 minutes remaining, four bars (220 calories and 44 g of carbs) will do. Anything longer, double that. To help digestion, drink 8 oz of fluid.

Coca-Cola

This classic works to avert an oncoming bonk and can also give you a kick before a short ride. Bonus: You've squeezed your last gel and are desperate for a jolt. Coke is available at just about

every gas station along any ride route. "The caffeine and sugar give you a boost, but the downside is that it's relatively transient," says Leslie Bonci, RD, director of sports nutrition at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center. If you feel yourself dragging prior to a ride, drink one can 30 to 60 minutes before you start. As for staving off a midride bonk? Though the



traditional method among cyclists is to shotgun a can at the convenience store, it's better to sip slowly.

Energy Bars

Bars are formulated to digest easily during exercise and provide a steady stream of carbs (you want about 30 g per hour). For rides lasting 3 or more hours, energy bars can stabilize levels of glycogen, your main fuel source. Choose a low-fiber bar (2 g is plenty) with more carbs than protein (about 40 g of carbohydrates and no more than 15 g of protein) and cut it into quarters, says Bonci. Put

the pieces into a ziplock bag and, starting with hour 2 and every hour after that, eat one piece and wash it down with some sports drink.

But avoid them as preride fuel. "Bars are too heavy to eat immediately before a ride," says Bonci. They're also a poor everyday snack choice—some top out at 350 calories and are high in sugar and low in fiber.



3 More Convenient Choices

These options can also fill a midride craving.



• Sweet treat: Snickers

If energy bars aren't on the shelves, this substitute will do in a pinch. It also holds up well to pocket travel.

• Substantial fare: Pizza

A plain slice has half the fat of a typical breakfast sandwich. And it's easier to fold up and eat with one hand.



• Fruit snack: Banana

These are reliable peel-and-eat (or stash-and-go) foods, and their wrappers are biodegradable.



[Sandwiches on the Go]

When it comes to fuel, the humble sandwich may just be a cyclist's salvation. Not only does it tuck neatly into a jersey pocket and is easy to manipulate one-handed, it can be customized to meet any nutritional need. It even has a history in the sport's most renowned races: In the 15th stage of the 1975 Tour de France, Aussie domestique Don Allan

abruptly dismantled his bike and refused to continue without a 25-tooth gear, a beer, and a chicken sandwich. The team mechanic had only a 24, but the crowd pulled through with a glass of wine and the sandwich. Satisfied, Allan finished the stage.

You won't get a baguette hand-up from a roadside fan during your ride, so try these

five sandwich recipes for nutrient-packed, portable meals. Or see Assembly Required (at right) for a mix-and-match menu to help you create your own great sandwiches. Whether it's a powerful blend of energy-revving carbohydrates or a protein-packed postride muscle mender, any way you slice it, a sandwich can meet all your fueling needs.

Veggie Pita

This high-fiber, meatless option replaces lost electrolytes.

- ½ whole wheat pita
- 2 Tbsp garlic hummus
- 1 black bean burger
- 1 slice reduced-fat Colby-Jack cheese
- ¼ avocado, sliced
- ¼ cup arugula
- 3 Tbsp shredded carrots

Stuff pita half with remaining ingredients.

MAKES 1 SANDWICH

Per sandwich: 395 calories, 16 g fat, 44 g carbs, 12 g fiber, 24 g protein, 942 mg sodium

Crunchy Tuna Salad

This low-fat option is also a good postride recovery meal, providing a balanced boost of carbs and protein.

- ½ cup tuna
- ¼ cup chopped apple
- 2 Tbsp Dijonnaise mustard
- 2 Tbsp sliced toasted almonds
- 2 slices whole grain bread

Combine tuna, apple, mustard, and almonds and spread between slices of bread.

MAKES 1 SANDWICH

Per sandwich: 339 calories, 9 g fat, 31 g carbs, 5 g fiber, 27 g protein, 934 mg sodium

Banana-Nutella Roll-Up

This makes a great grab 'n' go breakfast or midride fuel.

- 1 whole wheat wrap
- 2 Tbsp Nutella
- 1 Tbsp whipped cream cheese
- 1 Tbsp sliced toasted almonds
- 1 small banana, sliced

Spread wrap with remaining ingredients.

MAKES 1 SANDWICH

Per sandwich:

493 calories, 21 g fat, 70 g carbs, 6 g fiber, 10 g protein, 329 mg sodium

Tangy Turkey Ciabatta

This high-protein sandwich is a no-mess traveler.

- 1 ciabatta roll
- 1 Tbsp pesto
- ¼ cup baby spinach leaves
- 2 oz sliced lean turkey
- 1 slice part-skim mozzarella
- 3 pickle slices

Spread roll with pesto and pile on remaining ingredients.

MAKES 1 SANDWICH

Per sandwich:

378 calories, 15 g fat, 43 g carbs, 2 g fiber, 24 g protein, 1,338 mg sodium

Peanut Butter, Bacon & Honey

This salty-sweet energy blast is a good midride meal.

- 2 slices raisin bread, toasted
- 2 Tbsp peanut butter
- 2 tsp honey
- 2 strips crispy bacon (cut in half)

Spread one slice with peanut butter, then one with honey, and add bacon.

MAKES 1 SANDWICH

Per sandwich:

410 calories, 22 g fat, 45 g carbs, 4 g fiber, 15 g protein, 353 mg sodium

Assembly Required

Pick Your Bread	Whole wheat pita	Ciabatta roll	Whole wheat wrap	Raisin bread	Whole grain bread		
Choose a Spread (or 2)	Pesto	Whipped cream cheese	Hummus	Peanut butter	Dijonnaise mustard	Nutella	Honey
Give It a Heart	Banana	Black bean burger	Canned tuna or salmon	Low-fat cheese	Baked tofu	Sliced lean turkey	Portobello mushrooms
Top It Off	Bacon	Sliced toasted almonds	Pickles	Shredded carrots	Avocado	Leafy greens	Apple

After the Ride

Ride hard, and inflammation inevitably results: It's how the body tries to repair worked muscles

and joints. Paradoxically, though, inflammation also causes soreness and slows recovery. There's always ibuprofen, but research

shows that some foods contain anti-inflammatory agents that ease aches and hasten healing. Eat them to bounce back faster.

[Quick Fixes]

Immediately after your ride, you should eat and drink to help replenish those nutrients that will help you recover faster.

Chocolate Milk

After exertion, when muscles are most ready to absorb missing nutrients, low-fat chocolate milk provides plenty of carbs (nearly twice as much as white milk) to replenish glycogen stores and protein to repair muscles, says Leslie Bonci, RD, director of sports nutrition at the



University of Pittsburgh Medical Center.

Bonus You get calcium, vitamin D, potassium, magnesium, and B vitamins—all essential for reloading your energy—and

antioxidants to knock out the damaging free radicals your body produced during exercise. Sip 12 oz within 20 minutes of finishing your ride, when muscles are most ready to absorb missing nutrients.

Berries

Fruit such as blueberries, strawberries, and goji berries contain lots of healthy anti-inflammatory antioxidants that help you recover after your ride. Throw back a handful or toss them in



salads or on cereal or yogurt.

Or try this protein-rich smoothie: Before heading out, fill your blender with 1½ scoops whey protein powder, ½ cup frozen strawberries or blueberries, ½ frozen

banana, 2 tablespoons nonfat Greek yogurt, 2 tablespoons flaxseed meal, and 1 cup vanilla almond milk—but don't blend it yet. Store the blender in the refrigerator, then whirl and drink when you return.

Grilled Banana Sandwiches

This meal provides healthy fat and protein from the peanut butter, plus extra carbs from the banana. And the honey, a natural energy booster, is also an excellent source of carbs.

- 1 large banana
- 1½ Tbsp low-fat whipped cream cheese
- 1½ Tbsp peanut butter
- 1 Tbsp honey
- Pinch of salt
- 4 slices whole grain bread

1. Mash ¼ of the banana in a bowl with a fork; stir in cream cheese, peanut butter, honey, and salt. Spread over two bread slices.

2. Coat a large skillet with cooking spray and place over medium-high heat. Slice remaining banana in half lengthwise and then in half crosswise. Place banana slices in the skillet and cook until caramelized. Arrange bananas over cream cheese and top with remaining bread.

3. Wipe out the skillet, add a spritz of cooking spray, and place over medium heat. Add sandwiches and cook until browned on each side.

MAKES 2 SERVINGS

Per serving: 320 calories, 10 g fat, 50 g carbs, 6 g fiber, 11 g protein, 320 mg sodium

Plan Ahead

After a ride—especially when you haven't fueled properly beforehand—your depleted muscles and low blood sugar can trigger binge behavior. Plan recovery eating ahead of time, portioning out foods to ensure that healthy options are available immediately after your ride.

Granola with Nuts

Making your own granola ensures that it'll be healthier than store-bought versions. Serve it with milk or yogurt to increase the protein and bone-building calcium—good news for cyclists whose bone density tends to be lower than average due to the sport's low impact levels.

- ½ cup honey
- ¼ cup canola oil
- 1 Tbsp almond extract
- 1 Tbsp ground cinnamon
- 1 Tbsp ground nutmeg
- 3 cups rolled oats
- 1 cup raw almonds
- 1 cup unsalted dry-roasted peanuts
- ½ cup unsalted mixed nuts
- ½ tsp salt

- 1.** Preheat oven to 300°F. Line a large rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.
- 2.** Whisk together honey, oil, almond extract, cinnamon, and nutmeg in a large bowl. Add oats, almonds, peanuts, mixed nuts, and salt; toss to coat well.
- 3.** Spread evenly on baking sheet. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes, stirring mixture every 10 minutes to prevent burning, until browned and dry. Cool on a rack for 15 minutes.

MAKES 6 CUPS

Per ½ cup: 346 calories, 21 g fat, 33 g carbs, 6 g fiber, 10 g protein, 99 mg sodium

Turkey Sandwiches with Swiss Cheese & Apple

This sandwich is the perfect planned postride meal—make it before you head out. It can be refrigerated for up to 3 hours.

- 3 Tbsp macadamia or other nut butter
- 8 slices light whole wheat bread, lightly toasted
- 4 slices (4 oz) Swiss cheese
- 8 slices (8 oz) cooked turkey breast
- ¼ tsp salt
- ⅛ tsp black pepper (optional)
- 1 small apple, thinly sliced
- ½ bunch watercress sprigs

Spread nut butter on bread. Place cheese on four slices of the bread, top with turkey, and season with salt and black pepper (if using). Top with apple, watercress, and remaining bread. Cut in half.

MAKES 4 SERVINGS

Per serving: 407 calories, 20 g fat, 33 g carbs, 6 g fiber, 26 g protein, 898 mg sodium

[Postride Feasts]

Cap your day with these ride-specific meals.

After an Interval Workout or Race

Soba Noodle Salad with Chicken

A short ride is less disruptive to the digestive system, so you can often eat whole foods sooner after a workout than if you had, say, ridden a century, says Adam Kelinson, nutrition consultant and author of *The Athlete's Plate: Real Food for High Performance*. "You'll also need a bit more protein to help repair muscles after anaerobic exercise," he says. Soba noodles, which are popular in Japan, are made from buckwheat, a high-quality source of protein containing eight essential amino acids your body uses to help repair tissue and build new cells. The gingerroot helps battle inflammation.

MARINADE

- ½ cup tamari
- ½ cup water
- 2 Tbsp fish sauce
- 3 Tbsp raw honey
- 2 Tbsp fresh lime juice
- 2 Tbsp minced fresh gingerroot
- 3 Tbsp sesame seeds
- ½ bunch cilantro leaves, chopped

CHICKEN

- 1 lb boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 4 oz soba noodles, cooked according to package directions

1. Whisk marinade ingredients together in a baking dish; reserve ¼ cup. Rinse chicken breasts in cool water, pat dry, and place in dish with marinade. Cover and refrigerate for several hours.

2. Preheat oven to 425°F. Place uncovered chicken on middle rack. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes or until fully cooked. Remove from oven and let cool slightly before cutting into bite-sized pieces. Toss with reserved marinade and noodles.

MAKES 2 SERVINGS

Per serving: 580 calories, 14 g fat, 58 g carbs, 1 g fiber, 63 g protein, 3,850 mg sodium

Real Macaroni & Cheese

Cyclists know that carbs fuel performance—but calcium? Like sodium and potassium, this mineral plays a supporting role in muscle contraction, and it's lost through sweat: Lose too much calcium and you lose your edge. Cheese is one of the richest sources of absorbable calcium.

- 1 lb elbow macaroni or rotelle pasta
- ¼ cup unsalted butter
- ¼ cup unbleached white flour
- ¼ tsp ground nutmeg
- ½ tsp dried basil
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ tsp black pepper
- 3 cups low-fat milk
- 2 cups grated sharp Cheddar cheese
- ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese

- 1.** Boil 4 quarts of salted water in a stockpot. Add pasta and cook until al dente, about 8 minutes. Drain and set aside.
- 2.** Melt butter in a saucepan over low heat, then add flour and whisk for about 2 minutes. Add nutmeg, basil, salt, and black pepper and whisk for another minute. While stirring, add milk. Turn heat to medium and continue stirring until mixture thickens just enough to coat the whisk, about 4 minutes. Add 1½ cups of the Cheddar and all of the Parmesan, ½ cup at a time. Add more salt and black pepper to taste, if needed.
- 3.** Combine cheese sauce with pasta. It will be a little soupy. Pour mixture into a 2-quart casserole dish sprayed with cooking spray. Sprinkle remaining ½ cup Cheddar on top and bake for 15 minutes at 350°F, until cheese melts.

MAKES 8 SERVINGS

Per serving: 446 calories, 19 g fat, 50 g carbs, 1 g fiber, 19 g protein, 450 mg sodium

After a Century or Endurance Ride

Mediterranean Pizza

Topped with vegetables and healthy goat cheese, this recipe proves once and for all that pizza can be a healthy choice. Eat within an hour after your ride so that you replenish your energy stores when your body is most responsive.

- 5 oz low-fat soft goat cheese
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 tsp chopped fresh oregano or 1 tsp dried
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 12" (10 oz) prebaked pizza crust
- 6 oz jarred, roasted sweet red peppers, drained and cut lengthwise into strips
- 6 oz jarred or canned artichoke hearts, drained and quartered

1. Preheat oven to 450°F. In a small bowl, stir together cheese, garlic, and oregano, and add black pepper to taste.

2. Dapple crust with crumbled cheese mixture, leaving 1" rim around edge. Scatter pepper strips and artichoke hearts on top of cheese.

3. Slide pizza directly onto oven rack and bake 12 minutes, or until crust crisps and cheese melts. Remove pizza from oven, cut into eighths with pizza cutter, and serve hot.

MAKES 4 SERVINGS

Per serving (2 slices): 292 calories, 8 g fat, 42 g carb, 3 g fiber, 14 g pro, 729 mg sodium

Healing Foods

When an injury sidelines a cyclist, the natural reaction is to cut back on calories until it's time to ride—and burn energy—again. But the healing process demands fuel, too. “It's like fixing a house,” says sports dietitian Cynthia Sass, RD, CSSD. “A crack in the foundation requires raw materials to patch

things back together, and in the body, those raw materials come from what we eat.”

Proteins, vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants help heal wounds, relax stressed tendons, and mend fractured bones more quickly. So in addition to your doc's

advice to elevate and ice, choose the right combinations of foods to speed recovery and get back on your bike. Here's where to aim your cart at the Stop & Shop.

SOMETIMES THE BEST PRESCRIPTION FOR HEALTH AND WELLNESS COMES IN THE FORM OF WHOLE FOODS.

[In the Produce Section]

Buy Carrots, spinach, sweet potatoes, and kale for vitamin A; oranges, strawberries, peppers, and broccoli for vitamin C

Why Vitamin A helps make white blood cells for fighting infection,

“which is always a risk with injury,” says Sass. Vitamin C has been proven to help skin and flesh wounds heal faster and stronger, making it a valuable ally when caring for road rash. Vitamin

C also helps repair connective tissues and cartilage by contributing to the formation of collagen, an important protein that builds scar tissue, blood vessels, and even new bone cells.

Spinach, Chicken & Mandarin Orange Salad

- 1½ Tbsp Dijon mustard
- 1 Tbsp honey
- 1 Tbsp fresh lemon juice
- 1 Tbsp orange juice
- 8 cups baby spinach
- 1 red onion, thinly sliced and separated into rings
- 4 oz sliced mushrooms
- 3 cups shredded cooked chicken breast
- ½ cup no-salt-added canned kidney beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 cup canned water- or juice-packed mandarin orange segments, drained
- 1½ Tbsp sliced almonds, toasted

1. Whisk together mustard, honey, lemon juice, and orange juice in a large bowl.
2. Add spinach, onion, mushrooms, chicken, and beans to dressing. Toss until well blended. Divide salad among four plates. Top with oranges and almonds.

MAKES 4 SERVINGS

Per serving: 284 calories, 5 g fat, 21 g carbs, 5 g fiber, 38 g protein, 269 mg sodium

Sweet Potato Burgers

- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 red bell pepper, chopped
- 1 rib celery, chopped
- ½ bunch kale, stems and ribs removed, coarsely chopped (about 5 cups)
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1½ tsp salt-free Cajun seasoning blend
- ¼ tsp salt
- 2 medium sweet potatoes (1 lb), peeled and shredded
- 1 can (15 oz) no-salt-added black-eyed peas, rinsed and drained
- 4 oz light firm tofu, patted dry
- 2 Tbsp yellow cornmeal
- 3 tsp olive oil

1. Heat a large nonstick skillet coated with nonstick cooking spray over medium heat. Cook onion, bell pepper, and celery for 8 minutes, stirring, until vegetables soften. Stir in kale, garlic, seasoning, and salt. Cook for 4 minutes, stirring, or until

kale wilts. Add sweet potatoes and cook for 10 minutes, stirring, or until sweet potatoes soften. Set aside.

2. Combine black-eyed peas and tofu in a large bowl. Mash with a potato masher until smooth. Stir in sweet potato mixture until well blended. Refrigerate for 30 minutes.

3. Sprinkle 1 tablespoon of the cornmeal on a plate. Pack burger mixture in a ½-cup measure and turn out onto plate. Press to form 3" burgers, making eight burgers total. Sprinkle tops with remaining cornmeal.

4. Wipe out skillet. Add 1½ teaspoons of the oil to skillet and heat over medium heat. Cook four burgers for 10 minutes, turning once, or until hot and browned. Repeat with remaining oil and burgers. Serve two burgers per person.

MAKES 4 SERVINGS

Per serving: 301 calories, 7 g fat, 51 g carbs, 10 g fiber, 13 g protein, 273 mg sodium

Stir-Fried Broccoli & Peppers with Ginger

- ½ cup reduced-sodium vegetable broth
- 1 Tbsp low-sodium soy sauce
- 1 Tbsp rice vinegar
- 2 tsp hoisin sauce
- 2 tsp cornstarch
- 1 tsp toasted sesame oil
- ¼ tsp red pepper flakes
- 1 Tbsp peanut or vegetable oil
- 2 red bell peppers, cut into small strips
- 1 red onion, halved and thinly sliced
- 4 cups broccoli florets
- 1 cup frozen shelled edamame, thawed
- 4 oz shiitake mushrooms, stems discarded and caps halved
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tsp minced fresh ginger
- 3 Tbsp water
- 2 cups hot cooked brown rice

1. Whisk together broth, soy sauce, vinegar, hoisin sauce, cornstarch, sesame oil, and red pepper flakes in a small bowl. Set aside.

2. Heat peanut oil in a wok or large nonstick skillet over high heat, tilting pan to coat. Cook bell peppers and onion for 1 minute, stirring constantly. Add broccoli, edamame, mushrooms, garlic, ginger, and water. Cook for 10 minutes, stirring constantly, or until vegetables are tender-crisp. Quickly whisk broth mixture and add it to wok. Cook and stir for 20 seconds, or just until thickened.

3. Divide rice and vegetable mixture among four bowls.

MAKES 4 SERVINGS

Per serving: 285 calories, 8 g fat, 46 g carbs, 8 g fiber, 10 g protein, 295 mg sodium

THE VITAMIN C IN BROCCOLI IS NATURE'S CURE FOR ROAD RASH.

[At the Meat Counter]

Buy Lean turkey, sirloin, fish, and chicken

Why Lean meats are packed with protein, a critical building block for producing new cells. In a 2008 study published in the *Journal of the Federation of*

American Societies for Experimental Biology, researchers at the University of Ottawa identified a protein that acted like a bridge between damaged tissues, promoting repair.

Because athletes require about 112 g of protein per day (for a 175-lb male or female) for optimum healing, eating meat is an easy way to rocket toward this goal faster.

Recovery Burger

- 10 oz lean ground turkey
- 4 Tbsp teriyaki sauce
- 2 thick slices red onion
- 2 slices pineapple
- 2 whole wheat buns, toasted
- ½ jalapeño pepper, thinly sliced
- 2 slices Swiss cheese

1. Form ground turkey into two patties. Grill over high heat for 4 minutes per side, basting frequently with 2 tablespoons of the teriyaki sauce.

At the same time, grill onion and pineapple slices until lightly charred.

2. Put each burger on a bun and layer on onion, pineapple, jalapeño, and cheese. Top with remaining teriyaki sauce.

MAKES 2 SERVINGS

Per serving: 510 calories, 22 g fat, 40 g carbs, 5 g fiber, 39 g protein, 1,770 mg sodium

Baked Pistachio Chicken

- 1 Tbsp Dijon mustard
- 2 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 2 Tbsp honey
- Salt and black pepper to taste
- 1 cup chopped pistachios
- ½ cup whole grain bread crumbs
- 2 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves

1. Preheat oven to 500°F. Coat a baking sheet with cooking spray.

2. Mix mustard, oil, and honey in a shallow bowl; season with salt and black pepper to taste. Mix pistachios and bread crumbs on a plate.

3. Place chicken breasts between two sheets of wax paper and pound with a meat mallet to ½" thick. Dip chicken in mustard mixture to coat and then dip in crumbs. Place chicken on baking sheet.

4. Put baking sheet in preheated oven. Turn heat down to 375°F. Bake for about 20 minutes, until chicken is no longer pink when tested with a knife.

MAKES 4 SERVINGS

Per serving: 380 calories, 23 g fat, 25 g carbs, 4 g fiber, 22 g protein, 135 mg sodium

[In the Dairy Department]

Buy Eggs, milk, and yogurt

Why All three are good sources of protein; milk and yogurt also contain calcium, which repairs bone and muscle. The

vitamin D in dairy products improves calcium absorption and helps injured muscle and bone heal: A 2010 study published in

the *Journal of Bone and Joint Surgery* reported that boosting this nutrient's levels in deficient patients produced earlier results.

Breakfast Pizza Rustica

- 1 mini whole wheat pizza crust
- ¼ cup mushrooms, thinly sliced
- ¼ cup baby spinach, roughly torn
- 2 Tbsp crumbled goat cheese
- 2 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1 egg
- Salt and black pepper to taste

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Top crust with mushrooms, spinach, and cheese.
3. Drizzle oil on top and crack egg into center of pizza round.
4. Bake pizza according to package directions, or until egg is cooked. To serve, quarter pizza, allowing yolk to break. Season with salt and black pepper.

MAKES 2 SERVINGS

Per serving: 398 calories, 24 g fat, 34 g carbs, 6 g fiber, 14 g protein, 461 mg sodium

Green Eggs & Ham Omelet

- 2 eggs
- 1 slice Canadian bacon, diced
- ⅓ cup torn baby spinach leaves
- 1 Tbsp shredded reduced-fat smoked mozzarella

Whisk eggs in a bowl, then stir in bacon and spinach. Coat a nonstick skillet with cooking spray. Pour in egg mixture, cook over medium heat until set, and flip. Sprinkle with cheese and fold omelet in half.

MAKES 1 SERVING

Per serving: 200 calories, 12 g fat, 3 g carbs, 0 g fiber, 20 g protein, 560 mg sodium

[In the Seafood Case]

Buy Salmon, tuna, and trout

Why In addition to an added protein bonus, fish is packed with omega-3s, fatty acids that quench the inflammation that slows recovery from tendinitis,

bone fractures, and sprained ligaments. University of Pittsburgh Medical Center researchers found that omega-3s relieved joint pain in 60% of subjects,

and a study published in the March 2009 *Clinical Journal of Sport Medicine* showed that they alleviated delayed-onset muscle soreness after strenuous exercise.

Fish Tacos

- 1 Tbsp unsalted butter
- 1 onion, thinly sliced
- 1 cup chopped tomato
- 1 Tbsp lime juice
- 2 tilapia fillets (6 oz each), halved lengthwise
- ¼ tsp ground chipotle chile pepper
- ½ tsp salt
- 2 Tbsp chopped fresh cilantro
- 4 multigrain tortillas (8" diameter)
- 1 cup chopped romaine lettuce (2 leaves)
- 4 Tbsp fat-free sour cream

1. Melt 1 teaspoon of the butter in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add onion and cook, stirring occasionally, until starting to soften, 2 to 3 minutes. Stir in tomato and cook until wilted, about 2 minutes. Add lime juice and transfer mixture to a bowl.

2. Wipe out skillet and melt remaining 2 teaspoons butter over medium-high heat. Sprinkle tilapia with ground chipotle and salt. Add to skillet and cook for 3 minutes per side, until fish flakes easily. Add onion mixture and cook for 1 minute. Remove from heat and stir in cilantro.

3. Heat tortillas according to package directions. Fill each with ¼ of the tilapia mixture, ¼ cup of the lettuce, and 1 tablespoon of the sour cream. Serve immediately.

MAKES 4 SERVINGS

Per serving: 212 calories, 6 g fat, 19 g carbs, 3 g fiber, 22 g protein, 517 mg sodium

Dilly Egg & Salmon Wrap

- 1 whole wheat tortilla (8" diameter)
- 3 Tbsp salmon cream cheese spread
- 1 hard-cooked egg, sliced
- ¼ tsp dried dill
- Black pepper (optional)
- 3 leaves baby spinach

Place tortilla on a paper towel or a piece of waxed paper. Spread with cream cheese. Top with egg and dill. Season to taste with black pepper (if using). Top with spinach. Roll into a cylinder.

MAKES 1 SERVING

Per serving: 303 calories, 19 g fat, 23 g carbs, 3 g fiber, 13 g protein, 566 mg sodium

Buy Fortified Cereal

Fortified cereals are some of the best sources of zinc (some deliver 100% of the recommended daily value). By itself, zinc doesn't repair damaged tissue, but it assists the nutrients that do. Cereal also supplies whole grain carbohydrates, which fuel your body's healing efforts and keep it from dipping into protein for energy.

Leaner, Faster Meals

Not only does more weight put a damper on your performance (5 extra pounds will make you 30 seconds slower on a 5-K climb), it also leads to physiological changes that can affect your cycling long term. A series of studies published in the *International Journal of Obesity* reported that when you put on pounds, even as few as 11, you change the composition of your fat cells, slow your metabolism, and have a harder time losing weight. Worse, repeatedly gaining and losing pounds year after year can make you more susceptible to packing on weight in the future. Over time those pounds add up, says Leslie Bonci, RD, of the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center. Try these changes to sidestep those extra pounds without feeling deprived.

Don't Underfuel Your Rides

Though some people have an easier time slimming down than others, weight loss is basically about how many calories you eat versus how many you burn.

But don't make the mistake of trying to lose weight by underfueling your rides—it always backfires. If you don't eat enough on the bike, you'll empty your stored glycogen, forcing your body to break down muscle tissue for energy.

[Beans, the Power Carbs]

Limited sunlight can lower levels of serotonin, the feel-good hormone, and make you crave comfort foods such as starchy carbs. Beans provide those carbs, as well as satiating protein and filling fiber (a cup has 12 g). And findings from the National Nutrition and Health Examination Survey show that people who eat beans weigh 7 lb less on average than those who snub them.

Breakfast Bean Burritos

- 4 whole wheat tortillas (8" diameter)
- 2 tsp olive oil
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1 large garlic clove, minced
- 1 can (16 oz) reduced-sodium black beans
- 1 tsp chili powder
- 2 Tbsp finely chopped fresh cilantro
- ½ cup salsa
- ¼ cup fat-free or low-fat plain yogurt
- ¼ cup fat-free or low-fat sour cream
- 6 Tbsp shredded reduced-fat Monterey Jack or Cheddar cheese

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Coat a small baking dish with cooking spray. Wrap tortillas in a single piece of foil. Bake for 10 minutes to heat through.

2. Meanwhile, heat oil in a medium-size nonstick skillet over medium heat. Cook onion and garlic for 3 minutes. Stir in beans (with liquid) and chili powder. Simmer, stirring occasionally, for 10 minutes. Stir in cilantro.

3. Combine salsa, yogurt, and sour cream in a small saucepan. Stir over very low heat just until warm (do not boil). To assemble burritos, divide bean mixture evenly among tortillas. Sprinkle each with cheese and roll to enclose the filling. Place burritos seam side down in baking dish. Top with salsa mixture. Bake for 10 minutes, or until heated through.

MAKES 4 SERVINGS

Per serving: 255 calories, 8 g fat, 44 g carbs, 8 g fiber, 15 g protein, 809 mg sodium

Brown Rice with Black Beans

- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 can (4 oz) diced green chile peppers, drained
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 3 Tbsp chili powder
- 1 Tbsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 2 tsp ground coriander (optional)
- 2 cups brown rice
- 3 cups reduced-sodium vegetable or chicken broth
- 2 cups water
- 1 can (15 oz) black beans, rinsed and drained
- 2 Tbsp chopped cilantro

1. Heat oil in a medium-size saucepan over medium heat. Add onion, peppers, and garlic. Cook for 5 minutes or until tender. Add chili powder, cumin, oregano, and coriander (if using). Cook for 1 minute. Stir in rice, broth, and water. Bring to a boil.

2. Reduce heat to low, cover, and simmer for 40 to 45 minutes, until liquid is absorbed and rice is tender. Stir in beans and cook for 1 minute. Sprinkle with cilantro.

MAKES 8 SERVINGS

Per serving: 262 calories, 3 g fat, 50 g carbs, 7 g fiber, 8 g protein, 104 mg sodium

[Surf, Not Turf]

Fatty fish, like salmon and sardines, is rich in two essential waist whittlers: omega-3 fatty acids and vitamin D. Both help control insulin levels and improve your ability to burn fat. One study reported that exercisers who took fish-oil supplements lost more fat and gained more muscle than those who went fish-oil free.

Alaskan Halibut

DIJON DRESSING

- ¼ cup Dijon mustard
- 2 Tbsp honey
- ¼ cup champagne vinegar
- 2 Tbsp sherry vinegar
- 2 cups grapeseed oil
- Salt and black pepper to taste

HALIBUT

- 4 6-oz halibut fillets
- Salt and black pepper to taste
- ¼ cup canola oil

VEGETABLES

- 3 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- ½ lb sunburst squash, quartered and blanched
- ¼ cup shelled English peas, blanched
- ¼ lb turnip, peeled, quartered, and blanched
- Salt and black pepper to taste
- 2 oz baby arugula (about 2 cups)

1. Preheat oven to 400°F.
2. Mix mustard, honey, and both vinegars. Slowly drizzle in grapeseed oil until it's emulsified. Season with salt and black pepper to taste. Set aside.
3. Season fillets with salt and black pepper to taste. Heat canola oil in a large sauté pan over medium heat and add fillets, then put pan in the oven for about 4 minutes. Remove pan, turn over fillets (they should be golden brown), then put them back in oven for 4 to 5 minutes, until cooked through. Remove from oven, set aside, and keep warm.
4. In a medium-size pan over medium heat, place olive oil, squash, peas, and turnip. Cook until warmed through and season with salt and black pepper to taste. Set aside and keep warm.
5. To assemble, place ¼ of the vegetable mixture on plate and a fillet on top of vegetables. Dress arugula with ¼ cup of the vinaigrette and place it on top of fish. Drizzle a tablespoon of the dressing onto each plate as a sauce.

MAKES 4 SERVINGS

Per serving: 600 calories, 45 g fat, 11 g carbs, 2 g fiber, 38 g protein, 180 mg sodium

Ginger & Lemon Steamed Striped Bass with Fennel Salad

- 2 whole striped bass, cleaned and heads removed
- 1 2"-piece fresh ginger, peeled and thinly sliced
- 1 lemon, thinly sliced
- ¼ cup fennel fronds
- Kosher salt
- 1 fennel bulb, halved, cored, and very thinly sliced
- ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
- 3 Tbsp fresh lemon juice
- 2 Tbsp snipped chives

1. Stuff bass with ginger, lemon slices, and fennel fronds. Season fish, inside and out, with salt. Place a wire rack in a large, deep skillet with ½" of water; bring it to a simmer. Set fish on rack, cover skillet, and steam over moderately low heat until fish is cooked through, about 18 minutes.
2. In a bowl, toss sliced fennel with salt and 2 tablespoons each of the olive oil and lemon juice. Let stand for 15 minutes. Transfer fish to a platter. Drizzle fish with the remaining olive oil and lemon juice and sprinkle with chives. Serve fish with fennel salad.

MAKES 4 SERVINGS

Per serving: 280 calories, 17 g fat, 7 g carbs, 2 g fiber, 26 g protein, 1,570 mg sodium

SOME RIDERS TRY TO LOSE WEIGHT BY UNDERFUELING THEIR RIDES. IT ALWAYS BACKFIRES.

A Perfect Day of Lean Eating

Here's a day's worth of food providing plenty of power.

Preride

- 1 banana drizzled with honey

On the bike

- 1 serving of an electrolyte sports drink
- 1 banana
- 2 Fig Newtons

Breakfast

- Oatmeal with almond butter and fruit

A.M. snack

- Hummus and fresh vegetables

Lunch

- Grilled chicken sandwich on whole grain bread

Dinner

- Grilled turkey burger with oven-baked fries and steamed spinach

P.M. snack

- 1 apple, 1 orange, and 15 almonds

10-Second Blubber Buster

If you don't have time to eat anything for breakfast, at least chug some milk. Doing so will likely help you eat less at lunch, say Australian scientists. In their study, overweight people who drank about 2½ cups of fat-free milk in the morning consumed 8.5% fewer calories at an all-you-can-eat lunch buffet than people who drank orange juice in the morning. What's the difference between the drinks? Milk has protein, which helps you feel fuller throughout the morning, while the OJ has no protein and lots of quick-burning sugar, which triggers hunger.

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