

TTIPS VOL. 24/22 – INSIGHTS

Eating During the Ride

“Whenever I see someone on my rides cycling faster than me, I assume they aren’t going as far.”

INTRODUCTION

After last Saturday’s ride we gathered in the parking lot for some of the usual post-ride chatter. The conversation drifted to discussion about one of our fellow Club riders who’s performance has improved drastically in the past few months. He’s faster, has more endurance and is clearly enjoying the rides more than he used to enjoy them. It’s always better when you ride faster, longer, and feel good, even if a little tired.

Someone proposed that his recent improvement was due to his having gotten a good bike fit by a professional, having gotten new cleats and pedals, a new seat, etc. Surely all of that is true. I added “and, he’s learned how to eat.” By that I meant that he has taken seriously his pre-ride nutrition, and also knows to eat during the ride too.

I’m quite serious about the nutrition thing. I notice many fellow Club riders who are in superb physical condition neglect to eat often during the ride, and at the right intervals and thus do not perform at peak levels. During the kind of riding that we do, trying to run your body without proper and sufficient nutrition is like trying to make your car run on an empty tank of gas. You can’t “gut” your way through it. When it comes to proper nutrition in the saddle, it’s not about will power, it’s about science. Snack correctly during the ride and you’ll not only ride better, you’ll feel better too.

But Darryl, you ask, how do I do that and what should I eat? Well, you can get some of the nutrition bars and gels that are professionally mixed and will deliver lots of energy to your legs and supercharge your performance. I use them. On

longer rides, however, I find that they upset my stomach. I prefer real food over gels and energy bars. But it's hard to carry lots of real food because it takes up lots of room in your jersey pockets. You can, however, opt to make your own snacks. Check out this article on when to eat, what to eat and how to make it.

7 Homemade Snack Recipes to Fuel Long Rides

Sick of Gels or Gummies? These Homemade Snacks Pack Nutrition, Energy, and Flavor Into Every Bite.

By Clay Abney / Bicycling Magazine
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You might chomp on gummies or slurp back gels midride, all to keep your energy up and your muscles fueled for miles. And while those conveniently packed options, loaded with carbs, might get you through your workout, you can also easily whip up some homemade snacks—made of just a few whole foods. All it takes is a little prep work and some delicious recipes (we've got you covered on that front).

Making your own midride snacks also means you can dial in your specific needs and desires when it comes to ingredients, palatability, and what works best for you and your body. Keep in mind, it may take some trial and error in figuring out the best fuel for you, but to help guide you toward a snack that powers you for plenty of miles, we got sports dietitians to share what nutrients you need in your homemade snacks to fuel your rides—plus when to fill up on those key ingredients. They also offer their go-to recipes for what to munch on mid-mileage, along with a few top cyclists who also share their favorite concoctions.

When Should I Fuel Up During Long Rides?

"It's best to start fueling in the first 30 minutes of the ride," says Kristen Arnold, M.S., R.D.N., C.S.S.D., sports dietitian and certified cycling coach. This keeps your fuel stores, like the glycogen in your muscles, from depleting.

Pamela Nisevich Bede M.S., R.D., sports dietitian and author of *Sweat, Eat, Repeat* agrees, saying that she tells athletes to fuel early and often on their rides. "I prefer to see athletes consuming incremental fuel across the hour rather than some huge bolus of food that the gut might have difficulty digesting and absorbing," she explains. That might mean taking small bites of food every half hour, rather than eating handfuls of food every hour.

The exact amount of fuel you take in per hour (or half hour) depends on several factors: your fueling in the hours leading up to your ride or race, the size of the athlete, and the intensity of the ride (the more intense the workout, the more fuel you'll burn), Bede says.

When figuring out what and when to eat during your next workout, here's a quick guide from Kim Schwabenbauer DHSc, R.D., C.S.S.D., sports dietitian and triathlon coach:

- If you're riding for less than an hour, you don't need extra carb intake midride to fuel performance.
- For rides lasting longer than an hour and up to 2.5 hours, go for 30g to 60g of carbs every hour and 200mg to 250mg of sodium every hour.
- For rides lasting longer than 2.5 hours, go for 45g to 90g of carbs every hour, aiming for a 2:1 ratio of glucose to fructose, and aim for about 250mg of sodium every hour—more if it's hot outside.

What Nutrients Do I Need in Homemade Snacks to Fuel My Rides?

To help you determine what to pack in your back pocket for your rides, Arnold offers some suggestions: "Ride snacks for shorter, more intense rides should include mostly carbs from quick-burning sources like honey, maple syrup, and dried fruit. Ride snacks for longer rides can include fat- and protein-rich foods like nuts, seeds, nut butter and protein powder."

Those carbs work best when easily digestible (meaning without a ton of extra fat or fiber), says Schwabenbauer. This means they're less likely to cause gastrointestinal upset.

To get to know what your body can handle as you ride, it's best to practice during training so you're set for a big race or mega long ride, Schwabenbauer says. "Practice in training so you 'train your gut' to absorb the carbohydrates/sodium/fluid prior to race day," she says. "I often recommend at least three to four practice rides at partial race day intensity to make sure the athlete is well-prepared to handle the intake at a similar intensity to race day."

Also, while you're snacking midride, don't forget to drink some water too. "It's equally important to also maintain hydration," says Wesley McWhorter, DrPH, R.D.N., C.S.C.S., assistant professor at The University of Texas Health School of Public Health and a spokesperson for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. "If it's an early morning ride, drink a glass prior to the ride and then continue drinking every 10 to 15 minutes during the ride. This will change on hot rides versus colder rides but it's important to drink before you get thirsty. Also, a good rule of thumb is that you need approximately 8 ounces of water for every 7 to 9 grams of carbohydrates consumed."

As for what whole foods and snacks to eat midride? Here, the list of recipes from dietitians and cyclists.

The Best Homemade Recipes for Fueling Up Your Rides

Most pros will say to turn to a classic PB&J to take with you on the ride—combining some *real* peanut butter (that means just peanuts in the ingredient list), fresh fruit preserves, and your favorite bread. But if you’re looking for something new to try, these recipes check the boxes for nutrition and taste.

SUGAR PLUM CHOMPS

Contributor: Kristen Arnold, M.S., R.D.N., C.S.S.D., sports dietitian and certified cycling coach

Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup chopped nuts (almonds, cashews, walnuts, pecans)
- 2 teaspoons freshly grated orange zest
- 1/2 cup dried currants or raisins or dried cherries or craisins
- 1/4 cup chopped and pitted prunes
- 1/4 cup pitted dates
- 3 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice
- 1/4 cup maple syrup
- Coconut flakes for rolling

Instructions:

1. Place the nuts, dried fruit, spices, orange zest and maple syrup in a food processor. You can also finely chop everything by hand. Pulse the mixture until it is just combined and starting to stick together.
2. Form into bite size balls. Roll in the coconut flakes.
3. Store in the fridge and eat within 7 days.

Notes: Very lightly wetting your hands prevents the balls from sticking to your hands and makes rolling easier.

PROTEIN-ENERGY BITES

Contributor: Pamela Nisevich Bede M.S., R.D., sports dietitian and author of Sweat, Eat, Repeat.

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup peanut butter
- 1/4 cup dried raisins or cranberries
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/2 cup old fashioned oats
- 2 Tbsp honey or maple syrup

Instructions:

1. Combine all ingredients in a bowl and form into bites. If mixture is too sticky, add more oats.
2. Place bites in freezer and remove just prior to ride.

SWEET POTATO BITES

Contributor: Kristen Arnold, M.S., R.D.N., C.S.S.D., sports dietitian and certified cycling coach

Ingredients:

- 2 medium sweet potatoes, mashed
- 1/2 cup instant oatmeal
- 1/4 cup chopped dried apricot
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons maple syrup

Instructions:

1. Poke holes in sweet potatoes and roast at 425 degrees Fahrenheit until soft, 60-75 minutes. Let cool and mash.
2. Mix all ingredients in a bowl. If the mixture is too gooey to form into a shape with hands then add more instant oats. It should be play-doh consistency.
3. Form mixture into bite-size pieces, about 1-inch diameter balls or discs.
4. Place on a baking tray and bake at 425 degrees Fahrenheit for 10-20 minutes until not gooey in the middle.

Notes: Refrigerate and eat up to 7 days. Freeze and keep them even longer. Consider leaving in the oven on low heat at 275-degrees for an additional up to 20 minutes to make them dryer. The dryer they are, the better they will hold their shape, but the less comforting moist texture they will have. Experiment to get your ideal texture.

M&M BITES

Contributor: Jess Cerra, vice president, product and community development at JoJé Bar

Ingredients:

- Dried mango (without added sugar)
- Macadamia nuts
- M&Ms

Instructions:

1. Quick and easy, no prep required other than putting in a baggie—seems overly simple but this combo is luxurious and offers a nutrient-packed combo.

TESSA'S RICE KRISPY BITES

Contributor: Tessa Reder, adventure racer and ultra-endurance athlete

Ingredients:

- 3 tbsp butter
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 package of marshmallows
- 2 1/2 cups Rice Krispies
- 2 1/2 cups puffed quinoa
- 1/4 cup hemp seeds
- 1/4 cup chia seeds
- 1/2 cup almonds

Instructions:

1. In a large pot, melt butter over low heat.
2. Stir in vanilla and salt.
3. Add marshmallows (eat a couple), and stir until melted and gooey.
4. Remove from heat, and add in all of the other ingredients. Stir until coated.
5. Butter a spatula. Lightly grease or butter a 13x9 pan, and use the spatula to press the mixture into the pan.
6. Once it's cooled, cut it into squares and wrap individually.

Notes: If you're going to be in the rain, I suggest using snack-sized Ziploc bags to avoid the disappointment of a soggy snack. These bars are super versatile, and you can tweak them to your taste. Try changing out the almonds for peanuts or dried blueberries, swapping the chia for pumpkin seeds, etc. As long as you have one cup total of "super foods," then it works out. The entire tray of squares is 3,378 calories total. If you divide it into 16 squares, that's 211 calories each.

OATMEAL COOKIES

Contributor: Meaghan Praznik, Ironman champion and head of communication for AllTrails

Ingredients:

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
 - 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
 - 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
 - 1/2 teaspoon sea salt
 - 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
 - 1 1/2 cup rolled oats
 - 3/4 cup chopped dates or chocolate chips (or half and half)
 - 1/2 cup chopped walnuts
 - 1/2 cup coconut oil, melted and cooled (but not re-solidified)
 - 3/4 cup brown sugar
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- 1 large egg
 - 1 large egg yolk
 - 2 teaspoons vanilla

Instructions:

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F and line baking sheets with parchment paper.
2. Combine the dry and wet ingredients in separate bowls
3. Stir the wet ingredients into the dry ingredients.
4. Stir in the dates/chocolate chips and walnuts.
5. Use a tablespoon to measure out your cookie batter, roll into a ball, and place on the baking sheet.
6. Bake for 10-12 minutes

Notes: If it's super hot out, skip the chocolate chips so they don't melt.

KANSAS BUFFALO TURDS

Contributor: Peter Jolles, expedition adventure racer

Ingredients:

- 20-24 oz bag steel cut oats
- 1 cup milled flax seed
- 16-18 oz pecans, walnuts, almonds, or any nut
- 1 Tbsp salt
- 8 oz package dates
- 12 oz package dark chocolate chips
- 1 cup chunky peanut butter with salt

- 5 oz bag Starbucks Dark Chocolate Covered Espresso Beans

Instructions:

1. Grind up all the dry ingredients in a food processor.
2. Add the peanut butter and mix until fully blended.
3. Measure out about a half cup and roll it up into the shape of a big ol' turd and throw it in a little ziploc bag.

Notes: Keeps indefinitely in the freezer or a couple days out in the open. Each half cup serving has about 750 calories, a little salt and a little caffeine.

Okay riders, I hope that helps. Make some snacks, Ride on and....

Make Every Ride Epic,

Darryl
