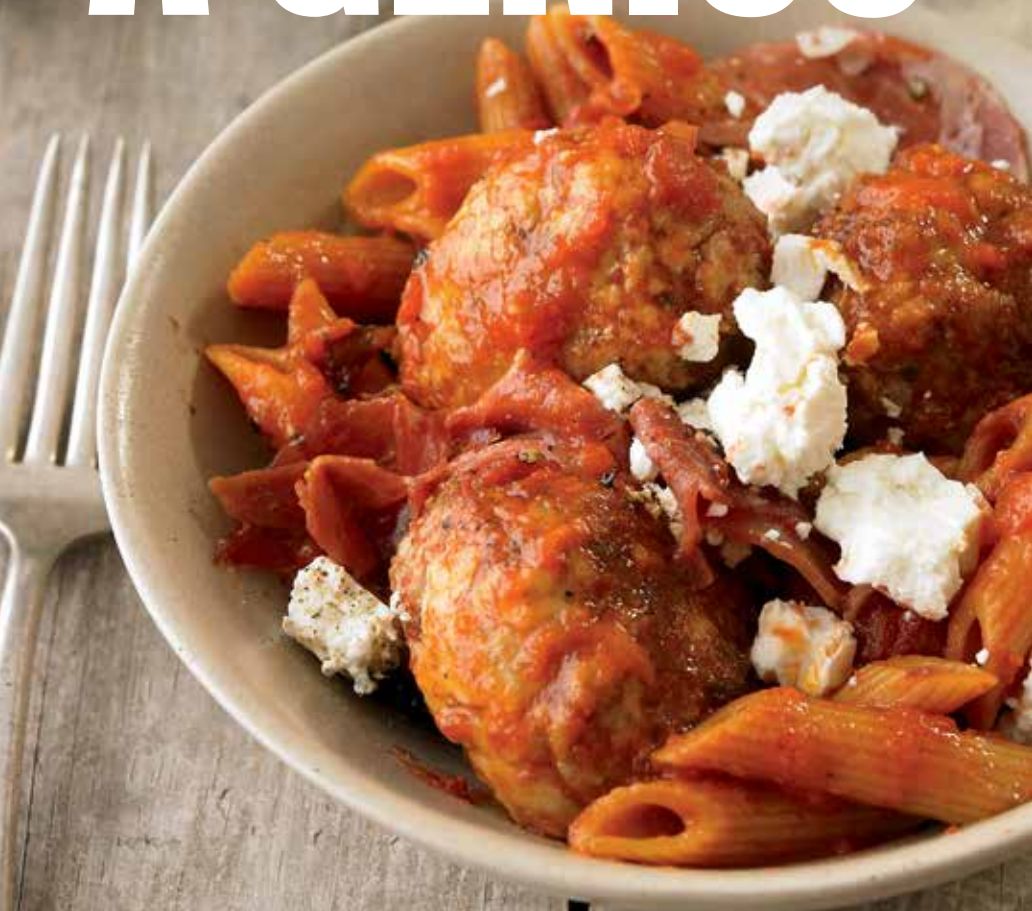


RUNNER'S WORLD[®]

EAT LIKE A GENIUS



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The information here is designed to help you make informed decisions about your health. It is not intended as a substitute for any treatment prescribed by your doctor. If you suspect that you have a medical problem, please seek competent medical care. Though self-healing is an important aspect of good health and general well-being, it is not meant to replace medical treatment or diagnosis. When illness strikes, we urge you to seek the best medical assistance that you can find.

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GROCERY RUN

Attention, runners! This comprehensive shopping list of best buys and must-avoid items will get you in and out of the store fast.

Every time you walk into a grocery store, you face a daunting task: picking the healthiest, most nutrient-packed foods to fuel your running from thousands of choices. Supermarkets today carry an average of 38,718 items, according to the Food Marketing Institute. Colorful packaging, deceptive claims, and hidden ingredients confuse even the savviest shopper. Who wants to waste precious running time dithering over yogurt? This aisle-by-aisle guide tells you exactly which nutritious (and delicious!) foods you should toss into your cart and which health food impostors you should run away from. Our expert tips will help you shop smarter, so you can get in, get out, and get back to running—fast.

→ The Produce Section

“Fruits and vegetables are loaded with vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants runners need to support training,” says Tara Gidus, MS, RD, an Orlando-based sports dietitian and marathoner. “In general, the more color in your shopping cart, the more antioxidants and nutrients you’re going to get.”

Red

Beets Nitrates found in beets can make your muscles work more efficiently

during exercise by reducing the amount of oxygen they need.

Raspberries You get 8 g of fiber in a single cup. “Higher fiber foods help runners maintain a healthy body weight and digestive system,” says Gidus.



When to Buy Organic

Not sure when to buy organic? If you’re peeling or removing the rind (avocado, bananas, or onions), conventionally grown produce is fine.

However, if you are going to eat the entire fruit or vegetable, buying organic will limit your pesticide exposure. Below are the 12 vegetables and fruits that contain more pesticides than any other produce items. Buy them organic whenever you can.

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| 1. Peaches | 5. Nectarines | 9. Lettuce |
| 2. Apples | 6. Strawberries | 10. Imported grapes |
| 3. Sweet bell peppers | 7. Cherries | 11. Carrots |
| 4. Celery | 8. Kale | 12. Pears |

Green

Kale It’s jam-packed with vitamin C, vitamin K, and vision-protecting beta-carotene. Add it to soups, sauté it for a side, or add it to salads and sandwiches.

Avocado Nearly 70% of its fat is monounsaturated, “the same kind that makes olive oil heart healthy,” Gidus says. Half an avocado also delivers 7 g of fiber.

Yellow and orange

Sweet potato One potato provides more than three times your daily need for immunity-boosting vitamin A. “It’s full of complex carbohydrates,” Gidus says, “which helps keep your energy stores topped up.”

Mango High vitamin C intake may reduce upper-respiratory-tract infections, as well as help lower your heart rate during exercise. One cup of mango delivers 75% of your daily need for C.

Blue and purple

Eggplant Eggplant, which has just 20 calories per cup, contains antioxidants with heart-protective qualities.

Plums A study from Texas AgriLife Research and Extension Center found

that plums contain as much antioxidant power as blueberries. “Consuming plenty of antioxidants,” says Gidus, “may reduce postworkout muscle-tissue damage, speed recovery, and boost immune function.”

White

Banana It brims with potassium and quick-digesting carbs. “Potassium plays a key role in muscle contraction, with low levels linked to muscle cramping,” Gidus says.

Tofu Usually located in the produce department, tofu is an inexpensive and low-fat protein source. Add it to stir-fry, chili, or even pasta sauce.

Skip These “Healthy” Foods

Presliced packaged fruit Slicing ahead of time exposes more surface area, raising the risk for nutrient loss from oxygen exposure. And the packages are more expensive than whole fruit.

Iceberg lettuce One of the most popular vegetables is also one of the least nutrient dense. In general, the darker the leafy green, the bigger the nutritional bang.

➔ The Meat Counter

Organic meat costs more but limits your exposure to the antibiotics and growth hormones used in conventionally raised livestock. “Free range” means only that animals have access to outdoor spaces. Grass-fed beef is a smart choice: A California State University study found that, compared with conventionally raised cattle, it’s lower in saturated fat and richer in heart-healthy omega-3s and vitamin E.

Best Choices at the Deli

Turkey breast It’s virtually fat-free and a good source of protein. Fresh roasted tastes better and usually contains less sodium.

Roast beef A 2-oz serving contains just 3 g of fat, 110 calories, and 19 g of protein.

Canadian bacon 1 oz of this lean cut contains about a third of the calories of regular bacon and 11 fewer g of fat.

	BEST BUYS	GOOD NEWS	AVOID	BAD NEWS
Beef	Eye, top, and bottom round; sirloin; flank steak; 90 to 95% lean ground beef	Contain about 18 g of protein per 3 oz serving and no more than 6 g of fat	Rib-eye, porterhouse, and T-bone steaks; 80% lean ground beef	These cuts have the highest fat-to-protein ratio—3 oz packs 12 to 18 g of fat.
Poultry	Skinless chicken thighs; turkey legs	A 3-oz thigh contains 18 g of protein and 3 g of fat—just 1 more g than breast meat. Remove the skin, and turkey legs have the same protein-to-fat ratio as chicken thighs.	Ground turkey; enhanced chicken breast	If it includes skin, ground poultry can have as much fat as ground beef. Enhanced chicken is injected with salt water to keep it moist; a 3-oz can packs more than 300 mg of sodium.
Pork	Pork tenderloin; boneless pork loin chops	Contain 3 g of fat and 18 g of protein per 3 oz, making them nearly as lean as chicken breast	Premarinated cuts; pork blade chops	Premarinated meats contain a lot of sodium, and pork blade packs about 21 g of fat per 3 oz.

➔ The Seafood Counter

If you own an iPhone, you can download apps to help you choose sustainable seafood with low contaminant levels. The FishPhone app from Blue Ocean Institute ranks fish choices, as does the Seafood Watch app from the Monterey Bay Aquarium, which also provides regional recommendations.

EAT THESE 2 or 3 times a month

Tilapia Protein-rich and inexpensive, U.S.-farmed tilapia is virtually free of saturated fat and is farmed in an environmentally sound way; but it’s relatively high in omega-6 fats, which promote inflammation in the body.

Sea scallops Populations are abundant and contamination risk is low, but

harvesting methods can be harmful to the ocean. Farmed bay scallops are a more eco-wise option.

EAT THESE 2 or 3 times a week

Rainbow trout Less expensive than wild salmon, trout is rich in omega-3 fatty acids, which may help lower your risk for diabetes and heart disease and relieve achy joints. Almost all U.S. rainbow trout available in supermarkets is grown at inland farms that follow environmentally responsible production methods.

Wild smoked salmon More sustainable than farmed varieties, wild smoked salmon is an easy way to add brain-boosting vitamin B₁₂ and inflammation-reducing omega-3s to your meals.

Mussels Inexpensive mussels are full of iron, vitamin B₁₂, and selenium—an antioxidant that may ease postexercise oxidative stress. They’re farmed using eco-sound methods with little toxin risk.

EAT THESE rarely or never

Imported shrimp Overseas shrimp farms have destroyed coastal forests and often rely heavily on antibiotic use. Try U.S. farmed or wild shrimp.

Farmed Atlantic salmon Ocean pens can pollute surrounding waterways, and contamination from PCBs may be

a concern. Splurge on wild.

Bluefin tuna This pricey tuna is overfished and high in mercury. Domestic, line-caught skipjack or yellowfin tuna have lower contaminants.

➔ The Bread Aisle

Skip multigrain bread Multigrain bread is often made of enriched flour or wheat flour—which lacks the fiber and vitamins of 100% whole grain flour. “The first item should be a whole grain,” says Bonnie Taub-Dix, MA, RD, author of *Read It Before You Eat It*. Look for 3 g of fiber and no more than 200 mg of sodium per slice.

Skip spinach wraps Made mostly of refined white flour, many spinach wraps actually contain a scant amount of the leafy vegetable. Instead, choose corn tortillas made with whole corn flour, which are higher in fiber and lower in calories.

Skip bagels Choose 100% whole wheat English muffins instead. They contain less than half the calories of and more fiber than most bagels.

➔ The Pantry Aisles

Pasta

Whole wheat, brown rice, buckwheat, spelt, or another type of whole grain should appear first in the ingredient list.

5 g of fiber Look for at least this much fiber per 2-ounce serving. “Choose a 100% whole grain product and it won’t be hard to reach this mark,” says Janis Jibrin, RD, author of *The Supermarket Diet*.

6 g of protein per 2-ounce serving Whole grains naturally contain some protein, which helps keep blood sugar levels steady.

Shop Smart!

“Grocery shopping when hungry can set the stage for unhealthy impulse buys,” says Bonnie Taub-Dix, MA, RD. With its high-fat doughnuts and pastries, the bread aisle can be particularly dangerous. Fortify your healthy resolve by eating before you leave home.

The Perfect Sauce

Unless you're making your own, choose brands that don't exceed these basic limits.

400 mg of sodium per ½ cup. Some brands can pack more than 600 mg.

4 g of sugar or less per ½ cup. Ideally, there should be *no* added sugar. The only sugar in the sauce should come from the tomatoes themselves.

2 g of fat or less per ½ cup. Skip the creamy white sauces, like alfredo, which pack the most saturated fat.

Salad dressings

Choose vinaigrette “You're more likely to get good-for-you fats in oil-based dressings than creamy ones,” says Taub-Dix.

Keep it simple Look for a short ingredient list with real foods, like olive oil, herbs, and vinegar.

Count calories “Some dressings contain a lot more calorie-dense oil than vinegar,” says Taub-Dix. It should contain no more than 70 calories per 2-tablespoon serving.

Check sodium Keep it below 200 mg per serving.

Mustards and more

Dijon mustard Mustard seeds are a source of omega-3s and the antioxidant selenium. For few calories, Dijon adds tons of flavor to sandwiches, salad dressings, even mashed potatoes.

KEEP IT HEALTHY Look for brands without sugar and with no more than 120 mg of sodium per teaspoon.

Ketchup It's rich in lycopene, an antioxidant that helps protect skin from sun damage.

KEEP IT HEALTHY Splurge on organic, which has up to 60% more lycopene than conventional. Keep it under 5 g of sugar and 180 mg of sodium per tablespoon.

Horseradish This spicy root contains glucosinolates, compounds that can detoxify carcinogens. Use it to add kick to dips, sauces, and fish.

KEEP IT HEALTHY Brands with the word “sauce” in the name often contain sugar and low-quality oils. An ideal ingredient list includes only grated horseradish, vinegar, and salt.

Sriracha This chile sauce adds low-calorie punch to scrambled eggs, soups, and pasta sauces. It gets its spice from capsaicin, a compound in chile peppers that may boost metabolism and curb appetite.

KEEP IT HEALTHY Avoid versions with more than 100 mg of sodium per teaspoon or with food coloring in the ingredient list.

Mango chutney Use it on fish, chicken, or cooked rice. Mangoes provide a kick of vitamin C and vitamin A.

KEEP IT HEALTHY Choose brands that list mango before sugar in the ingredient list.

Health Food Impostors

Fat-free dressings Fat is often replaced with sugars or other fillers, so these dressings may contain nearly as many calories as regular versions. Plus, you need *some* fat—it helps your body absorb vitamins and antioxidants.

Vegetable oils Made from corn, soybean, or cottonseed, these heavily refined oils are high in inflammation-causing omega-6 fatty acids.

Oils & vinegars

BEST FOR SALADS

Extra virgin olive oil It contains an antioxidant called oleocanthal, a natural anti-inflammatory that helps soothe sore muscles. Dark bottles preserve flavor.

Hemp oil Pressed from hemp seeds, this nutty-tasting oil adds artery-friendly omega-3 fats to your diet. Try it in tomato sauce or pesto.

Balsamic vinegar With just 14 calories per tablespoon, it adds a rich, intense, and slightly sweet flavor.

BEST FOR COOKING

Canola oil This inexpensive oil has a high smoke point, making it ideal for stir-fries, and provides healthy amounts of omega-3 fats.

Avocado oil Buttery tasting, it provides an abundance of “good” monounsaturated fat. Use it to sauté vegetables. It's also delicious drizzled over pasta.

Rice vinegar It's a low-calorie way to punch up the flavor of stir-fries, marinades, and vegetables.

Seeds, nuts, grains, & more

Quinoa This fast-cooking whole grain is loaded with fiber, B vitamins, and magnesium, a mineral that may improve muscle strength.

Pumpkin seeds A quarter cup of pumpkin seeds provides 30% of your daily need for iron.

Prunes Research from Oklahoma State University shows that dried plums contain polyphenol antioxidants that may fight bone loss.

In-shell pistachios They're high in protein, fiber, and vitamin B₆. A 2011 study in the journal *Appetite* shows you eat fewer if you have to shell them.

Brown rice Harvard scientists found that adults who eat two or more

Shop Smart!

Bulk bins offer pantry staples like whole grains, spices, and nuts at lower prices than their prepackaged counterparts.

servings of brown rice a week reduce their risk of developing type 2 diabetes by about 10%.

Walnuts These contain more inflammation-fighting omega-3s than other nuts.

Nut butters

GOOD

Natural-style peanut butter Made with just peanuts, it contains heart-healthy fats and vitamin E without added sugar or hydrogenated oils.

BETTER

Almond butter More expensive than PB, the almond version is a richer source of bone-building magnesium and calcium, as well as cholesterol-lowering monounsaturated fat.

BUST

Reduced-fat peanut butter Most brands swap out unsaturated fats for extra sugar, which means they often have nearly the same calorie cost as and more sugar than the full-fat version.

Sweeteners

GOOD

Honey The easily digestible carbs contain antioxidants and antibacterial properties. Stash a honey packet in your running shorts for midrun fueling.

BETTER

Maple syrup It has about 20% fewer calories than honey, plus a wider array of antioxidants that may help with muscle recovery. Use it to lightly sweeten plain yogurt or oatmeal.

BUST

Imitation maple syrup Made of dyed and refined corn syrup, it contains empty calories with no redeeming health qualities.

Fruit spreads

GOOD

Marmalade It's made with whole fruit, including the orange rind. Stick with fruit-juice-sweetened varieties.

BETTER

Apple butter Cooking down apples creates a spread with a buttery mouth feel but no fat. Buy brands made without added sugars.

BUST

Sugar-packed jams Avoid jams, jellies, and preserves that contain more added sugar than fruit. How do you know? If sugar is on the ingredient list before fruit.

Hot cereals

Old-fashioned rolled oats They cook up quickly without the sugar overload found in flavored instant brands. "Whole grain oats are a good source of soluble fiber, which is shown to reduce cholesterol," says Taub-Dix. Liven them up with berries and chopped walnuts.

Hot multigrain cereal The healthiest choices contain fiber-rich whole grains, such as oats, barley, rye, and whole wheat, and no added sugars.

Cold Cereals

Serving size A hungry runner can easily eat more than the 1-cup serving commonly listed (some list a smaller serving). Be realistic about how much you'll eat, and adjust accordingly.

Calories Cap it at 200 per cup. Despite their health halo, granolas can pack twice that and lead to weight gain if eaten too liberally.

Fiber It keeps you full and helps steady blood sugar levels, so pick brands that pack 5 g of fiber or more per cup.

Sugar The Environmental Working Group found that 66% of cereals it tested were more than 25% sugar by weight. Choose one with fewer than 10 g per cup, more if it contains fruit.

Sodium Stick with those with 200 mg or fewer in 1 cup.

Ingredient list The first ingredient should be a whole grain. If sugar by any name (cane juice, dextrose, rice syrup) is near the top or if it lists hydrogenated oils (which contain harmful trans fat), skip it.

Brown rice farina Made of finely ground whole grain brown rice, it's fast-cooking and easy to digest, making it an ideal prerun choice. Plus, it's gluten-free.

Steel-cut oatmeal It provides more fiber and a chewier texture than regular oatmeal does.

Canned and jarred products

Canned sardines This sustainable catch is loaded with omega-3s, vitamin B₁₂, and vitamin D, which may help fend off viruses. Sauté with onions and toss with pasta, parsley, and bread crumbs.

Salsa verde Tangy tomatillos make a vitamin C-packed green salsa. Use it to brighten up fish tacos or baked chicken breasts.

Roasted red peppers They're a rich source of beta-carotene. Add them to frozen pizza for a low-calorie flavor and nutrient boost.

Canned chicken Quick and convenient, lean canned chicken gives fresh salads a hit of muscle-building protein.

Black beans One cup provides 15 g of fiber and a high dose of antioxidants. Use as a sandwich spread.

Applesauce Eat it as a prerun snack, or use it in place of some fat in baked goods. Unsweetened varieties have about half the sugar calories.

Shop Smart!

University of Arizona researchers found that people who wait in long lines at the checkout counter are up to 25% more likely to succumb to tempting snacks like candy bars. Cut down on your wait by using the self-checkout.

Canned butternut squash A half-cup serving provides nearly half your daily need of immunity-boosting vitamin A. Blend with broth and spices for an instant soup.

Canned salmon It contains more heart-friendly omega-3 fatty acids and far less mercury than most brands of canned tuna.

Fire-roasted tomatoes These lend a smoky flavor (plus potassium) to vegetarian chili or tomato sauce.

Pineapple chunks Add them to yogurt or cottage cheese for blood-pressure-lowering vitamin C. Choose only fruits packed in juices.

Baking supplies

Pure vanilla extract Use this for a nearly calorie-free way to boost the flavor of yogurt.

Whole wheat pastry flour This is milled from a softer variety of whole wheat. Use it as a 1-to-1 replacement for refined white flour.

Skim-milk powder It adds bone-building calcium to smoothies and hot cereal.

Cocoa powder According to a study by the USDA, cocoa powder contains 12 times the antioxidants of blueberries.

Flaxseeds These tiny seeds are brimming with omega-3 fats and fiber and can help lower cholesterol.

Cinnamon Studies show regular consumption can help reduce type 2 diabetes risk.

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→ The Beverage Aisles

Flavored sparkling water You get bubbles without the calorie-packed sugar.

Low-sodium vegetable juice Those made with tomatoes supply lycopene. A 2012 *Nutrition Journal* study found that this antioxidant may help lessen exercise-induced oxidative stress.

Hemp milk This dairy alternative contains more heart-friendly omega-3s than soy or almond milk.

Coconut water Tangy coconut water contains natural sugars and electrolytes such as potassium, making it ideal to drink before or after a run.

Green tea It's a rich source of catechins, antioxidants that can help lower cholesterol and protect against exercise-induced muscle damage.

Tart cherry juice The antioxidant-packed juice can reduce muscle damage.

Skip Bottled Smoothies

Many are sweetened with sugar or nutritionally poor juices like apple or pear. Plus, they almost always cost much more than making your own.

→ The Snack Food Aisles

Popcorn Crunchy and salty, whole grain popcorn packs antioxidants and fiber.

Hummus Chickpeas, the main ingredient in hummus, are brimming with fiber, protein, and brain-boosting vitamin B₆.

Whole grain crackers A 2011 study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* linked eating more fiber-rich whole grains to weight loss.

Beef jerky The high-protein snack keeps you feeling full between meals.

Health Food Impostors

Yogurt-covered nuts and pretzels This fake yogurt covering is made with added sugars and unhealthy fats.

Salted nuts and seeds Eating too many will put you into calorie and sodium overload.

Sweetened dried fruits Some dried fruits (e.g., cranberries) are bathed in extra sugars. Buy unsweetened.

Dark chocolate A 2011 British study found that people who regularly eat antioxidant-packed dark chocolate reduce their heart-disease risk by a third.

Trail mix It supplies antioxidants from dried fruit and healthy fats from nuts.

➔ The Dairy Section

A Canadian study found that people who exercised daily and ate a high-dairy, calorie-controlled diet for 4 months lost fat and gained muscle. Researchers think that dairy products may regulate appetite and promote muscle growth.

BREAKFAST

Low-fat kefir “With protein and carbs, kefir is a good option when you need something easy to digest,” says Marni Sumbal, owner of Trimarni Coaching and Nutrition in Jacksonville, FL.

MORNING SNACK

Low-fat plain Greek yogurt Thick and creamy Greek yogurt has about twice as much hunger-satisfying protein as traditional yogurt. Your best buy is Fage Total 2% Plain, which has 20 g of protein—and just 2.5 g of fat.

Health Food Impostors

Fruit-on-the-bottom yogurts are loaded with sugars, syrups, flavorings, and artificial ingredients.

Liquid egg whites lack the vital nutrients in an egg, including vitamin D and the brain-boosting compound choline.

Vanilla soy milk is packed with added sugar. The best choices are unsweetened and fortified with calcium and vitamins.

POSTRUN

Chocolate milk “The combination of protein and quick-digesting carbs helps repair exercise-induced muscle damage and refuel tired muscles,” says Sumbal. But it’s high in calories, so choose low-fat varieties.

DINNER

Eggs Antioxidant-rich eggs are an inexpensive, nutritious, and quick-cooking alternative to meat for dinner. One large egg provides 6 g of protein and 23% of your need for selenium.

EVENING SNACK

Low-fat cottage cheese A 2012 study published in *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise* found that eating protein prior to sleep significantly improves recovery from exercise.

The Cheese Bar

THUMBS UP

Parmesan A little freshly grated Parmesan packs potent flavor.

Fresh mozzarella Thanks to its high water content, it’s one of the lowest-calorie cheeses on the market.

Soft goat cheese Studies suggest that goat milk is richer in omega-3 fats and bone-building calcium than cow’s milk.

Light ricotta cheese Reduced-fat

Shop Smart!

Buy blocks or wedges of fresh Parmesan cheese. They provide better flavor than preshredded and won’t contain any stabilizers or other additives.

ricotta cheese is still rich-tasting and delivers good amounts of whey protein.

THUMBS DOWN

Cheddar cheese An oilier cheese, Cheddar is higher in fat than many varieties.

Blended cheese mixes Bags of shredded cheese mixes often include higher-fat options (such as Cheddar).

American cheese Heavily processed American cheese is among the saltiest and fattiest cheeses.

➔ The Health Foods Aisle

Here’s where you’ll find a selection of energy bars, a favorite snack for many runners for good reason: They’re tasty, convenient, and relatively healthy. But with so many to choose from, which are best? That depends. “You need to consider when you plan to eat the bar,” says Tara Gidus, MS, RD, an Orlando-based sports dietitian. Before a run, for example, you want the right amount and type of carbs for an energy boost—without a trip to a porta potty. Afterward, you need more protein. Here’s how to find the perfect bar for every running situation.

For prerun energy

Choose one with maltodextrin

Maltodextrin is more quickly absorbed than other carbohydrates, so it delivers a fast hit of fuel. It’s also easier on the stomach than the concentrated glucose found in some sports drinks.

GROCERY RUN

For midrun energy

Choose one with honey

During medium- to long-mileage runs, you need easily digestible energy that won’t send your blood sugar levels on a roller-coaster ride. Honey contains carbohydrates (glucose and fructose) that deliver fast and long-lasting fuel. Fructose is absorbed relatively slowly, so its energy is released over time, while glucose is fast-acting. Plus, studies show that consuming those two types of carbs at once improves performance.

As a lunch substitute

Choose one with extra fiber and protein

If back-to-back meetings mean you’ll have to skip a sit-down meal, grab a bar that contains 350 to 500 calories, 9 g of protein or more, and high-fiber carbohydrates, such as seeds, whole oats, and dried fruit. You also want some healthy fat (from nuts, for example), which will keep you feeling satisfied.

For postrun immunity

Choose an antioxidant-packed bar

The high mileage needed to train for a marathon or ultra makes you susceptible to colds and the flu. Research suggests that selenium, vitamin E, and other antioxidants help protect the immune system. Nuts and dried fruits are rich in these antioxidants; cherries in particular contain phytochemicals, which help protect against cancer and heart disease and help reduce inflammation.

MORNING JUMPSTARTS

That old adage “Breakfast is the most important meal of the day” is especially true for runners. Whether you need a little fuel before you run in the morning or run first and eat later, you’ll find many delicious, easy options.



→ Fueling before a Run

If you want to eat before you go out, eat light. These prerun meals fuel you up without weighing you down.

Cinnamon Jam Toast

Toast 1 slice of whole wheat cinnamon-raisin bread; top with 1 tablespoon each mascarpone cheese (which will hold off hunger) and blackberry jam (which provides quick-digesting carbs).

Pumpkin Ricotta Waffle

Mix ¼ cup pumpkin with 2 tablespoons ricotta (it’s a lower-fat cheese, which is ideal prerun) and heat. Spread on 1 whole grain waffle. Top with pumpkin pie spice and brown sugar.

Chocolate Oatmeal

Cook ¼ cup instant oatmeal; mix with ¼ cup strawberries, which contain compounds that help reduce inflammation. Top with 1 tablespoon antioxidant-rich dark chocolate chips.

“Baked” Apple

Core 1 apple. Drizzle with honey, cinnamon, and nutmeg. Microwave for 4 minutes. Fill with 1½ tablespoons granola.

→ Eating after a Run

It can be hard to squeeze in breakfast after a run. But a morning meal can help you recover from a workout. “You want to eat between 400 and 500 calories with a mix of carbs and protein,” says sports dietitian Tara Gidus, MS, RD. “The carbs replenish glycogen in your muscles, while protein helps to build and repair those muscles.”

It’s also key to eat within 30 minutes

of finishing your run. “Otherwise your body starts to break down muscle for energy,” says Gidus. These tasty breakfasts offer a wealth of nutrients, contain the ideal amount of calories, carbs, and protein, and are quick and easy to make—so you can refuel well and still get out the door on time.

High-Protein Pancakes

Warm up 2 frozen whole grain pancakes. Top them with 5 ounces fat-free vanilla Greek yogurt, ⅔ cup blueberries, and 1 tablespoon each crushed almonds and hazelnuts.

WHY The pancakes provide carbs to restock energy stores. Plus, research shows whole grains help reduce the risk for chronic disease, “which is why it’s important to make at least half your grains whole,” says Jenna Bell-Wilson, PhD, RD, coauthor of *Energy to Burn* and owner of *Swimbikeruneat.com*. Greek yogurt contains twice the protein of regular yogurt. Antioxidant-rich blueberries help fight disease and inflammation, and the nuts are high in vitamin E, which may help reduce abdominal cramping and pain before and after running.

Savory Pita

Toast 1 whole wheat pita. Spread 2 tablespoons olive tapenade inside. Fill with 3 diced dried apricots and a few slices of tomato, red onion, and red bell pepper. Add 3 pieces turkey bacon and ¼ cup low-fat feta cheese.

WHY Breakfast is an ideal time to eat antioxidant-rich fruits and vegetables, including tomato and onion. “When you exercise intensely, you create a lot of free radicals, which can attack your cells,” says Gidus. “Antioxidants can reduce some of those free radicals.” Red bell pepper packs 60% more vitamin C (an immunity-boosting antioxidant) than green peppers. Tapenade is rich in healthy fat, while turkey bacon contains protein—both help keep you fuller longer.

Breakfast Sundae

Slice 1 banana over 8 ounces fat-free vanilla yogurt. Mix with 2 tablespoons peanut butter and ¼ cup high-protein, high-fiber cereal with at least 5 g of protein and fiber per serving. Sprinkle with 2 teaspoons cinnamon.

WHY A study in the journal *Appetite* concluded adults who eat high-fiber cereal daily feel less fatigue than those who eat cereal low in fiber. Bananas are full of potassium, which decreases muscle cramping. Yogurt contains calcium and lactoferrin, a protein that helps maintain bone strength. Peanut butter provides heart-healthy monounsaturated fats, and research shows that daily cinnamon consumption can help fight diabetes.

Southwestern Wrap

Fill a whole wheat tortilla with ¼ cup warmed black beans and ¼ cup quick-cooking brown rice. Add a scrambled egg, ½ cup spinach, ¼ avocado, ¼ cup low-fat Cheddar, 2 tablespoons salsa, and cilantro.

WHY A single egg contains 6 g of protein, and black beans are also rich in the nutrient, “which helps promote muscle building right after a workout,” says Bell-Wilson. The beans also supply fiber, and the brown rice has plenty of manganese, a mineral that helps convert the rice’s carbohydrates into energy. The spinach has more than 90% of your daily need for vitamin K, which contributes to bone strength.

Sweet Sandwich

Spread 2 tablespoons cashew butter on half of a toasted whole grain English muffin. Add 2 tablespoons mango chutney, 1 tablespoon golden raisins, and ¼ cup low-fat whipped cottage cheese. Top with the second half of the muffin.

WHY The cashew butter in this gourmet PB&J supplies monounsaturated fat to keep you satisfied and full until lunch. The high-protein muffin contains about 6 g of protein, whereas the brand’s original version contains just 4. The raisins pack energizing carbs, and cottage cheese is chock-full of protein, as well as sodium to help rebalance your electrolyte levels after a sweaty run.

→ Postrun Smoothies

If the last thing you feel like doing after a run is eating a meal, try a quick, tasty smoothie to kickstart your recovery. “Smoothies are a great way for runners to meet nutrient needs,” says sports nutritionist Cassie Dimmick, RD, “especially when it’s necessary to quickly consume a mix of carbs and protein for muscle repair.”

But runner beware: Smoothie bar options can top 900 calories, and bottled brands are often low in nutrients. By blending your own with your choice of ingredients and with as much or as little ice as you want, you can make flavorful smoothies with carbs, protein, fiber, and healthy fats. And at less than 300 calories each, these smoothies are easy on the stomach in more ways than one.

Island Smoothie

PUT IN A BLENDER: 1 cup low-fat peach kefir, ¼ cup low-fat milk, ½ cup canned crushed pineapple, 2 tablespoons dried coconut, ½ packet plain instant oatmeal, and ¾ cup frozen raspberries. Add ice and blend until smooth. Serves 2.

WHY Several studies have linked kefir, a yogurt-like drink, with reduced reaction to allergens. And a 2008 Australian study reported that long-distance runners who take a strain of the probiotic *Lactobacillus* (often found in kefir) every day suffer less-severe bouts of respiratory illness.

Oats can help cut your risk of heart disease and type 2 diabetes, while raspberries are rich in the antioxidant quercetin. A small study published in the *International Journal of Sport Nutrition and Exercise Metabolism* concluded that daily quercetin supplements may help increase exercise endurance.

Low-Calorie Cooler

PUT IN A BLENDER: ½ cup unsweetened almond milk, 1 cup fresh spinach, 1 kiwi (sliced), and ½ banana (preferably frozen). Add ice and blend until smooth.

WHY Your body doesn’t need a ton of nutrients to recover from an easy run. That’s why this smoothie uses almond milk—it has nearly half the calories of low-fat milk. Spinach, which has just 7 calories per cup, is one of the richest plant sources of iron, a mineral that helps transport oxygen to muscles. Kiwis are high in vitamin C, which increases iron absorption, says Dimmick. The frozen, creamy banana chills the smoothie and offsets the slightly bitter greens.

Crunchy Coffee Fix

PUT IN A BLENDER: 4 ounces chilled coffee, 4 ounces fat-free milk, 1 banana (sliced, preferably frozen), 2 tablespoons whole almonds, and 2 teaspoons natural cocoa powder. Add ice and blend until smooth.

WHY Not only does coffee taste great in smoothies, but it can speed your recovery, too. A study in the *Journal of Applied Physiology* found having caffeine and carbs at the same time helps your body restock muscle glycogen stores faster than having carbs alone. Natural cocoa powder—not Dutch-processed or alkalinized—provides anti-inflammatory antioxidants (and chocolate flavor) for just a few calories. Bananas are rich in potassium, an electrolyte that helps maintain fluid balance. Almonds not only add crunchy texture

but also contain heart-healthy fats that help keep you full.

Black Forest Smoothie

PUT IN A BLENDER: ½ cup frozen, dark sweet cherries, ½ frozen banana (in chunks), ½ cup chocolate soymilk, 2 tablespoons Greek yogurt, 1 teaspoon honey or agave syrup, and ⅛ teaspoon almond extract. Process until creamy smooth. Top a crumbled Famous Chocolate Wafer.

WHY Plain Greek yogurt has roughly twice the protein and half the sugar of plain traditional yogurt. Cherries contain antioxidants that help reduce postrun inflammation.



Savory Surprise

PUT IN A BLENDER: 6 ounces carrot juice, ¼ avocado, 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice, 2 ounces water, 1 tablespoon freshly grated ginger, and a pinch of cayenne pepper. Add ice and blend until smooth.

WHY The carrot juice in this savory smoothie is rich in vitamin A, which helps regulate the immune system, says Ilana Katz, RD, a sports nutritionist in Atlanta who developed the recipe.

Fresh ginger adds a sweet, peppery flavor that, according to a study in *The Journal of Pain*, can reduce postexercise muscle pain. Avocado adds a silky texture and heart-healthy monounsaturated fats. Studies show the capsaicin in cayenne pepper briefly boosts metabolism, helping you burn a few extra calories.

Oatmeal to Go

PUT IN A BLENDER: 1 cup fat-free milk, ½ cup frozen blueberries, ½ cup plain fat-free Greek yogurt, ¼ cup uncooked old-fashioned oats, and 1 tablespoon ground flaxseed. Add ice and blend until smooth.

WHY Greek yogurt and milk provide lots of protein to repair your muscles after long runs. Plus, a study in *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise* found that drinking fat-free milk postworkout can help you gain muscle and lose fat. Oats are fiber-rich and digest slowly, providing long-lasting energy, says Dimmick. Blueberries have a very high amount of antioxidants and help neutralize free radicals

caused by exercise. Ground flaxseed provides a dose of omega-3 fatty acids that can lower cholesterol.

Maple Pumpkin Pie

PUT IN A BLENDER: ½ cup plain soymilk, ⅓ cup canned pumpkin, ⅓ cup silken tofu, 1 tablespoon natural peanut butter, 1 teaspoon real maple syrup, and ¼ teaspoon cinnamon. Add ice and blend until smooth.

WHY Pumpkin is high in fiber and beta-carotene, an antioxidant that protects eye health. Silken tofu lends a thick consistency; it and the soymilk provide a nondairy source of protein—making them ideal choices for lactose-intolerant runners. Studies show that regularly eating nuts and nut butters (including PB) can lower your risk for developing heart disease and type 2 diabetes. Maple syrup adds sweetness along with compounds that have anticancer properties, while cinnamon “helps keep blood sugar steady,” says Katz, “preventing fluctuations in energy levels.”

5 Steps to the Perfect Smoothie

Here's how to create your own smoothie-for-one.

1. Choose a liquid Use 4 to 8 ounces of liquid, such as water (sparkling or still) or milk. If you use fruit juice (which is high in sugar), limit it to 6 ounces or less.

2. Add fruits and vegetables Try ½ to 1 cup of produce, such as berries, mango, kale, or tomato. Frozen produce is just as healthy as fresh and makes smoothies cold with less ice.

3. Throw in fats and protein Limit yourself to 1 serving of healthy fats to keep calories in check. Try a tablespoon of nut butter or seeds. Use one serving of protein, like ½ cup of soybeans.

4. Add spices and sweeteners Honey, agave nectar, and other sugars have few nutrients, so use no more than 1 teaspoon. Add ¼ teaspoon of

ground spices, such as nutmeg or ginger. A few drops of vanilla, orange, peppermint, or almond extract will boost the flavor of your smoothie without adding calories.

5. Top with ice More ice (1 cup) will give you a thick, milk shake-like consistency, while less ice (¼ to ½ cup) will produce a thinner smoothie. Use less or no ice if you're using frozen produce.

MIDDAY MEALS

What's for lunch? For many time-strapped runners, the answer is a sandwich. The right mix of foods can provide energizing carbs, protein to repair muscles, healthy fats for hormone production, and vitamins to build immunity.

→ Great Sandwiches

Take your lunch to the next level with these six unique recipes (each serves two). You'll never go back to turkey and cheese again.



Salmon with Chili Aioli

Mix 3 tablespoons low-fat mayo and 1 teaspoon jarred sriracha chili sauce; set aside. Combine 1 5-ounce can salmon, juice of ½ lemon, 2 tablespoons chopped fresh dill, 1 minced garlic clove, and salt to taste. Divide between 2 slices of rye; top each with arugula, tomato, half the aioli, and a second slice of rye.

WHY This sandwich is a fat burner. Scientists in Japan found that capsaicin, the nutrient that gives chili sauces like sweet-spicy sriracha their kick, can increase fat burning during exercise. The other main ingredients help with recovery: Salmon gives you inflammation-reducing omega-3s, and rye bread contains up to 5 g of fiber per slice—more than whole wheat. (Just make sure the first ingredient on the loaf is whole rye flour or rye meal.)

Fig Prosciutto Sandwich

In a pot, bring ½ cup apple cider and ½ cup dried figs to a boil, then simmer for 10 minutes. Move to a food processor; blend with 1 teaspoon honey, 1 tablespoon lemon juice, and ¼ teaspoon cinnamon. Spread on 4 slices of whole wheat baguette. Top 2 slices each with 1 ounce prosciutto, 1 slice Swiss, spinach, and roasted red pepper. Top with remaining bread.

WHY Dried figs contain calcium, iron, and potassium. The latter “works with sodium to maintain the body's water balance,” says sports dietitian Barbara Lewin, RD. Prosciutto is high in sodium, making it ideal after a sweaty run, when you need electrolytes. Red peppers are brimming with vitamin C, which Harvard researchers have found may keep upper-respiratory-tract infections at bay.

Curry Egg Salad

Mix ¼ cup Greek yogurt, 2 tablespoons golden raisins, 1 teaspoon Dijon, 2 sliced green onions, ½ teaspoon curry powder, and salt and pepper to taste. Mix 4 chopped, hard-boiled eggs with yogurt mixture. Cut 2 whole grain bagels in half. Divide mixture between 2 slices; top each with avocado, cilantro, and remaining bagel.

WHY Velvety Greek yogurt gives egg salad a protein boost along with probiotic bacteria. A study published in the *Nutrition Journal* found that athletes who take a daily probiotic supplement have a 50% decrease in symptoms of upper-respiratory-tract infections. Eggs are rich in muscle-friendly protein, vitamin D, vitamin B₁₂, and selenium.

Almond Pear Sandwich

Whisk together 3 tablespoons almond butter, 1 teaspoon honey, ¼ teaspoon cinnamon, and ¼ teaspoon vanilla extract. Spread on 2 slices of whole grain bread; top each with 4 thin pear slices, 2 tablespoons chopped dried apricots, 2 tablespoons crumbled goat cheese, and a second slice of bread.

WHY Compared with peanut butter, almond butter contains more of the bone-building minerals calcium, magnesium, and phosphorus. It also has more monounsaturated fat, “which improves blood cholesterol levels,” says Lewin. Pears add fiber, while dried apricots are a good source of beta-carotene, which bolsters immunity.

Build It Better

Use these smart strategies for creating your own healthier sandwiches.

Choose whole grain bread A label touting “100% whole grain” cannot include any refined flour.

Pick the right protein In addition to turkey, lean options include eggs, canned fish, grilled flank

steak, beans, and tofu.

Add vegetables Dark leafy greens, red peppers, carrots, and tomatoes give a boost of disease-thwarting antioxidants.

Be condiment-savvy Mustard and vinegar are

low-calorie choices. Pesto, nut butters, and hummus provide healthy fats.

Choose your cheese Just keep it to a slice. Grating hard cheese, such as Parmesan, onto your sandwich can help you use less.

Chicken Pesto Pitas

Mix 6 ounces cooked, shredded chicken breast with 1 tablespoon prepared pesto. Slice 2 whole wheat pita pockets in half; stuff each half with an equal amount of the chicken pesto. Stuff all 4 pitas with shredded carrot and mesclun.

WHY Chicken breast is an excellent source of protein and niacin. “Your body needs this B vitamin to produce energy,” says Tara Gidus, MS, RD, an Orlando-based sports dietitian and marathoner. The carbs in the whole grain pita help replace energy stores postrun. Carrots get their vibrant hue from stellar amounts of the antioxidant beta-carotene and are a good source of vitamin K, “which assists with bone strengthening,” says Gidus, “so it’s important for preventing stress fractures.”

White Bean Wraps

In a food processor, blend together 1 15-ounce can white beans, 3 tablespoons olive oil, 2 garlic cloves, juice of ½ lemon, 1 tablespoon fresh thyme, ½ teaspoon paprika, ½ teaspoon cumin, and salt and pepper. Spread over 2 whole grain wraps. Top each with ⅓ cup artichoke hearts, ¼ cup parsley, and ¼ cup roasted red pepper; roll and slice in half.

WHY Wraps have about 20% fewer calories than two slices of bread, while ½ cup of beans has 7 g of hunger-reducing fiber. Beans are also high in iron, and eating vitamin C-rich veggies (such as artichoke hearts) boosts absorption of this mineral.

POSTRUN DINNERS

After a tough run at the end of the day, you need a meal that will give your muscles the nutrients they need to recover.

→ Fast, No-Cook Meals

There are plenty of ways to prepare runner-friendly recovery meals without having to so much as boil water. These tasty, no-cook meals take less than 20 minutes to assemble and provide your body with the right mix of carbs, protein, and healthy fat needed to recharge postrun—no sweat guaranteed. Each recipe makes four servings, unless otherwise noted.

Chickpea, Cherry & Ginger Salad

Combine 2 15.5-ounce cans chickpeas, 1 11-ounce can mandarin oranges, ½ red onion (diced), 1 minced garlic clove, 1 tablespoon minced ginger, ⅔ cup each chopped pecans and dried tart cherries, 1 minced jalapeño, 1 cup chopped parsley, and 4 ounces feta. Whisk together 2 tablespoons each apple-cider vinegar and olive oil; add salt and pepper. Pour over chickpea salad and mix well.

WHY Tart cherries are teeming with nutrients that aid in recovery by reducing muscle damage. Chickpeas supply a trio of carbs, protein, and iron, “a mineral needed to carry oxygen to muscles,” says sports dietitian Tara Gidus, MS, RD. A study from two Georgia universities found compounds in ginger can reduce muscle pain postexercise by decreasing inflammation.

Tomato Stuffed with Crab, Lentils & Yogurt

In a bowl, combine 2 6-ounce cans

crabmeat, 1 cup canned lentils, 2 sliced celery stalks, 2 sliced green onions, 4 tablespoons pine nuts, 2 tablespoons chopped basil or oregano, juice of ½ lemon, and salt and pepper. In a separate bowl, whisk together ½ cup Greek yogurt, 1 teaspoon curry powder, and juice of ½ lemon. Slice off tops of 6 large tomatoes; guide a knife around the inside. Scoop out innards and fill with crab mixture. Top with yogurt sauce.

WHY Crab is packed with selenium, a mineral that may play a role in warding off skin cancer. Inexpensive lentils are rich in fiber and folate, a B vitamin that may safeguard against pancreatic and colorectal cancers. “Creamy Greek yogurt contains twice as much protein as traditional styles,” says Gidus, “making it an ideal substitution for mayonnaise and sour cream in recipes.” The primary antioxidant in tomatoes is lycopene, which has been found to reduce oxidative muscle damage in runners.

Smoked Salmon & Veggie Wraps

In a bowl, mix together ½ cup reduced-fat cream cheese, 2 tablespoons each chopped dill and chives, and ¼ teaspoon black pepper. Spread on 4 whole grain wraps. Divide among wraps 8 ounces smoked salmon, 2 tablespoons capers, 3 tablespoons sunflower seeds, 1 cup sliced artichoke hearts, and 2 cups baby spinach. Roll and cut in 1½-inch slices.

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WHY Good-for-you smoked salmon is rich in omega-3s—heart-healthy fats that may help improve the ratio of lean body mass to fat mass, according to a study in the *Journal of the International Society of Sports Nutrition*. Sunflower seeds are a rich source of vitamin E, an antioxidant shown to decrease exercise-induced muscle damage. Swedish researchers found that nitrates in leafy greens such as spinach improve how efficiently muscle cells use oxygen during exercise, which could lead to better running performance.

Chicken Pitas with Sun-Dried Tomato Spread

Before running, put 10 sun-dried tomatoes in warm water to soak for 30 minutes. Blend till smooth in a food processor with ¼ cup of the soaking liquid, ⅓ cup roasted pepper, ¼ cup olive oil, 2 garlic cloves, ¼ cup walnuts, ¼ cup fresh mint, 2 tablespoons fresh oregano, a pinch of cayenne pepper, and salt to taste. Slice 4 whole grain pitas in half; place 1 tablespoon tomato spread in each half. Divide among pitas 8 ounces rotisserie chicken, 1½ cups arugula, 1 sliced avocado, and ⅔ cup roasted pepper.

WHY Whole grain pitas help replenish spent muscle glycogen stores so you are ready for your next run. Poultry is a leading source of an enzyme that scientists found can help preserve muscle

power during high-intensity exercise by increasing the efficiency of oxygen use. The nutrient-rich résumé of avocado includes an abundance of the antioxidant vitamin C, folate, and monounsaturated fat, all three of which help maintain heart health.

Asian Noodle Salad with Eggs & Peanut Dressing

Soak 2 ounces cellophane or thin vermicelli noodles in very hot tap water for 10 minutes. In a blender, combine ⅓ cup peanuts, 3 tablespoons each sesame oil and rice vinegar, 2 tablespoons reduced-sodium soy sauce, 2 teaspoons sugar, juice of ½ lime, 1 garlic clove, 2 teaspoons chopped ginger, and ¼ teaspoon chili flakes. Divide 1 head lettuce among four bowls. Slice noodles into 3-inch pieces and place on lettuce. Evenly divide among bowls 2 shredded carrots, 1 sliced red bell pepper, and 6 hard-boiled, sliced eggs (look for them at the deli counter). Drizzle with dressing. Sprinkle with sesame seeds.

WHY Eggs are a great source of the high-quality protein that runners need for muscle repair and growth. They also provide vitamin D, which has been linked to an improvement in exercise performance. Carrots provide a healthy dose of beta-carotene; the body converts this antioxidant into vitamin A, which bolsters bone strength and may help reduce stress-fracture risk.

➔ Great Recovery Meals

In an ideal world, you'd prepare every meal from scratch, using the most nutrient-packed foods possible. In the real world, a hectic work schedule and a commitment to training can leave you with little time and even less energy to cook. Thankfully, you can skip a lot of the prep work with healthy, ready-to-use items. Try them for a healthy, satisfying post-run meal.



Switch It Up

- Try baby spinach instead of arugula.
- Sub in low-fat grated mozzarella for goat cheese.
- Use whole wheat pitas for mini pizzas.
- Swap chicken with canned white tuna.

Mediterranean Chicken Pizza

Place a 12-inch whole wheat pizza crust on a baking sheet and bake at 400°F for 6 minutes. Remove crust and turn oven to broil. Spread ¾ cup prepared pesto on crust and top with 1 cup packaged arugula, 8 ounces packaged cooked chicken-breast strips, ⅔ cup jarred, sliced roasted red peppers, ⅔ cup jarred, sliced olives, ½ cup torn fresh basil, and 4 ounces crumbled goat cheese. Season with black pepper. Broil for 1 minute.

WHY “Whole wheat pizza crust packs in more fiber and vitamins than crust made with refined flour,” says Rebecca Scritchfield, RD, a Washington, DC-based sports dietitian and marathoner, who adds that the extra B vitamins in whole wheat help a runner’s body generate energy during workouts. Prepared chicken-breast strips have a stellar 11-to-1 protein-to-fat ratio to help build muscle. “Enjoy this pizza after a run, when you can benefit from the extra sodium found in packaged chicken to replace what you lose in sweat,” says Scritchfield.

Sweet & Sour Shrimp Stir-Fry

Heat 1 tablespoon oil in a large sauté pan over medium heat. Cook 2 teaspoons jarred, minced garlic, 1 teaspoon red pepper flakes, 1 package frozen Asian vegetable medley, and 1 cup frozen lima beans for 5 minutes. Stir in 1 package frozen cooked shrimp; cook for 3 minutes. Add 1 cup unsalted cashews, a 20-ounce can pineapple chunks, ⅓ cup of the canned pineapple juice, and 1 cup jarred sweet-and-sour sauce; heat for 2 minutes. Serve over brown rice.

WHY Not only is shrimp a lean source of protein, “but it also provides the mineral selenium,



Switch It Up

- Try frozen mango instead of pineapple.
- Omit lima beans in favor of edamame or fava beans.
- Swap out the shrimp for cooked, packaged chicken strips.



which may help reduce joint inflammation that runners can experience from training,” says Scritchfield. And the copper in cashews helps a runner’s body use iron properly to carry oxygen to working muscles, she adds. Lima beans have fiber, protein, iron, and potassium, an electrolyte necessary for proper organ and muscle functioning. Frozen Asian vegetables provide antioxidants.

Crunchy Cocoa Chili

Heat 1 tablespoon oil in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add 1 diced onion and 1 8-ounce package sliced cremini mushrooms; cook for 4 minutes. Stir in 1 block firm tofu (diced), 2 teaspoons cumin powder, 1 teaspoon chili powder, 1 teaspoon jarred, minced garlic, and salt and pepper to taste; cook for 3 minutes. Add 1 28-ounce can diced tomatoes, 1 6-ounce can tomato paste, 1 15-ounce can each black and kidney beans (drained and rinsed), 1 cup frozen corn, and 2 tablespoons cocoa powder; simmer for 30 minutes. Serve with crumbled whole grain tortilla chips on top. Makes 6 servings.

WHY A *European Journal of Nutrition* study found that polyphenol antioxidants in cocoa can blunt the muscle-damaging effects of oxidative stress resulting from exercise. “Canned beans are a

good source of carbohydrates and lean protein, the two key nutrients runners need for exercise recovery,” Scritchfield says. Furthermore, University of Arkansas scientists determined that soy protein, which is abundant in tofu, can stimulate protein synthesis, making this no-fuss vegetarian chili a smart postexercise meal option.

Mini Salmon Loaves with Salsa

Combine 2 5-ounce cans wild salmon (drained), 1 cup frozen chopped spinach (thawed), 1 diced red bell pepper, 2 tablespoons chopped dill, juice of ½ lemon, ½ cup quick-cook rolled oats, 2 large eggs, and salt and pepper to taste. Divide mixture among 12 lightly greased muffin cups and bake at 375°F for 20 minutes. Let cool before unmolding, and serve topped with jarred salsa.

WHY “Canned salmon is a very rich source of DHA, a type of omega-3 fat that promotes brain health and helps lower blood triglycerides to reduce heart disease risk,” says Scritchfield. What’s more, University of California researchers discovered that DHA can improve skeletal-muscle bloodflow during exercise. Just be sure to check that the label says “wild salmon” to avoid high mercury levels. Oats have fiber and magnesium, a bone-building mineral that may also slash diabetes risk by improving insulin sensitivity.

Switch It Up

- Use frozen peas to replace corn.
- Cook lean ground chicken breast with the onion instead of using tofu.
- Swap the tortilla chips for shredded reduced-fat Cheddar cheese.

Switch It Up

- Try canned crab instead of salmon.
- Swap out red bell pepper for diced frozen asparagus.
- Trade spinach for collard greens.

BONUS RECIPE: Penne with Turkey-Feta Meatballs

This healthy take on an Italian classic is ideal fuel after a long run.

- 8 cloves garlic (3 whole, 5 minced)
- 1½ lb ground turkey
- ¾ cup crumbled feta cheese, plus more for garnish
- ½ cup crumbled saltines
- ½ tsp dried oregano
- 1 egg
- 1 Tbsp tomato paste
- ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
- 4 slices (2 oz) prosciutto, chopped
- 1 cup red wine
- 2 cans (28 oz) no-salt-added crushed tomatoes
- 7 cups water
- ½ tsp salt, plus more if needed
- 1 lb penne



- **HEAT** a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add whole garlic cloves and toast for 5 minutes. Remove from skillet, then smash and mince.
- **BREAK** up turkey in a large bowl. Add feta, saltines, and oregano. Gently mix together.
- **MIX** together egg, tomato paste, and toasted garlic in a small bowl. Add to meat mixture and thoroughly combine. Form into 24 meatballs.
- **HEAT** oil in a large pot over medium heat. Add meatballs (working in batches) and brown on two sides. Transfer to a plate.
- **ADD** minced garlic and prosciutto to pot. Cook, stirring frequently, for 1 minute, or until garlic is golden. Add wine and reduce by half. Add tomatoes and 1 cup water to thin sauce. Bring to a simmer. Add meatballs to sauce and cook, loosely covered, for 15 minutes.
- **ADD** remaining 6 cups water to pot, along with salt. Bring to a simmer. Add penne, cover loosely, and cook, stirring frequently, for 15 minutes, or until pasta is tender. Uncover and simmer until sauce thickens. Adjust seasoning to taste. Garnish each portion with feta and serve.

MAKES 6 SERVINGS

GOOD HYDRATION

Here's some juicy news: Drinking water isn't the only way to stay hydrated. According to the Institute of Medicine, 20% of your water intake comes from food.

→ Eat Your Water

“Eating a 3-ounce cucumber is like drinking 3 ounces of water, but better,” says Howard Murad, MD, author of *The Water Secret*. Besides being water-rich, vegetables, fruits, and a few other key foods contain nutrients that can boost a runner's performance and health. In addition to filling your water bottle, add these foods to your diet for hydration, nutrients, and a tasty change of pace.



H₂O + CANCER DEFENSE

Tomatoes, broccoli

Tomatoes are rich in lycopene; studies link this antioxidant to a reduced risk of lung, stomach, prostate, breast, colon, and cervical cancers. While it may not seem juicy, broccoli is 90% water and contains compounds called isothiocyanates. A study in the *Journal of Medicinal Chemistry* found isothiocyanates block a defective gene that causes cells to become cancerous.

Wet your appetite Skewer cherry tomatoes and grill until lightly charred; add mozzarella balls, balsamic vinegar,

and fresh basil. Stir-fry broccoli with grated ginger; add minced grapes and sunflower seeds.

H₂O + ELECTROLYTES

Cantaloupe, peaches, strawberries

These fruits are mostly water and rich in potassium, an electrolyte lost through sweat. “Potassium and sodium work together to maintain fluid levels in the body,” says Wendy Bazilian, DrPH, RD, author of *The SuperFoods Rx Diet*, “which helps regulate your heartbeat and circulation.” One cup of each contains between 5 and 10% of your daily needs.

Wet your appetite Toss strawberries into guacamole. Or make a cool soup: Blend together peaches, cantaloupe, peach nectar, lime juice, and sea salt, says culinary nutritionist Jackie Newgent, RD.

H₂O + VITAMIN C

Watermelon, kiwi, citrus

Vitamin C helps maintain cartilage and joint flexibility, and these fruits provide at least a third of your daily need per serving. It also plays a role in protecting your skin. “UV rays, pollution, and sweat negatively affect your skin,” Bazilian says, and vitamin C counters those effects. A study in the *Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry* found watermelon and kiwi are nearly as healthy 6 days after being cut, so make fruit salad for the whole week.

Wet your appetite Stir-fry tofu, bok choy, and scallions; add grapefruit segments. Combine kiwi with greens, avocado, pistachios, and onion. Toss watermelon with feta and mint.

H₂O + RECOVERY

Pineapple, cherries

Both fruits may help you recover and rehydrate post-run. Studies show the enzyme bromelain, found in pineapple, may reduce inflammation and speed muscle repair. “Tart cherries contain anthocyanins and melatonin, which reduce inflammation,” says Russel J. Reiter, PhD, professor of cellular and structural biology at the University of Texas Health Science Center.

Wet your appetite Brush chicken with teriyaki sauce and grill with pineapple. Stir minced cherries into Dijon mustard.

H₂O + IMMUNITY

Yogurt, kefir

Studies show that eating probiotic-rich foods can protect you from catching respiratory-tract infections that might otherwise thwart your run. Yogurt usually delivers between one and five strains of probiotics (healthy bacteria); kefir, a yogurt-like drink, can contain up to a dozen. One cup of each also contains 10 to 12 g of protein, an immune-system building block.

Wet your appetite Mix together hummus and yogurt; add lemon juice.

Beverages with Benefits

Chocolate milk Its ideal ratio of protein to carbs helps speed post-run recovery.

Coconut water The liquid found in green coconuts has fewer calories and more electrolytes than sports drinks.

Concord grape juice Research shows it has more antioxidants than other common juices.

Iced green tea Compounds called EGCGs give it anti-inflammatory properties.

Whisk together equal parts maple syrup and kefir for a pancake topping.

H₂O + DIGESTION

Beans

One cup of cooked beans (like kidney, pinto, and garbanzo) provides a half cup of water, as much protein as two eggs, and half your daily fiber needs. Fiber keeps your digestive system moving, helps lower cholesterol, and controls appetite. “Beans are the perfect runner's food,” says Bazilian. “They're a balanced combo of carbs and protein, which allows for a slower release of blood sugar for optimal performance.”

Wet your appetite Combine beans, celery, onion, olive oil, and red-wine vinegar; add herbs and salt.

A Drink for Pain Relief

When mile 15 of your 22-miler has your body begging for ibuprofen, reach for a jolt of caffeine instead. A study published in 2009 in the *International Journal of Sport Nutrition and Exercise Metabolism* found that it reduces exercise-related pain during workouts. Study participants who consumed caffeine prior to high-intensity cycling reported less quadriceps pain than those who did not consume it. Researchers believe that caffeine blocks the brain's receptors for adenosine, a chemical released in response to inflammation.

SMART SNACKS

It's the middle of the afternoon, dinner is hours away, but your stomach is growling. Should you have a snack? Yes—snacking can provide nutrients you need before and after a run.

➔ Beat a Craving

When done right, snacking can be a key component of a runner's daily diet, says sports nutritionist Deborah Shulman, PhD. "Eating every 3 or 4 hours can help control your appetite."

But choose wisely—constant grazing can lead to weight gain. Avoid prepackaged junk foods, and stick to whole or minimally processed options, which will not only satisfy your cravings but also provide surprising health benefits.

IF YOU CRAVE SALT...

Eat popcorn

High in fiber and low in calories, popcorn is also a heart-healthy food. In one study, University of Scranton researchers tested a wide range of whole grains for polyphenol count. Polyphenols are antioxidant plant chemicals that may protect your body from cell and tissue damage linked to heart disease and certain cancers. Researchers found that among snack foods, popcorn has the highest polyphenol level.

Shopping tip Watch the fat. Choose prepackaged popcorn that's 90% fat-free. Or go with nonbuttered brands and add a touch of butter spray.

IF YOU CRAVE SWEETS...

Eat dark chocolate

Juggling family, work, and training is challenging, and too much stress may raise your heart disease risk. According to one study, dark chocolate may help. Researchers gave participants 1.4 ounces of dark chocolate (the size of a matchbook) daily for 2 weeks. The chocolate reduced stress-hormone levels in anxious participants. There's also evidence dark chocolate may help lower blood pressure—another key to reducing heart disease risk, says Shulman. But keep an eye on calories. "It's like red wine," says Pamela Nisevich Bede, MS, RD, of Swim, Bike, Run, Eat! Sports Nutrition. "It can provide health benefits but should be consumed in moderation."

Shopping tip Bump up the percentage of cacao. The higher the percentage, the more antioxidants.

IF YOU CRAVE SOMETHING CRUNCHY...

Eat roasted peanuts

A study published in the journal *Food Chemistry* discovered that the longer peanuts are roasted, the higher their levels of antioxidants. The extralong roasting preserves more manganese and vitamin E (which helps protect your bones and red blood cells, respectively) than lightly roasted or even raw nuts. Peanuts are rich in protein, fiber, and healthy unsaturated fats—three nutrients that help keep you feeling full. Store small bags of peanuts in your desk drawer, or make your own trail mix with peanuts, dried fruits, cereal, and pretzels, says Nisevich Bede.

Shopping tip Go for dry roasted. Methods that add oils or sugar up the fat and calories.

IF YOU CRAVE A COLD DRINK...

Drink tart cherry juice

Tart cherries have been shown to help relieve soreness; they might also be good for your heart. In a study in the *Journal of Nutrition*, participants drank about 8 ounces of tart cherry juice or a placebo twice a day for 2 weeks. Researchers found the juice reduced oxidative damage, which can contribute to heart disease. The juice's protective qualities come from its high level of antioxidants. "Your body creates antioxidants," says Shulman, "but it's important to eat and drink foods rich in them, too." Although juice lacks the fiber of whole fruit, "it's an excellent source of carbohydrate," says Nisevich Bede, which makes it a good choice for recovering after a run.

Shopping tip Stick with cherry. Tart cherry juice is often blended with sweet fruits; the most cherry antioxidants, choose brands without other fruits.

IF YOU CRAVE SOMETHING FILLING...

Eat cereal and milk

Turns out the breakfast of champions can help speed recovery after a tough workout. In a study published in the *Journal of the International Society of Sports Nutrition*, cyclists rode for 2 hours and then ate whole grain cereal with fat-free milk or drank a carbohydrate sports drink. Several days later they repeated the test. Researchers found the pantry staple replenishes energy stores equally as well as sports drinks. Milk also provides quality protein, which is ideal for muscle recovery post-run, says Shulman—making this less expensive (and less processed) option a smart post-run snack.

Shopping tip Avoid cereal with too much sugar. It should have fewer than 7 to 9 g per 100 calories.

➔ Quick Bites

Your training plan may say it's time for your lunchtime 5-miler, but your grumbling stomach begs to differ. So how can you get through your workout without keeling over from hunger? Have a snack, of course. "The right snack can prevent premature fatigue on a run and keep blood sugar levels steady, thwarting cranky moods that might cause you to peter out early," says sports dietitian Jan Dowell, MS, RD. She recommends eating up to 150 calories if you're running within 15 to 30 minutes and as much as 300 calories if you have an hour or more to digest. And, yes, it's okay to have a nibble if you're trying to lose weight—just keep it on the lighter side.



These options contain carbohydrates for quick energy, a bit of protein to hold off hunger, and some electrolytes to keep your fluid levels balanced (it's best to avoid too much fat and fiber, which take longer to digest and can spell GI trouble). Best of all, these snacks take little or no prep, so you can grab a bite and go.

RUNNING IN 15–30 MINUTES

Oranges

Easy to stash, slow to spoil, and hard to bruise, oranges quench your thirst while providing more than 100% of your daily need for vitamin C. “This vitamin helps prevent muscle injuries and replaces collagen in muscle fibers that break down during exercise,” says sports dietitian Nisevich Bede. One orange has just 62 calories—enough to quiet a growling stomach before a short run without going overboard.

Snack right Stick with whole fruit—orange juice is a very concentrated source of sugar, supplying too many carbs at once, and drinking a lot of it may upset your stomach during a run.

Applesauce or pudding

These scoopable snacks are easy to digest and won't cause GI problems, making them safe to eat just before your workout, says Nisevich Bede. Both options also provide a hit of carbohydrates with little or no fiber. A sweet bonus? One pudding cup supplies 10% of your daily need for calcium. Stick with varieties with 1.5 g of fat or fewer.

Snack right Choose applesauce without added sugar—it has nearly half the calories of traditional.

RUNNING IN 30–60 MINUTES

Cereal

Forget the Kashi GoLean before lacing

up. While high-fiber cereals are a healthy bet any other time of day, they'll likely cause stomach trouble during a run.

“Muscles can convert simple carbs into energy faster than fiber-rich foods,” says sports nutritionist Barbara Lewin, RD, who works with endurance athletes. Stick to cereals with fewer than 2 g of fiber per serving, like Special K or Rice Krispies.

Snack right Eat it plain or pour in milk—your choice. Top with ½ cup of sliced strawberries or bananas for an extra kick of carbs and vitamins.

Dried dates

The natural sugars in these little gems are a concentrated source of quick carbohydrates, says Dowell. They are also packed with potassium, which aids muscle function. Two dates contain 10% of your daily need—the same as a small banana.

Snack right Dried fruit can have up to three times the calories of fresh, so stick to a ¼-cup serving. Don't like dates? Try dried apricots, mangoes, cherries, or—Dowell's favorite—blueberry-flavored dried cranberries.

Iced coffee drinks

A quick drive-thru option, Frappuccinos, iced caffè lattes, and similar cold coffee beverages provide liquid to hydrate you while also cooling you down before a warm workout. The milk provides some protein, while the caffeine can improve your focus during a run. A study in the *Journal of Applied Physiology* also found that caffeine delays muscle fatigue during intense workouts.

Snack right Frappes can have around 100 calories—or 500. At Starbucks, order a tall (12-ounce) unsweetened coffee Frappuccino with fat-free milk for 160 calories. Skip the whipped cream.

RUNNING IN 60–90 MINUTES

Hummus and carrots

This protein-and-carb combination will help keep you satisfied during long runs. The sodium in hummus will make you thirsty for a few extra sips of H₂O. Carrots are rich in beta-carotene, and according to a study review published in the journal *Nutrients*, eating carotenoid-packed fruits and vegetables may help defend skin against sun damage—good news for midday runners.

Snack right Pick up handy single-serve cups, like Sabra Hummus Singles. A few whole grain crackers or a wheat pita are other smart dunkables.

Instant oatmeal

A good source of whole grains, “oatmeal is great for longer runs because it sticks to your ribs without feeling heavy,” Dowell says. The instant variety is convenient when you can't make it from scratch.

Snack right Plain instant oatmeal is the best choice, but it's also okay to go with sweetened varieties when you're clocking longer runs—the extra sugar will provide quickly absorbed fuel.

Sweet potatoes

High in carbs, sweet spuds provide long-lasting energy for your run, says Lewin. One has 230% of your daily need for vitamin A, key for a strong immune system. The skin contains soluble fiber, which, according to a study in *Obesity*, can help reduce belly fat when paired with exercise. But if you eat it, give yourself an hour or more to digest before running.

Snack right Microwave a small sweet potato at home, wrap it up, and take it to work. Reheat in a microwave. “It's also just as tasty cold,” Lewin says.

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