

PLANNING, SHOPPING, COOKING

Planning and shopping for food builds the foundation of the important meal plan. This guide will help you learn how to quickly and effectively plan your week, navigate through the grocery store, and prepare the meals. Here is some guidance as well as a shopping list for the most important items you need to have in your pantry and fridge to prepare optimally for training and competition and to recover quickly for the next day.

Athletically sound meals must have a balance between carbohydrate, protein, and fat. These meals are typically lower in fat and rich in carbohydrate. Carbohydrate sources come from foods such as pasta, rice, potatoes, breads, cereals, vegetables, and fruits. The more natural and least processed, the greater the nutrient content. Protein sources include the lean types such as turkey and chicken breast, lean ham, lean red meat, lean pork, fish (frozen, fresh, canned in water), low fat dairy (milk, yogurt, cheese, & cottage cheese), eggs, legumes, as well as soy products (i.e. tofu) and nuts. Although an athlete's diet should be low in total amount of fat, some fat is essential. The focus should be on vegetable oils, nuts, seeds, avocado, and fish oils.

PLANNING

1. Sit down and assess the training and work/school schedule.
2. Plan to cook about 2-3 dinner meals per week (identify good days/nights to do that) and rely on leftovers and quicker options for most other meals.
3. Choose a schedule that works for you. Spread your cooking out over the week.
4. Have Tupperware and zip lock bags in the house for quick and safe storage/freezing of foods. Chill in fridge for no longer than 3-5 days (depends on type of food). When in doubt about when you will eat it, freeze it. Chill or freeze your cooked foods as early as possible after cooking. The longer you wait, the closer your food will get to the danger zone (bacterial growth), which is 41-140° F.

COOKING

Cooking requires skill. However, simple strategies can go a long way. With minimal effort, you can whip up a meal in less than 20 minutes.

Cooking Rice, Couscous, Pasta - follow directions on package for these (simple boiling for 5-20 minutes; add salt and a few drops of olive oil to water for pasta, veggie or chicken broth for rice).

Cooking Potatoes - *Steaming* (1/2 inch of water; put potatoes into a metal basket inside pot; close lid; steam for 10 min; if you cut potatoes in half, they are done in 5 min); *Pan frying or Sautéing*: 1 tsp. oil, fresh garlic, onions, add potato wedges or chunks; add drops of water; close lid & sauté for 5-10 min at medium heat; *Baking*: cut potatoes in chunks, peel garlic and onion (if desired) and drizzle with oil to lightly coat potatoes, add pepper or herbs. Put in baking dish and bake for 30 min at 350° F.

Preparing Vegetables - *Wok frying*: use olive oil or spray and add veggies (1st the hardest and last the softest to avoid overcooking); close lid and stir fry over medium heat for 3-4 min. Add soy sauce or other seasoning. *Roasting/Baking*: similar process to potatoes above but bake for less than 20 min at 350° F. *Microwaving*: use a microwave dish with lid; sprinkle with a little water; close lid and set to steam function. Remove and let stand for a few min; add splash of oil,

salt, pepper, etc. for flavor; **Athletic Salads**: choose dark green leaves such as spinach, romaine lettuce, herb or spring mix; mix with tomatoes, cucumbers, carrots, corn black beans, fresh fruit pieces (such as peaches, pears, apples), dried cranberries or raisings, top with a sprinkle of nuts or seeds and add canola or olive-oil based dressing.

Cooking Meat, Poultry, Fish - Sautéing/Pan frying: depending on thickness of meat, sauté a little oil or use spray at high heat for at least 3 min. each side. For strips of meat, poultry, fish, use less time but check for pink in meat, particularly chicken. Cook it through until the pink color disappears. **Broiling**: in oven set on broil, broil each side for at least 3 min. (depending on thickness). Fish is cooked when it becomes flaky. **Baking**: takes 20-30 min. depending on the dish and temperate. Fish in tin foil takes about 10 min at 400° F; medium chicken breast takes ~ 30 min. at 350° F. **Grilling**: 5 min. per side or longer depending on meat/fish.

Cooking Eggs – Scrambled: fry in skillet with oil or butter (and plenty of veggies, if desired – sauté veggies first and add egg mix later); scramble until stiff; **omelet** with veggies, cheese, mushrooms (similar process but add eggs first and cover pan; let cook at medium heat until stiff; add veggies on one side and fold; let cook for a little longer. **Hard boiled**: Place eggs in a pot filled with cold water; set eggs in a single layer in saucepan, water should cover eggs by 1-2 inches; Bring the water to a full, rolling boil, and cover the saucepan; Turn off the stove and remove the pan from the burner; Let stand and covered for ~12 min. Drain the pot and transfer eggs to a bowl of cold water to stop the cooking process.

Cooking Legumes – Canned: Drain and rinse with water; add to pan with a little oil, herbs, spices; directly add to sauces, stir fries, soup, & salads after rinsing; **Baked BBQ Beans** – Add BBQ sauce and baked in oven for 30 min.; **Lentils from scratch**: 1 cup lentils for every 2 cups water and place in pot; add curry powder, onions, carrots, garlic and cook for 30 min. at medium heat.

Cooking Tofu – Marinades: use soy-based, teriyaki, BBQ, or make your own with balsamic vinegar, olive oil, herbs, salt, pepper (use marinades for ~ 4 hrs. if possible or overnight). Tofu has no taste, so it needs to assume flavor to make it an enjoyable experience. **Stir-Fry, Sauté, Grill, Bake, or Broil Tofu**: Takes much less time than meat! Use caution so that it does not dry out. If you make curry tofu, use 1 tsp. olive oil, garlic, onions, curry powder, shredded coconut, a touch of soy sauce. Cook tofu for 5-10 min. until golden; add fresh bananas & raisins if desired; **Tofu in soups**: cut into chunks and add to miso or vegetable soups; **Tofu in Salads**: add firm chunks (may want to use a marinated tofu or a per-flavored baked type).

SHOPPING

Fruit – 2 to 3 per day

- Focus on fresh, dried, or frozen. Canned fruit if in its own juice (use caution as many are full of sugar and very low in fiber). If you choose applesauce, get unsweetened.
- Go for local. This requires reading where the food comes from. Local is cheaper, is in season, and is friendlier for the environment!
- Go for a variety of colors: orange, red, yellow, green
- All fruits count!
- Dried: check labels for sugar additives. Your dried fruit should not contain any added sugar with the exception of cranberries & pineapple.
- Frozen: check labels for sugar additives. Your frozen fruit should not contain sugar.
- If you choose juice instead of fruit make sure it is 100% juice.

Vegetables: 2-3 cups per day

- Focus on fresh or frozen produce. Canned veggies often have lower amounts of fiber and nutrients and added sodium. However, use canned veggie soups if you like. Soups are now also available in cartons and ready-serve cups.
- Go for local. This requires reading where the food comes from. Local is cheaper, is in season, and is friendlier for the environment!
- Choose a variety of colors: orange, red, yellow, green
- V8 & other vegetable juices can be used occasionally but should not replace vegetables in your diet!
- All veggies count!
- *Quick Vegetables: **Frozen mix*** (all varieties; there are some nice oriental mixes; watch for sauces, cream, and added fats; frozen preferred – corn, peas, soy beans [edamame], butternut squash, green beans, broccoli).
- *Quick Vegetables: **Fresh & raw***
 - Bagged salads (watch for expiration dates; a good one to have on hand is baby spinach due to its durability in the fridge and when it loses its freshness you can toss it into pasta, soups, or eggs)
 - Bagged baby carrots
 - Cherry tomatoes & other tomatoes
 - Cucumbers
 - Green, yellow, red bell peppers
 - Red & green cabbage (finely slice and add to salads or slaws)
 - Broccoli & cauliflower (use raw in salads)
- *Quick Vegetables: **Fresh & quick cooking*** – Cooking veggies is very fast as long as the preparation method is not cumbersome (some veggies require peeling and extensive cutting)
 - Summer squash (zucchini, yellow squash, etc.; requires washing but no peeling; great steamed or stir fried, in tomato/marinara sauce).
 - Winter squash (butternut, acorn, etc.): great mashed or roasted with cinnamon, salt & pepper; try spaghetti squash in place of pasta.
 - Broccoli & cauliflower: wash and cut or break in small pieces; great steamed or stir fried.
 - Tomatoes: great for sauces, omelets, scrambled eggs, Mexican dishes.
 - Peppers: all are great for stir fry, eggs, Mexican, roasted or stuffed.
 - Cabbage: mostly for soups, stews, stir fry; great steamed with olive oil & salt.
 - Asparagus (may be expensive when not in season, wash before use).
 - Fresh corn (whole ear or kernels): great for soups, omelets, Mexican.
 - Hearty dark green leafy vegetables: kale, swiss chard, spinach, bok choy (all very fast cooking, submerge in water followed by quick washing under running water; add to pasta, stir fries, or into omelets/eggs).

Pasta, Rice, Potatoes, Breads, & Cereals – Top Carbohydrates for all of your meals!

- **Pasta** - Choose Italian brands (like Barilla) and go for whole wheat to try something new! Avoid instant pasta options and pre-cooked boxed options. Most pasta only takes 8-10 min. to be cooked al dente ('Italian form of somewhat hard in center'). Pasta, especially the tomato-based sauces keep very well and taste better the second time you

heat them. When warming up, add a sprinkle of water (not oil) and toss with fresh spinach leaves and add some parmesan cheese for extra flavor. Pasta also freezes well as long as it is in sauce. Plain pasta does not keep its texture well.

- **Rice** - Choose long, medium, or short grain white, basmati, or brown/wild rice. Other options are rice pilaf and boxed variety such as risotto. Most rice cooks in 20-40 min. Although there are minute-rice options, you are better off avoiding these unless you are really hungry or in a time crunch. Brown rice has more fiber and nutrients. A simple rule for cooking rice is the 1:2 ratio (1 cup dry + 2 cups liquid). Rice keeps well and can easily be frozen for re-use.
- **Potatoes** - All potatoes count (sweet, russet, Yukon, and purple potatoes are a few examples). Nutrient contents vary greatly. Potato, despite its bad reputation, is still a cheap, nutrient-rich food and great source of carbohydrate for the athlete. If you are in a hurry, you can cook potatoes in the microwave (use a dish, wash the potato/scrub free of dirt first). Other cooking methods are skillet fried with a little oil at medium heat (with onions is tasty) or roasted/baked in oven (with garlic is tasty). While raw potatoes should not be stored in the fridge (store in a dry, dark, cool place), cooked potatoes may keep well if chilled and used in salads the next few days.
- **Other grains for cooking** –
 - *Couscous*: similar flavor to pasta, but cooks quicker
 - *Quinoa*: high protein grain, great for soups, only takes a few min. to cook
 - *Barley*: chewy texture and nutty flavor, similar to brown rice; great for use in soups or in a pilaf or stir fry
- **Breads** – a staple in every athlete's diet!
 - Look for breads with a very short ingredient list. Bread should not have more than a few ingredients such as whole wheat/grain flour, salt, water, honey or traces of sugar. Watch for added high fructose corn syrup and hydrogenated fats. They should not be in breads. Look for the first ingredient being the actual whole grain flour. Per serving, each bread slice should contain at least 2-3 grams of fiber.
 - Flour tortilla – watch out for hydrogenated fats; choose whole wheat for good source of fiber
 - Pita pockets
 - Dark, whole grain German breads (usually available in deli section or under packaged breads)
 - English muffins: choose whole grain, nuts & grain, honey whole wheat
- **Cereals** - great for breakfast & snacks
 - The choices for cereals are endless. However, cereals are similar to breads...the shorter the ingredient list, the better and sugar should not be the first ingredient on the box!
 - Look for whole grains such as oats, millet, wheat flakes, soy, wheat germ, oat bran, spelt, dried fruit, nuts, canola oil (if any oil), honey or brown sugar on the label. While grains should be first, sugar and canola oil should be last on the list.
 - Cereal should not contain hydrogenated/partially hydrogenated fats.
 - Cereal should not contain artificial coloring or flavoring. Color your cereal with fruit, if desired.
 - Look for fiber content of greater than 3 grams per serving.

- Examples – Raisin Bran, Oat bran, Wheaties, Total, Grape Nuts, Kashi GoLean, Smart Start, Cheerios (especially whole wheat/grain), Shredded Wheat, Alpen brands, Whole oats or rolled oats, oatmeal packets (be aware of added sugar in flavored packets), Healthy Valley brands, Low fat granola (Quaker), other brands granola (watch added fats & sugars).
- **Other High Carbohydrate Options for Starches**
 - *Salty Snacks* – watch out for hydrogenated fats in these foods. Rather than eating a lot of these snacks, go by handful and combine them with fruit, veggies, & dairy
 - Popcorn (without butter topping); sprinkle some parmesan cheese for flavor
 - Pretzels (Paul Newman's brand, Snyder's; whole wheat options available)
 - Kashi Crackers
 - Whole roasted nuts (avoid added fats)
 - Wheat thins
 - Whole wheat saltines
 - Soy crisps/Rice cakes
 - Baked Lays, Sun chips
 - Crisp breads (Kavli or WASA brands)
 - Baked tortilla chips or regular tortilla chips
 - Pita chips
 - *Sweet Snacks*
 - Granola bars (Natural Valley, Health Valley)
 - Cookies: choose what you like, but eat in small amounts
 - Animal crackers, gingersnaps, graham crackers, vanilla wafers
 - Sport bars: Power bar, Harvest bar, Pria bar (not carb-select), Clifbar, Luna bar, Mojo bar, Kashi GoLean, Genisoy, ProBar, Builders from Clif
 - Frozen yogurt or fruit yogurt
 - Ice cream or sorbet
 - Dark chocolate
 - Trail Mix
 - 100% juice, fried fruit, fresh fruit
 - Soda...empty calories that do not fill you up

Dairy Products – Great sources of protein for you 3 times a day!

In general, choose low-fat or non-fat/skim dairy products. Reading labels does not hurt, as you will see that many non-fat, light products contain very little protein. This is unfortunate because dairy products contain all essential amino acids and are considered a great option for before and after training, particularly strength training. Low fat dairy products contain some fat but also the protein that you can expect in dairy. This consideration applies mostly to yogurt, with milk and cottage cheese most brands are similar.

- Examples for Yogurt: All Greek yogurts, Dannon low fat plain or fruit; Organic Brown Cow plain or fruit yogurt (Yoplait comes in smaller containers and typically has less protein)
- Cheese & Cheese Products: beware that cheese is a high fat source if you use it as a pure protein source in your meals.
 - Use sharper cheeses (cheddar, jalapeno cheese, parmesan, Swiss Gruyere, asiago)

- Fresh mozzarella or feta cheese are great additions to salads and on pizza in moderate amounts
- Use parmesan cheese for pasta
- Use string cheese for a quick snack with a bagel and apple or with crackers

Meat, Fish, Poultry, Eggs - Focus on Lean Sources at Lunch & Dinner

- *Poultry* (chicken & turkey): skinless; bake; grill, sauce or broil. Use tenders for stir-fry or cut your own. Select high heat for all meats except if roasting.
- *Red meat*: choose lean/extra lean sources for steak, strips, or ground beef.
- *Pork*: get lean cuts; cut off extra fat.
- *Game meat*: generally lower in fat.
- *Fish*: non-fried options (all fish are ok; choose tuna canned in water)
- *Eggs*: Make sure to wash your hands after handling. Trick to decrease your saturated fat and cholesterol intake if you eat a lot of eggs is to include 1 egg + 2 eggs whites.
- Keep raw fish and poultry no longer than 3 days in fridge; freeze if you don't use. Beef can be kept a bit longer.
- Lunch meats include turkey, chicken, lean ham, roast beef.
- Soups with chicken, beef and turkey are fine.

Meat Alternatives from Plants – Several meat alternatives exist for those of you whole do not like to eat or cook meat or vegetarians. The key for vegetarians is to eat a variety of plant protein in combination with dairy and eggs (lacto-ovo vegetarian). For vegans, meeting protein needs is a bit more difficult and soy products are required in the diet to obtain all the essential amino acids.

➤ **Soy Products**

- Soy milk, Soy yogurt
- Tofu
- Edamame (soy beans fully cooked and frozen)
- Soy nuts (great for snacks)
- Miso: soup stock made with fermented soy beans

➤ **Legumes**

- Any (check cans for ingredients): Bush is a good brand; typical are black, garbanzo, kidney, navy, lima
- Soups with legumes, veggies, and grains
- Hummus (mix of garbanzo beans with parsley, lemon, sesame pasta, and garlic and olive oil); great for sandwiches, wraps, or pita & veggies

➤ **Nuts & Nut Butters**

- A nut butter should be nothing else but nuts and salt and little or no added sugars or fats

Fats & Flavors: Use daily in small amounts with each meal

Even though your diet should be low in fat, you should not attempt to exclude fat. Fats and oils provide flavor to food, enable the absorption of some vitamins & minerals, and are important sources of nutrients, such as Vitamin E and essential fatty acids. Here are some guidelines on which ones to choose:

- *Vegetable Oils*: olive oil (from olives), canola oil, sunflower oil (from sunflower seeds), safflower oil, soybean oil (from soy beans); favor olive oil over the others for cooking (at medium heat only due to olive oil's low smoke point) and salads. Use canola oil for baking. For Asian cooking, peanut oil is good – it has a high smoke point.
- *Avocado*: nice source of plant oils (go by tablespoon full on sandwiches or a handful if you have it with tortilla chips)
- *Butter*: watch out for hydrogenated oils or trans fats - these fats are chemically changed and do not serve any purpose other than a harmful artery clogging one! Several butter spreads are now available that do not contain trans fats, such as Land-O-Lakes butter/canola oil spread and Earth Balance (completely vegan, made of soybean oil)
- *Nuts & Seeds*: Great toppings on salads, veggies, stir fries, or as snacks (mix with baby carrots and dried fruit; fresh fruit slices & raisins); eat by the handful!
 - Almonds, walnuts, peanuts, cashews, brazil nuts
 - Sunflower seeds, flax seeds, pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds (great salad toppings)
- *Sour Cream & Cream Cheese*: For cream cheese, use as you would use PB or nut butters (nut butters do offer more protein & nutrients compared to cream cheese).
- *Canadian bacon, bacon bits, smoked turkey, sausage*: add to pasta sauce, soups, rice bowls/paella/risotto for flavor. Use small amounts for smoky, cured flavors.
- *Chutneys, salsas, BBQ sauce, marinades, soy sauce*: use for flavoring; make your own salsa & turn it into a veggie/fruit serving (combine a store brand with fresh tomatoes and peaches!)
- *Olives & capers*: used in Italian cooking; great for tuna dishes, tomato sauce, pizza with tuna
- *Garlic & onions*: use when cooking with olive oil as nice flavorful base!
- *Vinegars*: use for salads and marinades. Check out white and traditional balsamic vinegar for salads and on leftover cold vegetables; with tuna or cold fish leftovers, pasta.
- *Lemons and lime juice*: use for salads, guacamole, hummus, any marinade.
- *Ketchup, mayo, & mustard*: for use on sandwiches.
- *Salt & pepper*: garlic salt, garlic pepper, herbed salts
- *Fresh & dried herbs*: even though this seems like detail to cooking, this is where the flavors really come from! Equip your kitchen with a mix of Herbes de Provence (French herb mix) or Italian herb mix; Individual herbs for cooking:
 - Rosemary for chicken, turkey, veggie soups
 - Marjoram for anything, especially in combination with olive oil & garlic
 - Thyme for chicken, beef, pork
 - Basil for tomato sauces, fresh tomatoes with mozzarella cheese
 - Oregano for salads and stews
 - Bay leaves for soups, lentils, beans, chili
 - Cilantro for salsa, salads, black bean/corn, guacamole, hummus
- *Spices*:
 - Curry for tofu, chicken, beans, lentils
 - Masala mix (includes Indian spices)
 - Cinnamon, allspice, cloves, ginger, nutmeg for use in stewed fruit, fruit cobblers, applesauce, and baking