

NUTRITION AND TRAVEL

High performance athletes are constantly on the go, not only travelling around the country for competition and training, but often across the globe. Managing your diet can be one of the most difficult things to do while you're away. Travel nutrition is based around three main goals:

- Ensuring adequate micro-nutrients to prevent illness (colds, virus, infections),
- Ensuring adequate calories to fuel performance and aid recover,
- Preventing traveller's diarrhoea etc from unhygienic food preparation.

PACKING FOR YOUR TRIP

- Pack as much food as reasonably possible for your outward journey. Food should be as fresh as possible, as if you don't like the food out there you may have to survive on processed foods such as cereal bars.
- When packing foods keep airport restrictions on hand luggage allowance (flying from UK airports, you are only allowed 1 item of hand luggage), fluid restrictions (no liquids in hand luggage through security), and restrictions on exporting/importing meat products to/from other countries in mind.
- Remember that if your flight is delayed you may not have time to eat in the airport before you catch your connecting flight.
- Food at airports tends to be expensive and it can be difficult to find nutritious options. It is always useful to have some supplies in case of unexpected delays.
- If you have to buy food in the airport, buy the most nutritious available (e.g. fresh made sandwiches or rolls; fresh meat with salad) even if not the cheapest option.
- After clearing security, make sure you buy adequate fluid supplies for your flight.

PLANE FOOD

- Take a supply of suitable snack foods to supplement the meals supplied on board.
- The vegetarian meal choice is usually rice or pasta based so is a good choice.
- Travelling can upset your digestive system. To minimise constipation, drink lots of fluids and eat fibre-rich foods such as fresh fruit and wholemeal bread.
- Fluids are very important. Aircraft humidity is around 10-15%, meaning that the moisture is literally drained from your body. Drink water or fruit juice. Travel with your own drink bottle on long flights.
- Don't drink alcohol on the flight and avoid drinking too much tea, coffee and cola; all of these may increase dehydration
- Avoid overeating to relieve boredom. Drink fluid instead!



THE DINING HALL

- If you are going to be eating in a dining hall, try to get a copy of menu in advance. Using sound nutrition principles elect what you want to eat and stick to it. Avoid trying everything on the menu.
- Your meal should mainly be carbohydrate based (noodles, potatoes, cereal, bread), with some protein (eggs, meat, fish, cheese), and ample fresh vegetables.
- Avoid eating food that you are not used to.
- Practice eating what you will eat on competition day as soon as you arrive.
- Eat plenty of fresh fruit when available.
- Ask for alternatives if your nutritional requirements are not being met.

FOOD SAFETY

- Be particularly careful in African, Asian and South American countries where food hygiene may not meet 'Western' standards
- The general rule is 'Peel it, cook it, shell it, or forget it'
- Do not eat from stalls. Eat only in well known or recommended places.
- Where possible, eat food that has been well cooked. It should be hot too.
- If the local water is unsafe to drink: Drink only sealed, bottled water and drinks; avoid ice in drinks; clean teeth with bottled water; avoid salad vegetables.
- After vomiting or diarrhoea replace lost fluids and electrolytes using oral rehydration solutions and safe water. Eat bland diet (e.g. dry toast, crackers, biscuits and rice). Avoid alcohol, fatty foods and dairy products until. If you are using oral contraceptives, beware that absorption may not have occurred.

GOOD FOODS TO PACK

This list can be used as a starting point:

Dried fruit
Nuts and seeds
Tinned fruit
Cereal bars
Breakfast cereal
Crackers
Fig rolls, Jaffa cakes & other low fat biscuits
Dutch breakfast cake
Rice cakes
Liga, Rusks and other dry baby food
Jam, honey, peanut butter
Instant noodles
Baked beans, tinned spaghetti
Powdered milk
Powdered sports drinks
Jellies and sweets
Concentrated fruit squash

FLUIDS

The importance of fluid, especially in hot and humid weather and at altitude, cannot be overemphasized — always have an adequate fluid supply with you.

Always make sure that bottles are sealed before you buy/use them and that you are always drinking from your own bottle.



SOMETHING TO CONSIDER

Meat production in some countries is not subjected to the same rigorous controls as in Europe. Use of illegal hormones to aid lean meat production has been blamed for inadvertent doping offenses, particularly in the case of Clenbuterol. Clenbuterol is a banned substance in sport, and levels can be raised by eating contaminated meat. Mexico and China have both been associated with illegal Clenbuterol use. Care should be taken when travelling to these countries.