

NOBLE INVENTION

BIKE TOURING

NUTRITION TIPS FOR MULTIDAY BIKE TOURS



NUTRITION PLANNING

One of the best parts of bike touring is the food. Making sure you're eating the right foods at the right times will help you to enjoy the trip overall - and each day - so much more.

Most of our riders can expect to bike between 30-50 miles a day in weather that ranges from mild, cool temperatures to humid, hot conditions. Having a plan for nutrition on your trip is essential.

HAVING A PLAN FOR NUTRITION IS ESSENTIAL TO FUEL YOUR RIDE ADEQUATELY.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Different circumstances require different food plans. Think about the type of trail and the time of year you'll be riding - as well as your current fitness level - when reading through our suggestions. Our nutrition advice is geared toward touring cyclists riding at an easy to moderate pace for several days in a row.

HYDRATION

First and most important is proper hydration. Before starting your trip, drink plenty of water the week prior. This will ensure that when you start your body is well-hydrated and has had a chance to adjust. When packing for your trip, be sure to bring a water bottle - we recommend having two - or a hydration pack.



NUTRITION



Study your trail maps and be aware of trailheads and towns where water refilling will be available. Always have a little back up water with you in case you run into trouble, particularly in hot weather.

If you are touring in the heat, adding drink tablets to supplement lost electrolytes and vitamins/minerals can be essential. We particularly like tablets such as Nuun, although you can easily make your own by adding lemon juice and salt to your water. We suggest that sugary sports drinks like Gatorade are not particularly effective, although for very long and hot rides (60+ miles) a can of pop or sugary drink can be a pick-me-up.

FOOD

So what should you be eating each day on your bike tour? With our trip packages, you will be staying at the best B&Bs, inns, and hotels along the trail. So as you start your day, there will be plenty of nutritious food to fuel your morning ride. We highly encourage you to take advantage of these incredible breakfasts, but be mindful that you will be riding for the next 4-5 hours digesting whatever you eat! You may want to grab an extra piece of fruit to carry along for a late morning snack.

NUTRITION

At the start of any all-day ride, you'll want to focus on slow-release carbohydrates than can provide energy over several hours - such as oats, whole fruit, legumes, and breads. Please remember there is no such thing as a "no carb" diet. We have to eat carbohydrates to live! If you are eating fewer grains, you can still find useful carbs in fruit, nuts, and seeds.

Lunch will vary by rider preference and by your location each day. We assume our touring riders will want a nice lunch break around midday. This is a good time to eat a modest meal with a nice mix of food and drink - try to work in some veggies and fruit to help replenish your vitamins and minerals.



If you prefer not to ride with a full stomach, a lighter lunch option can include fruit plus a granola or protein bar. This is less than a full meal but can still provide the fuel needed to get through the afternoon, with maybe a few snacks along the way. We strongly recommend reading the labels of granola and protein bars very closely. There are a lot of options available and not all are of equal quality.

Signs of a healthy bar are that it has a relatively short list of ingredients, includes multiple grains or seeds, and perhaps also some dried fruits. Signs of unhealthy bars are a long list of ingredients, hydrogenated oils, and sugars like high fructose corn syrup. Some bars that we enjoy include KIND Bars, ProBar, RxBar, NuGo, and Go Macro Bars.

SNACKS AND SUPPLEMENTS

Snacks should focus on quick-release carbs. Having an energy bar or simple snack of nuts and a piece of fruit can make a big difference during your ride day. These snacks may also take the form of energy gels. For example, Stinger Honey Gels or Waffle, GU Gels or Clif Shot Gels.

If you'll be riding all day, having a snack midmorning and then another midafternoon is likely ideal. It depends very much on how many miles you're riding, how hard you're pushing yourself, and what conditions you are biking in.

There is a wide range in quality of sport supplements and we recommend reading the labels closely for ingredients and calories - you might be surprised!

Keep in mind that any of these sports supplements can upset your stomach and you should experiment with what works best for you BEFORE your bike tour. Try just one item per training ride and see how you react. It's important to always drink enough during these rides, because many of the supplements are can make you feel sick if you eat them on an empty stomach.

EXPERIMENT WITH WHAT FOOD WORKS BEST FOR YOU BEFORE YOUR BIKE TOUR.

AFTER YOUR RIDE

At dinner it's essential to include fats and proteins - such as dark vegetables, tofu, fish/seafood, or meats - to aid in your recovery. Proteins will help to repair your muscles from riding all day. Along with the proteins and fats, try to consciously include vegetables and grains in your dinner meal. Go ahead and order that pizza, but be sure to include a salad of dark greens and beans or a meat topping to make sure you meet your protein requirements.

Replenishing liquids after the ride is also essential to recovery. Beer or wine can be a great reward at the end of a day, but water is most effective for rehydration. If you've sweated a lot or know that you've had a particularly hard day, you may want to add an electrolyte mix or recovery powder to your water. Another good drink option can be vegetable juices like carrot, turmeric, ginger, and/or beet.

BE CONSISTENT

Once you have a plan for your day, try to stick to it. When you're riding along the trail it can be hard to know when you need that extra spike of energy. During a long ride day plan to replenish your fuels (carbs) about every 1-2 hours.

If you're not getting enough fuel, you may find your attention will start to wander and you'll go into a light daze or "tunnel vision". This is the best time to refuel, but also the time you're most likely to ignore the need. You may think, "I'm ok, I'll just ride a little bit more and then stop."

If those thoughts are going through your head, it's probably time to grab that handful of almonds or sports gel. You'll be amazed at how much better you feel just a mile down the trail. If you leave things too long, you can get into the HANGRY ZONE - and no one wants that!



IF YOU FIND YOUR ATTENTION WANDERING, IT MIGHT BE TIME TO REFUEL. IF YOU LEAVE IT TOO LONG YOU MIGHT ENTER THE HANGRY ZONE!



EATING PLAN

On a medium-effort day (20-40 miles) one snack bar and a piece of fruit, along with a good breakfast and lunch, may be enough to get you through the day feeling good. You'll probably find you won't need the energy gels or other supplements. Indeed, if you're having a rather relaxed day overeating energy gels can make you feel sick.

On hard-effort days (50+ miles) you may want to include energy gels along with a snack bar to your ride plan, or perhaps something more substantial like a ProBar Meal which provides 350-400 calories. On those longer days you may skip lunch altogether since it will feel heavy on the stomach, leaving the full meal for dinner.

EACH RIDER IS DIFFERENT AND THESE ARE JUST GUIDELINES. EXPERIMENT TO FIND OUT WHAT YOU NEED TO REFUEL DURING A RIDE.

SUMMARY OF HELPFUL TIPS

Here is a summary of our best practices for nutrition for a multi-day ride:

TIP #1: Get used to drinking plenty of water during your training so it becomes second-hand when you are on your trip.

TIP #2: Practice your meal planning by taking different drink and snack options with you on training rides.

TIP #3: Plan to eat something every 1-2 hours while riding to avoid the "bonk."

TIP #4: Have some back-up food and water with you on the trail, just in case.

TIP #5: Eat a variety of fats, carbs, and proteins each day to ensure you're meeting your nutritional needs.

