

ON THE ROAD AGAIN - TRAVELING NUTRITION

By Lindsay Langford, MS, RD, CSSD

The food you eat has a direct link to your performance in the gym. Frequent travel to and from competitions greatly increases your chances of finding your next meal at a fast food joint or a concession stand. When faced with the dilemma of eating most meals on the road, be sure you're making good choices to fuel your body with high-quality foods that will increase energy levels, decrease recovery time, and increase overall performance and health.

Top Tips for Eating on the Road

1) Design a meal to fit your needs. You are the customer and are able to determine how you want your food presented. Many foods on the menu could be "healthy" if prepared differently. Don't be afraid to special order.

2) Choose broiled, baked, steamed or grilled. These preparation methods are much healthier options to the popular high-fat frying methods.

3) Start meals with a side salad. This will help curb your appetite, allowing you to eat smaller portions of the main course and add another vegetable group to

your goal of 3 per day. Always be sure to get dressings on the side to monitor the amount of this typically high-fat salad addition.

4) Trim or peel all visible fat. When eating a meat source (beef, pork, chicken), cutting off visible fat can save serious calories. Also, removing the skin from a fried chicken breast can save you 350 calories and 25 grams of fat!

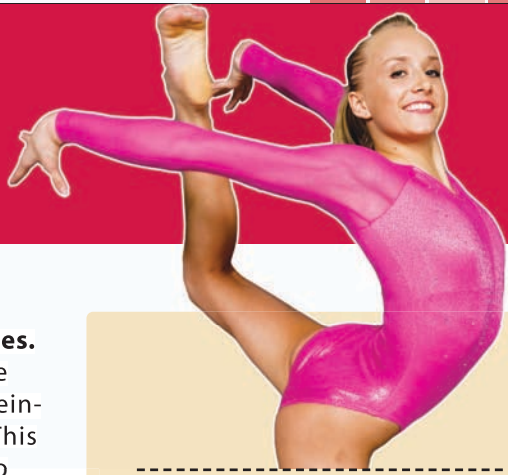
5) Substitute side items. Choose grilled vegetables, fruit, salad, yogurt, or a baked potato for side options when possible. An average fast food meal can run as high as 1,000 calories. Substituting the french fries drastically reduces the unhealthy trans-fat intake.

6) Beware of the liquids. A 32-ounce soda consists of 385 calories and more than 100 grams of sugar (equivalent to 4 candy bars worth of sugar). Choose water, low-fat milk, 100% fruit juice, or unsweetened tea to prevent the "empty" sugar calories.

7) Beware of condiments. Some items such as a single-patty burger can be a good choice, but it comes down to the condiments. Dismiss or go light on "white spreads" (mayonnaise, sour cream, cream cheese, tartar sauce, ranch). Ketchup, mustard, salsa, and cocktail sauce are all acceptable sauces that add little additional calories, but large amounts of taste.



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NUTRITION TIPS FROM THE NATIONAL TEAM

8) Reduce portion sizes.

Keep in mind that one serving of meat (protein-source) is 3-ounces. This is equivalent in size to a deck of cards. I don't know many restaurants that serve a 3-ounce steak! Cutting your meal in half or ordering the "kids meal" are two ways of reducing massive serving sizes.

9) Eat slowly. Chew each bite slowly and savor the flavor before cutting or collecting your next bite. This will help you to slow down and become more in tune with your hunger signals, making you less likely to overeat.

10) If any at all, limit to one fried food. At most fast food restaurants, you're typically able to find some assortment of non-fried options. If this is not the case or this becomes your "splurge" meal, limit fried food options to one item. So, if you decide on the chicken nuggets, substitute the French fries for something more nutritious.

With these tips, I hope you find yourself making more cautious and nutritious choices to fuel your body like an athlete while traveling. 🍷

Nastia Liukin

"It is really important to eat a good breakfast before starting your day. Even if you aren't hungry in the morning, try to make yourself eat something so you have enough energy for the day. And, drink plenty of water throughout the day to stay hydrated!"

Tim Gentry

"The best nutrition advice I have is to find a healthy snack that can be eaten in-between meals to control hunger. My favorite bedtime snack: raisin bran or frosted mini wheat cereal with a banana sliced on top."

Kayla Williams

"I freeze Yoplait Whips. It's a healthy alternative to ice cream and you can have it in tons of flavors."

Cassie Whitcomb

"My tip would be to always have a snack for practice. I keep fruit or a power bar at the gym. Keeping a snack in a cubby or in your locker is a good idea because if you have long workouts you are going to need to keep your energy up and your muscles fueled."

Michelle Milstein

"My nutrition tip would be to stay hydrated. I always have a water bottle with me! Rarely am I seen without one!"