

SPORT NUTRITION ON A DIME

How to Fuel Up on a Shoestring Budget: An Athlete's Guide



Athletes living on their own while in school or training away from home may find themselves faced with the challenge of eating for high performance while on a limited budget. Coupled with time constraints, the many temptations of fast food outlets, convenience stores, and even the grocery store, can interfere with both living on a budget and achieving optimal nutrition. The following are just a few of the many planning, shopping, and preparation tips that can help you make training on a budget a nutrition success.

COST SAVING SHOPPING TIPS

BOTTLED WATER ALTERNATIVE — Instead of expensive bottled water, use tap water. If you want to avoid chlorine, let your tap water sit open overnight in the fridge before putting the lid on. An alternate is to buy a water-filter pitcher. For a different fresh taste, add slices of lemon or cucumber to your water bottle.

SHOP BY FLYERS — Purchase discounted items! Buy fresh (in season) produce, poultry, lean beef, fish, and seafood according to what is on sale. This will also create variety in your diet. Watch for online coupons for additional savings.

BUY IN BULK — Items such as canned goods, frozen vegetables, rice, pasta, cereal, and other dry goods. Table 1 lists some staple, budget conscious food items to bulk up on.

BAG IT — Take advantage when meats are on sale. Buy larger quantities and freeze in smaller individual portions.

BUDGET PROTEINS — Look for recipes that use canned meats and beans for a cheaper protein source.

BUY WHAT YOU CAN EAT — When purchasing fresh produce only buy what you will eat in a few days so you don't waste any due to spoilage. Alternatively, purchase produce that has a long shelf life in your fridge (when kept in plastic bags), such as carrots, cabbage, celery, potatoes, apples, and oranges.

SKIP CONVENIENCE AND PRE-PREPARED FOODS — Choose regular rice and oats instead of the quick cook varieties; the more processed the greater the cost. Choose whole foods and spend the extra time to prepare...the savings are valuable!

CHOOSE CHEAPER CUTS — Cheaper cuts of beef can be cooked at lower temperatures and for longer periods of time (i.e. 3-4 hours) for an inexpensive alternative in stews, soups, and in crockpot meals.

PACK YOUR OWN LUNCH AND SNACKS TO LIMIT PROCESSED, PACKAGED, AND SINGLE SERVING FOODS — It may be a bit more work initially to make your own sandwiches, soups or

salads, but the effort will save you big bucks! In addition, nutritionally, you can control your meal ingredients.

LIMIT PRE-PACKAGED SPORT FOODS — Sport bars and beverages may be convenient and nutrient-dense, but they are expensive and can be easily made from scratch. Look online for low-fat energy bar recipes.

HOME-MADE SNACKS — Make your own snacks with mixed nuts, dry cereals, raisins, and dried fruits.

TIME-SAVING COOKING TIPS

ORGANIZE YOUR KITCHEN

- Knowing where items, supplies, and equipment are located in your kitchen can save precious preparation time. Keep a "running" grocery list to limit the number of times you have to go to the grocery store.

COOK IN BULK

- Cook in batches. Pasta and rice can be easily reheated by pouring boiling water on top. One-pot dishes like stir-fries, soups, stews, and casseroles are inexpensive meals that go a long way. Portion in freezer safe containers for quick reheated meals on the go. You can prepare a month's worth of meals in one weekend.

INVEST IN REUSABLE FOOD STORAGE CONTAINERS

- Purchase quality, reusable food storage containers in different sizes and shapes that are microwave-safe and easy to pack. Packing leftovers the night before or making several lunches at once will save time and ensure your meals are portable.

TIME-SAVING KITCHEN MUST HAVES

- **Crockpot** – arrive home to a hot meal by throwing in a few ingredients in the morning, such as veggies, beans, and cubes of meat, for quick one-dish meals.
- **Microwave** – for quickly cooking potatoes, chicken, and fish in a flash.
- **Blender** – for cost saving smoothies to refuel and rehydrate.
- **Cookware** – microwave egg cookers and vegetable steamers will save you time!

SNAC Sport Nutrition Advisory Committee
Comité consultatif sur la nutrition sportive



SPORT NUTRITION ON A DIME, page 2



TABLE 1. BULKING UP ON GOOD NUTRITION

Pull together quick, nutritious meals and snacks in a hurry by stocking up on the following inexpensive staple foods

CUPBOARD	REFRIDGERATOR	FREEZER
Dry pasta Low fat whole wheat crackers Pretzels Canned tomatoes and sauce Pizza sauce Canned fish Broth based soups Peanut/nut Butter Nuts (almonds, walnuts, etc.) Sesame seeds Kidney beans, lentils, chick peas Dry cereals, low-fat granola Raisins Dried fruit Bulk oatmeal Brown or whole grain rice Sweet potatoes, white potatoes Rice cakes Popcorn for air-popping Honey	Low-fat yogurt and milk Regular or light cheeses Low-fat cottage cheese Eggs Vegetable juice Fresh fruits and vegetables (in season when possible) Jam	Multigrain breads, buns Whole grain bagels, English muffins, pitas, tortillas Frozen vegetables (Stir fry mix) Chicken portions Lean beef cuts and ground Orange juice concentrate Frozen yogurt

