

Velo Ventures for Vegans

By Heather Hedrick, MS, RD

Long distance bicycle trips are a wonderful way to spend several weeks of your summer vacation. The adventure can be made much more enjoyable when your body is properly fueled and ready for many miles of flatlands, hills, or headwinds. Eating a high-energy diet on long distance bike trips can be challenging, due to increased nutrient needs and logistical problems with food availability, storage, and preparation. The following tips can help you plan ahead for a week-long adventure filled with great vegan food to nourish your muscles and keep you pedaling!

Increased Nutritional Needs

For long-duration athletic events, such as bicycle tours, nutritional needs will increase. The extent of the change will depend on your fitness level, and the duration or daily mileage of the trip. The requirements for total calories, carbohydrate, protein, fat, vitamins, minerals, and most important, fluid, will all increase in order to allow your body to sustain activity for long periods of time.

The number of calories needed to supply energy to your body can range from 2,000 to more than 6,000 calories per day. In general, vegans consume a diet which is low in fat and high in fiber, which can make it challenging to comfortably meet those caloric needs in a day. Tactics for increasing caloric intake include:

- consume three meals and several snacks throughout the day
- add sources of concentrated calories such as dried fruits, nuts, and seeds
- consume fluids with calories such as vegan sports drinks, fruit juices, soy milk, or grain (rice or oat) beverages

Meal Planning for Pedaling Power

The meals you plan will depend greatly on the nature of your trip and whether you will have access to coolers, refrigeration, stoves, campfires, pots, and pans. The following foods can be made with minimal utensils, refrigeration, or cooking methods:

Breakfast

Breakfast should be a meal high in carbohydrates, moderate in protein, and low in fat. The amount eaten at break-

fast will depend on how early you rise before leaving for the day and your individual preferences. For a large breakfast (i.e., pancakes, syrup, soy yogurt, and juice), generally allow three to four hours to pass before saddling up the bike. Only two to three hours are needed for proper digestion of a smaller meal (i.e., bagel with peanut butter and a banana). A small snack (i.e., granola bar) can be consumed a half hour before beginning for the day. The meal should incorporate lots of fluid to gain a jump start on hydration. The following are excellent examples of fast and fuel-packed breakfast foods:

- muffins
- instant oatmeal
- Nutlettes® soy nuggets with instant soy milk
- instant pancake mix with maple syrup
- granola
- dried or fresh fruit
- juice

Snacks

During the day the main focus should be on fluids and convenient, nonperishable meals and snacks. Food items will need to be compact in order to fit into a hip pack or a saddle bag. It helps to pre-portion foods and snacks into sandwich bags to minimize meal preparation during the week. The following are great snack ideas to carry in your pack:

- granola bars
- trail mix
- "make your own" sports bar (see Biker Bar recipe)
- Vegan varieties of Clif Bars (800) 884-KALI or Boulder Bars (800) EAT-1-NOW
- dried fruit

Lunch

Lunch will most likely be in the middle of your ride. Therefore, the meal should consist mainly of carbohydrate in order to continue to feed your muscles the fuel they need. Moderate amounts of protein and a small amount of fat should be incorporated to help keep you full and sustain your energy throughout the afternoon. Lunch may be far from camp; therefore, a portable, compact, and nonperishable lunch is needed. The following can be stored in a hip pack or a saddle bag through the morning and still be edible for lunch:

- peanut butter and all-fruit jam sandwich
- dried or fresh fruit

- canned fruit, in snack-size containers
- soy or grain beverage powder to mix with water
- dry hummus mix (prepare with water) and a bagel

Fluids

Fluid can be hard to find on the road. Depending on the intensity of the ride, the heat and humidity, and your individual sweat rate, you may need one liter or more of fluid per hour! For longer trips, that amount can be challenging to carry on your bike. The following tips can be helpful in keeping your engine cool and well hydrated:

- purchase large water bottles (24 oz. or more) that fit into your water bottle holders on your bike
- bring a hydration backpack, such as a Camelback, which can hold up to 2 liters of fluid at a time
- plan a route that passes through a town or past a truck stop, store, or restaurant where you can replenish your water supply
- fill your water bottles with a vegan sports beverage, such as Recharge (made by R.W. Knudsen) or make your own “sports juice” (1 c. water + 1 c. juice + 1/8 t. salt)

Dinner

The evening meal is a great time to replenish energy stores in your body to prepare for the next day’s ride. Dinner time can be made much easier if dishes are prepared ahead of time, stored in air-tight containers in a cooler, and then reheated over a campfire or in a microwave. Since your appetite will most likely be raging in the evening, one-dish meals with minimal preparation time are perfect. Try some of the following ideas for quick, easy meals:

- veggie chili
- pre-cooked pasta and marinara sauce
- vegan burger
- texturized vegetable protein (TVP), seasoned, in a pita or on a bun
- pre-washed and cut vegetables

Vegan Meal Plan and Sample Recipes

Be sure to try all foods you plan to eat on your journey before the trip! Do not experiment with any new recipes, meals, or snacks during the excursion. Each person reacts differently to various foods and beverages, especially during periods of increased activity. By testing recipes and beverages during training, you can hopefully prevent gastrointestinal upset while on the road.

The following meal plan provides approximately 3,200 calories per day. This calorie level is appropriate for individuals cycling moderately for three to four hours daily. If your daily bicycle journey requires a longer duration on the bike, or if you are working at high intensities, your caloric requirements may be higher. Therefore, drink

high-calorie liquids, add a small amount of food to each meal, or add another snack in the evening after dinner.

The following recipes are high-carbohydrate, moderate-protein, low-fat items to energize your body for long days of activity. The dishes, muffins, and bars can be made prior to the trip, transported in a cooler, and reheated during the week. The recipes are high in fiber; therefore, drink plenty of fluid with each meal and snack.

GEARED-UP GRANOLA

(Makes six 1-cup servings)

Granola is great in the morning for breakfast or can be packed in a baggie for a snack later in the day. Make sure the storage container is air-tight to prevent the granola from becoming stale.

- 3 cups rolled oats
- 1/4 cup wheat germ
- 1/2 cup chopped walnuts
- 2 Tablespoons chunky peanut butter
- 1/4 cup maple syrup
- 1/4 cup frozen apple juice concentrate
- 2 Tablespoons brown rice syrup
- 1 1/2 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice
- 1 cup currants
- 1/2 cup diced dried apricots
- 1/4 cup diced dates

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Coat a cookie sheet with non-stick spray.

Combine oats, wheat germ, and walnuts in a bowl. Place peanut butter in a small saucepan. Warm over medium heat to melt. Stir in the maple syrup, juice concentrate, and brown rice syrup. Drizzle over the oat mixture. Mix well, then spread evenly on the cookie sheet.

Bake for 20 minutes, stirring twice during that time to prevent burning. Sprinkle with the pumpkin pie spice and toss to mix well. Bake for an additional 5 minutes, or until golden.

Transfer to a large sealable bowl. Stir in currants, apricots, and dates. Cool completely. Store tightly sealed in a cool place.

Total calories per serving: 440
Carbohydrates: 76 grams
Sodium: 34 milligrams
High in iron

Fat: 12 grams
Protein: 13 grams
Fiber: 6 grams

POWERHOUSE MUFFINS

(Makes 8 large muffins)

Try adding dried cranberries or dates instead of or in addition to the raisins.

- 8 large bananas, peeled
- 1 egg equivalent of Ener-G Egg Replacer (found in health food stores)
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1½ teaspoon nutmeg
- 1½ cups whole wheat flour
- ¼ teaspoon ground cloves
- 1½ cups oat bran
- ½ cup raisins
- 2 cups rolled oats
- 1 cup fortified soy milk
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- ½ cup chopped pecans

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Mash bananas and egg replacer together. Mix in the rest of the ingredients. Spray a large muffin tin with cooking spray or lightly grease with olive oil. Fill muffin cups with batter. Bake at for 25-30 minutes.

Total calories per serving: 300
Carbohydrates: 52 grams
Sodium: 423 milligrams

Fat: 8 grams
Protein: 11 grams
Fiber: 1 gram

CYCLIST CHILI

(Serves 12)

This recipe can be made with any variety of beans. Choose your favorites!

- One 15-ounce can black beans, drained
- One 15-ounce can fava beans, drained
- One 15-ounce can red kidney beans, drained
- One 15-ounce can chickpeas, drained
- One 14.5-ounce can hominy, drained
- One 4-ounce can chopped green chilies, drained
- One 28-ounce can stewed tomatoes
- One 6-ounce can tomato paste
- 2 cups chopped onions
- 2 cups chopped zucchini
- 1 cup diced carrots
- 2½ cups water

- 2 Tablespoons chili powder
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- ¾ teaspoon garlic powder

Combine all ingredients in a Dutch oven. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, cover and simmer for 30 minutes.

Total calories per serving: 230
Carbohydrates: 44 grams
Sodium: 800 milligrams
High in Iron

Fat: 2 grams
Protein: 11 grams
Fiber: 11 grams

PEDALERS PASTA

(Serves 4)

The sauce is a unique combination of spicy and sweet flavors. Served cold, it's a refreshing way to end a long day of cycling.

- 4 cups green, yellow, and orange peppers, cut into 1" strips
- 2 Tablespoons olive oil
- 2 cups salsa
- One 8-ounce package tempeh
- 1 cup canned peaches, drained (save juice to thin sauce if desired)
- 8 cups cooked pasta

Sauté peppers in olive oil for 5-10 minutes or until slightly soft. Add salsa and tempeh. Simmer for 10-15 minutes or until the tempeh is heated through. Added canned peaches right before serving. Serve over pasta. Can be served warm or cold.

Total calories per serving: 610
Carbohydrates: 104 grams
Sodium: 975 milligrams
High in iron and zinc

Fat: 13 grams
Protein: 36 grams
Fiber: 23 grams

BIKER BARS

(Makes 12 bars)

These bars are moist, chewy, and filling. If prepared before your journey, store them in the freezer to keep fresh.

- 6 ounces dates
- ⅓ cup brown rice syrup

- ¾ cup orange juice
- 2 Tablespoons + 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- 2½ cups whole wheat flour
- 1 cup rolled oats
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ¼ teaspoon baking powder
- 1 Tablespoon olive oil
- ½ cup maple syrup
- 3 teaspoons Ener-G Egg Replacer (mixed with ¼ cup water)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Combine the dates, brown rice syrup, orange juice, and 2 tablespoons lemon juice in a food processor and chop.

In a mixing bowl, combine the flour, oats, baking soda, baking powder, olive oil, maple syrup, prepared Egg Replacer, and 1 teaspoon lemon juice. Beat with an electric mixer two minutes at medium speed. Add the date mixture and beat until blended.

Coat an 8" x 11" baking dish with cooking spray and spread the dough evenly. Bake for 25 minutes or until the bars are a bit puffy and a toothpick inserted in the center of the pan comes out clean.

Total calories per bar: 219
Carbohydrates: 48 grams
Sodium: 65 milligrams

Fat: 2 grams
Protein: 5 grams
Fiber: 4 grams

References:

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