

MEAL PREP & NUTRITION GUIDE

REACH YOUR PEAK

*For High School
Endurance Athletes*



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AFFORDABLE & ACCESSIBLE NUTRITION GUIDE FOR HIGH SCHOOL ENDURANCE ATHLETES

Purpose

Many high school athletes struggle to maintain proper nutrition due to busy schedules, lack of nutritional knowledge, and limited budgets. This negatively impacts their athletic performance, recovery, health, and energy levels. My project is a digital and printable meal prep guide designed specifically for in-season endurance high school athletes. The guide will provide affordable weekly meal plans, easy recipes, grocery shopping lists, and basic nutrition education tailored for busy student-athletes.

Nutrition Basics: What Your Body Needs

A vertical line on the left side of the page, composed of a dotted line with four teal circles at regular intervals.

CARBOHYDRATES (CARBS)

Your main energy source! Carbs fuel your muscles during practice and races. Think bread, rice, pasta, potatoes, fruits, and veggies. Don't be afraid of carbs, they help you perform your best and recover faster.

PROTEIN

Helps repair muscles after tough workouts. Include lean meats like chicken or beef, plant-based options like tofu, eggs, and dairy like Greek yogurt.

HEALTHY FATS

Good fats support hormone balance and reduce inflammation. Find them in olive oil, nuts, seeds, and avocado.

HYDRATION

Water keeps you energized and focused. Drink regularly throughout the day, and consider sports drinks or electrolyte powders during intense or long workouts.

SEEK A DOCTOR OR LICENSED PROFESSIONAL

Seeking a doctor or professional for nutrition advice is crucial because they provide personalized, evidence-based guidance, help manage specific health conditions, and can help you navigate a landscape of misinformation.

Professionals can create a customized plan that considers your unique needs, health status, and lifestyle, while also offering support and accountability to help you achieve your goals.

Grocery Shopping List

S M T W T F S

Carbohydrates

- ☐ Whole Wheat Bread
- ☐ Brown or White Rice
- ☐ Protein pasta
- ☐ Potatoes
- ☐ Rolled Oats
- ☐

Proteins

- ☐ Chicken Breasts
- ☐ Lean ground beef or turkey
- ☐ Tofu (plant-based option)
- ☐ Eggs
- ☐ Greek Yogurt
- ☐ Steak

Vegetable and Fruit

- ☐ Bananas
- ☐ Apples
- ☐ Oranges
- ☐ Frozen Mixed Vegetables
- ☐ Spinach or Kale
- ☐ Berries of your choice

Healthy Fats

- ☐ Almonds/Mixed Nuts
- ☐ Olive Oil
- ☐ Peanut butter
- ☐ Avocado
- ☐ Cheese
- ☐

Snacks

- ☐ Pretzels
- ☐ Goldfish
- ☐ Granola Bars
- ☐ Canned/Packaged Fruit
- ☐ Dark Chocolate
- ☐

Drinks

- ☐ Water
- ☐ Electrolytes
- ☐ Chocolate Milk
- ☐ Protein Shakes
- ☐
- ☐

Tips for Budgeting and Time-Saving



Buy Frozen or Canned Veggies: These are often cheaper, last longer, and just as nutritious as fresh.



Use Simple Ingredients: Recipes with fewer, affordable ingredients reduce cost and cooking time.



Prep the Night Before: Pack snacks and lunch to save morning time.



Cook in Batches: Make extra rice or chicken at once and use for multiple meals.



Don't Fear Processed Foods: Some processed foods like canned pineapple or pre-cut veggies are convenient and nutritious.



Shop Sales and Bulk: Buy staples like rice and oats in bulk to save money. Something that could be really helpful is shopping at places like Costco for bulk buying or Aldi for lower prices



Use Simple Ingredients: Recipes with fewer, affordable ingredients reduce cost and cooking time.

BRANDS & EXAMPLES

CARBOHYDRATES

- **Nature's Own 100% Whole Wheat Bread:** widely available, whole-wheat, no artificial preservatives or high-fructose corn syrup.
- **Pepperidge Farm Whole Grain 100% Whole Wheat Bread:** another solid whole-grain bread option (10 g protein + 6 g fiber per two slices).
- **Good & Gather Long Grain Brown Rice:** affordable brown-rice option from Target's "Good & Gather" line (budget white/brown grain).
- **Minute Instant Brown Rice:** very convenient for meal prep (10 min cook), whole grain.
- **Rolled oats:** (You'll find store-brands or major brands like Quaker; oats are widely recommended for budget healthy carbs).
- **Potatoes (white & sweet):** affordable carbohydrate staples. (See budget list advice).

PROTEINS

- **Good & Gather Organic Extra-Firm Tofu:** plant-based protein, affordable, usable in many dishes.
- **Eggs:** buy a dozen (store-brand or name-brand) — eggs = great lean protein. (Banner Health)
- **Lean ground beef or turkey:** Choose 90%+ lean when possible; look for sales/bulk.
- **Chicken breasts:** When on sale, buy ahead, freeze as needed.
- **Greek Yogurt:**
 - **Good & Gather Greek Plain Non-Fat Yogurt:** budget store-brand at Target;
 - **Cabot Greek Plain Yogurt:** another affordable brand often on sale;
 - **Fage Total Greek Yogurt:** premium, but still found in many grocery stores & gives high quality.
 - **Greek yogurt is recommended for protein in budget shopping.**

FRUITS & VEGETABLES

- **Bananas & apples & oranges:** extremely budget-friendly, accessible year-round.
- **Frozen mixed vegetables:** great for prep, cost-effective, less waste.
- **Spinach or kale:** fresh leafy greens; frozen spinach is also good and often cheaper.
- **Berries of choice:** pick frozen if fresh is too expensive; still provide good nutrient density.
- **Good & Gather Extra Virgin Olive Oil:** store-brand olive oil (Target) – good cost/value.
- **Pompeian Extra Virgin Olive Oil:** another brand widely available.
- **Almonds or mixed nuts:**
 - **Emerald Nuts 100-Cal Variety Pack:** convenient snack-pack nuts (almonds + others) for athletes.
 - **Nuts are highlighted as good budget healthy-fat & protein options.**
- **Peanut butter:** Look for natural-ingredient peanut butter (e.g., just peanuts + maybe salt). Many store-brands or "Simple Truth" / "Good & Gather" lines.
- **Avocado:** buy when in season or on sale; good source of monounsaturated fat.

How to Read Nutrition Labels

1 SERVING SIZE COMES FIRST

- Check the serving size at the top, all numbers on the label are based on that.
- Sometimes, a whole package has 2–3 servings, so double or triple the calories and nutrients if you eat it all.
- Example: If the serving size is 1 cup of cereal but you eat 2 cups, multiply everything by 2.

 **TIP:** Pay attention to serving size when packing snacks for tournaments or school days.

2 CALORIES = ENERGY

- Calories tell you how much energy the food gives you.
- Endurance athletes need enough calories to fuel training and recovery — not too little!
- Rough guide:
 - Light snack: ~100–250 calories
 - Meal: ~400–700 calories (depending on your size and activity level)

 **TIP:** If you're always tired, you might not be eating enough calories overall, especially if you train daily.

3 CARBOHYDRATES: YOUR MAIN FUEL

- Look for Total Carbohydrates, Dietary Fiber, and Total Sugars.
- Good carbs: whole grains, oats, rice, fruit, potatoes.
- Added sugars: keep these low (look for <10g per serving when possible).

 **What to aim for:**

- Choose items with whole grains or at least 2–3g of fiber.
- Save sugary snacks (like sports drinks or fruit snacks) for pre-game or during exercise, not all day.

4 PROTEIN: REPAIR AND RECOVERY

- Protein helps rebuild muscles after training.
- Aim for 5–20g per meal/snack, depending on size and intensity.
- Sources: meat, poultry, fish, eggs, Greek yogurt, tofu, beans, and nuts.

 **TIP:** Compare protein bars, some have more sugar than protein! Choose bars with more protein than sugar.

5 FATS & SODIUM: CHOOSE WISELY

- Fats: Focus on healthy ones, olive oil, nuts, seeds, avocado.
 - Avoid trans fats (they harm heart health and recovery).
- Sodium: Athletes need some salt (you lose it in sweat), but too much from chips, ramen, or fast food adds up.
 - Keep most foods under 500mg sodium per serving for everyday eating.

 **TIP:** A salty snack after a hot workout can actually help replace electrolytes, just don't overdo it daily.

6 INGREDIENTS LIST

- Ingredients are listed from most to least, what's first makes up the most of the product.
- Look for whole foods (e.g., “whole grain oats,” “peanuts,” “milk”) at the top.
- Watch for sneaky sugars like:
 - corn syrup, dextrose, fructose, cane juice, honey, agave
- The fewer ingredients, the better, simple foods tend to be cleaner fuels.

 **TIP:** Compare two similar foods (like two types of granola bars). The shorter ingredient list is often the smarter choice.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Knowing how to read a food label helps you pick snacks and meals that give you real energy, not just sugar and empty calories. As a student-athlete, you need to know what's actually in the foods that fuel your body.

Quick Label-Reading Checklist

What to look for	Why It Matters
Serving Size	Know how much you're actually eating
Calories	Energy for training and recovery
Carbs & Fiber	Main fuel + keeps you full
Protein	Builds and repairs muscles
Fat	Long-term energy, hormone support
Sodium	Keeps hydration balanced (in moderation)
Added Sugars	Limit outside of workouts

Sample Daily Meal Plan

TIME	MEAL/SNACK	WHY?
Breakfast (7:00AM)	Overnight oats with banana & peanut butter	Starts your day with carbs, protein & fat
Mid-morning Snack (10:00AM)	Apple and a handful of almonds	Keeps energy steady until lunch
Lunch (1:00PM)	Chicken rice bowl with mixed veggies	Balanced meal with carbs, protein, & fiber
Pre-practice Snack (4:00PM)	Pretzels and a small orange	Simple carbs to top off energy tank
Post-practice Snack (6:00PM)	Chocolate milk & a turkey sandwich	Protein & carbs for recovery
Dinner (7:30PM)	Pasta with tomato sauce and lean ground beef, side salad	Replenishes energy & supports muscle repair
Evening Snack (Optional)	Greek yogurt with berries	Helps recovery overnight

Healthy Breakfast Idea

Meal Breakdown: What's on the Plate & Why it Works

Bacon (protein, B vitamins)

Add a tasty addition, source of protein, high in sodium and saturated fat.

Tomatoes (Antioxidants):

Rich in flavor and lycopene (a powerful antioxidant found in cooked tomatoes).



Spinach (Leafy Green Goodness):

Lightly sautéed for volume, fiber, and a boost of iron and vitamin C.

Avocado (Healthy Fats):

Creamy, nutrient-rich, and helps make the meal more satisfying.

Egg (Protein):

Provides a satisfying source of protein to help keep you full and fuel your morning.



Balanced, colorful, and totally customizable, this is the kind of plate that checks all the boxes.

Game Day Nutrition Guide

Performing your best on game day means fueling your body right, with the right foods, at the right times.

THE DAY BEFORE

Focus on complex carbs to top off your energy stores (think pasta, rice, potatoes). Include lean protein (chicken, turkey, tofu) and plenty of vegetables. Stay hydrated throughout the day, aim for at least 8 cups of water. Avoid heavy, greasy foods or anything new that might upset your stomach.

GAME DAY MORNING

Eat breakfast 3-4 hours before the game. Example: oatmeal with banana and peanut butter, or a turkey sandwich with fruit. Choose foods high in carbs with some protein and healthy fat. Drink water, but don't overdo it; you want to be hydrated but not bloated.

1 HOUR BEFORE GAME

Eat a small snack with simple carbs to give quick energy. Examples: pretzels, a small piece of fruit (like an orange or banana), or Goldfish crackers. Avoid heavy proteins or fats right before playing, they take longer to digest.

DURING GAME

Drink water or electrolyte drinks during breaks.

For longer games or events over 90 minutes, a sports drink with carbs can help maintain energy.

AFTER GAME

Aim to eat a recovery snack or meal within 30-60 minutes. Focus on carbs + protein to replenish energy and help muscles repair. Examples: chocolate milk, a turkey sandwich, or yogurt with fruit. Continue hydrating with water or sports drinks.

Tips for Hydration



Hydration is critical to keep your body running smoothly during training and competition.



Why Hydration Matters: Supports muscle function and reduces cramping. Maintains focus and reaction time. Prevents fatigue and heat-related illness.



How to Stay Hydrated: Drink water regularly throughout the day, not just during practice.



Before activity: drink 16-20 ounces about 2 hours before exercise, then another 8-10 ounces 15 minutes before starting.



During activity: sip 7-10 ounces every 10-20 minutes. After activity: drink enough to replace lost fluids (16-24 ounces per pound lost).



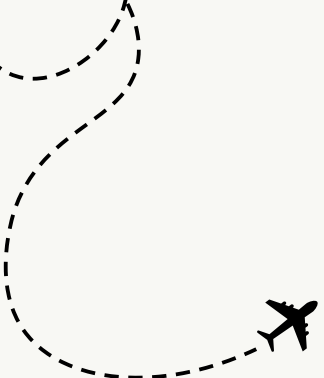
Carry a reusable water bottle with you. If training lasts longer than an hour, use a sports drink to replenish electrolytes.



Avoid sugary sodas or energy drinks; they can cause dehydration.



Monitor urine color: light yellow is ideal; dark yellow means you need more water.



Fueling On the Go:

Tournament & Away Game Nutrition:

Long weekends and travel days can throw off your normal eating routine, but with a little planning, you can still stay fueled, focused, and ready to perform your best. This section helps you make smart food choices when you're on the road, at hotels, or between games.

Before You Go: Plan Ahead

Pack Smart Snacks:

- Trail mix (nuts + dried fruit)
- Granola bars or protein bars
- Peanut butter crackers or pretzels
- Fruit (bananas, apples, clementines)
- Single-serve oatmeal cups or instant oats
- Chocolate milk boxes or protein shakes (shelf-stable)

Between Games or Events

Quick Energy Snacks:

- Banana or small granola bar (for quick carbs)
- Pretzels or Goldfish crackers
- Sports drink or diluted juice for electrolytes
- Apple slices with peanut butter

Smart Eating at Restaurants

If eating out with your team, look for:

- Grilled over fried (chicken, fish, or veggies)
- Whole grains (rice, pasta, bread)
- Add a fruit or salad for balance
- Avoid heavy cream sauces, greasy fries, or huge portions

Example Orders:

- *Subway: turkey sandwich on whole wheat, extra veggies*
- *Chipotle: brown rice, chicken, black beans, salsa*
- *Panera: half sandwich + soup + apple*
- *Breakfast stop: egg sandwich + fruit*

Post-Game Recovery

Within 30–60 minutes:

- Chocolate milk or protein shake
- Turkey or chicken sandwich
- Yogurt with fruit
- Burrito or rice bowl

Goal: Replace energy (carbs) and repair muscles (protein). Keep hydrating, especially if you have another game or day ahead.

Breakfast at the Hotel

(Keep it balanced — carbs + protein + hydration)

Good Choices:

- Oatmeal or cereal with milk
- Whole grain toast with peanut butter or eggs
- Greek yogurt with fruit and granola
- Banana with a boiled egg or string cheese

Meal Prep Ideas:

- Make sandwiches (turkey, cheese, or PB&J) ahead of time.
- Bring reusable containers for rice bowls or wraps.
- Pre-pack cut veggies like carrots, bell peppers, and cucumbers.
- Freeze a few water bottles — they'll keep your food cold and melt into hydration later.

Hydration on the Road

- Always keep a reusable water bottle with you.
- Sip water throughout the day, not just during games.
- Use electrolyte packets or sports drinks if it's hot or you're sweating a lot.
- Watch for signs of dehydration: dry mouth, headache, dark urine, or fatigue.

Champions are built off the field — in how they rest, recover, and refuel.

Common Myths

“Eating a lot of carbs will make me gain weight and slow me down.” ▼

Carbohydrates are your body’s main fuel source for endurance sports. Without enough carbs, you’ll feel tired, slow, and less able to perform. Eating carbs at the right times helps keep your energy high and supports muscle recovery. The key is balance and timing, not cutting carbs out!

“Skipping breakfast helps me lose weight and perform better.” ▼

Skipping breakfast can actually hurt your energy and focus, especially if you have practice or games early. A nutritious breakfast jumpstarts your metabolism and provides fuel for the whole day. Even a small snack like overnight oats or a banana with peanut butter can make a big difference.

“Processed foods are always bad for athletes.” ▼

Not all processed foods are created equal! Some processed foods, like pre-cut fruits, canned veggies, or even pretzels and granola bars, can be convenient, affordable, and nutritious options for busy athletes. The trick is choosing wisely and avoiding overly sugary or salty snacks.

“Drinking lots of water right before sports is enough hydration.” ▼

Hydration is a constant process. Drinking only right before activity isn’t enough. You should hydrate throughout the day to avoid dehydration and improve performance. Also, during long or intense sessions, sports drinks with electrolytes can help maintain energy and fluid balance.

“All athletes should eat the same diet.” ▼

Nutrition isn’t one-size-fits-all. Everyone has different needs based on their sport, body type, training load, and preferences. It’s important to listen to your body, experiment with what works best, and seek guidance when needed.



Overnight Oats



PREP TIME:
5 min



COOK TIME:
0 min



SERVINGS:
1

INGREDIENTS:

- ½ cup rolled oats
- ½ cup milk (dairy or plant-based)
- 1 tbsp peanut butter
- 1 small banana, sliced
- Honey or maple syrup (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS:

- In a jar or bowl, combine oats and milk.
- Stir in peanut butter.
- Top with banana slices.
- Cover and refrigerate overnight.
- In the morning, stir and enjoy cold or warmed up.





Chicken Rice Bowl



PREP TIME:

25 min



COOK TIME:

18 min



SERVINGS:

2

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup cooked rice (white or brown)
- 4 oz grilled chicken breast
- ½ cup mixed veggies (fresh or frozen)
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- Salt and pepper

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Cook rice according to package instructions.
- Season chicken with salt, pepper, oregano, garlic powder, onion powder, and paprika.
- Grill or pan-cook chicken until fully cooked.
- Sauté or steam veggies with olive oil, salt, and pepper.
- Combine all in a bowl and mix gently.





Garlic Chicken Pasta



PREP TIME:
10 min



COOK TIME:
25 min



SERVINGS:
2

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup cooked pasta
- 4 oz cooked chicken breast
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- Salt, pepper, and dried herbs (basil, oregano)

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Cook pasta as directed.
- In a pan, heat olive oil and garlic until fragrant.
- Add cooked chicken and pasta, toss together.
- Season with salt, pepper, and herbs.
- Finish with red pepper flakes, parmesan cheese, and a bit of lemon zest.





Chocolate Chip Oat and Banana Bites



PREP TIME:
10 min



BAKE TIME:
10 min



SERVINGS:
10

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 ½ cups of protein rolled oats
- 2 large bananas, mashed
- 1 cup of organic almond butter
- ⅓ cup organic maple syrup
- 1 ½ tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1 tsp baking powder
- ¼ tsp salt
- ¼ cup chia seeds
- ¼ cup ground flax
- Lily's dark chocolate chips
- ¼ cup slivered almonds (extra protein and fuel)

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Combine all ingredients
2. Make into balls and put on a baking sheet
3. Bake at 375 degrees for 10 minutes





Turkey and Egg Muffins



PREP TIME:
10 min



BAKE TIME:
18-20 min



SERVINGS:
3-4

INGREDIENTS:

- 6 eggs
- ½ cup milk (any type)
- ½ cup diced cooked turkey or turkey sausage
- ½ cup chopped spinach
- ¼ cup shredded cheese (optional)
- Salt and pepper to taste

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C).
2. Whisk eggs and milk in a bowl.
3. Stir in turkey, spinach, cheese, salt, and pepper.
4. Pour mixture into greased muffin tin (about ¾ full).
5. Bake 18–20 minutes until firm.
6. Let cool and refrigerate — they reheat well for quick breakfasts.





Sweet Potato and Bean Burrito



PREP TIME:
8 min



COOK TIME:
15 min



SERVINGS:
1

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 medium sweet potato, peeled and diced
- ½ cup canned black beans (rinsed and drained)
- 1 small tortilla (whole wheat or corn)
- ¼ cup shredded cheese (optional)
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp chili powder
- ½ tsp cumin
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Optional toppings: salsa, avocado, Greek yogurt

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Roast or sauté sweet potato with olive oil, chili powder, cumin, salt, and pepper until tender.
2. Warm tortilla in a pan.
3. Fill with sweet potato, black beans, and cheese.
4. Roll into a burrito and toast lightly in a pan for 1–2 minutes per side.
5. Serve with salsa or avocado.

