

What to Eat During Soccer Tournaments



As a soccer coach, I don't have to tell you that coaching a youth soccer team while traveling in tournaments is a difficult task. One of the hardest responsibilities as a soccer coach while on the road is monitoring your player's food intake. As their soccer coach, it is important for you to give the players a list of foods that will help their bodies recover quickly and give them the most energy for the following games.

First of all, some of the tournaments I have coached in often play with only a brief time between games. There is often not enough time to leave the complex to eat. In this situation, instruct your players to bring energy snacks that are easy and are an excellent energy source. These snacks are easy to carry and won't spoil.

SOCCER SNACK FOODS

- Apples
- Bananas
- Dried Banana Chips
- Apricots
- Raisins
- Fig Newtons
- Graham Crackers
- Bagels
- English Muffins
- Blueberry Muffins
- Oatmeal-raisin cookies
- Granola bars
- Hard Pretzels
- Bread Sticks
- Popcorn
- Cold Cereal
- Corn Flakes

- Juice in a box
- Raw Vegetables
- Fruit snack
- Fruit Sauce

Here is a list of foods that are high in carbohydrates:

FRUITS:

- Apples
- Bananas
- Peaches
- Apricots
- Raisins
- Oranges
- Grapefruit
- Kiwi
- Pineapple
- Plums
- Dates

BREADS/CEREALS

- Bagels
- English Muffins
- Granola Bars
- Rice
- Blueberry Muffins
- Toast
- French toast
- Dry Cereal
- Pancakes
- Waffles
- Oatmeal
- Pasta

VEGETABLES

- Corn
- Broccoli
- Potatoes
- Carrots
- Peas

- Beans
- Cabbage
- Yams
- Cauliflower
- Turnips
- Green Peppers

DAIRY FOODS

- Milk
- Yogurt

Soccer coaches, make sure your team has this list next time they travel on an out of town tournament.

Why should soccer players eat foods that are high in carbohydrates?

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Carbohydrates are the most efficient fuel for energy production. They function as a readily available energy source as they are stored as glycogen in muscles and in the liver. This is most beneficial for athletes engaged in strenuous exercise. With this being said, carbs may be the most important nutrient for sports performance. Some foods high in carbohydrates are: grains, bread, cereals, crackers, rolls, pasta (all kinds), rice, muffins, bagels, fruit, starchy vegetables, and low fat yogurt.

Soccer Players should AVOID foods that have high fat content or high in calories because these slow down the digestion process. Some foods that are high in fat or calories are: butter, margarine, mayonnaise, nuts, seeds, salad dressings, cream cheese, fried foods, sauces, gravies.

Soccer players should cut down on foods that are high in protein and high in fat such as: meat, fish, poultry, cheese, milk (unless skim milk), nuts, and seeds. Another important nutrient is water. Dehydration, which is the loss of too much water, is the most common nutrition problem among athletes. Players should bring water to all practices and games and drink plenty of water before, during, and after practices and games.

For pre-game meals, make sure the athletes eat at least 2-3 hours before practice or game. This allows for good absorption. Consult your doctor, practitioner, and/or pharmacist for any health problem before making dietary changes.