



Nutrition tips

Larapinta Trail Challenge 2017

Your body has two primary fuel sources – fat and carbohydrate. However, we can't burn fat alone, even in low-intensity endurance events.

The brain, red blood cells and some other cells around the body preferentially use glucose. That's why it's important for your body to keep blood glucose at a steady level. Your muscles use both fat and glucose, and when you're walking the amount of each will vary depending on how hard you are working and how long you have been going.

Your challenge during the trek is therefore to maintain glucose levels. You cannot store enough in your body so you must consume carbohydrate along the way at the right rate, otherwise you won't be able to keep up the pace and may not be able to finish.



Days before the trek

To ensure adequate body glycogen stores in the few days before the trek begins eating carbohydrates at each meal is important. Carbohydrate loading may be beneficial ensuring the right balance of fibre foods to reduce the chance of GI upsets. Aim to have 6–8 grams per kg of body weight in the few days prior to event:

*For example: 65kg (body weight) x 6g = 390g
In conjunction with a taper in your training and adequate rest, this will ensure you start the trek with a full fuel tank.*

Don't worry if you gain a couple of kilos in these last few days before the trek. This is not extra fat, it's reflective of the stored glycogen and so it's a good thing. Glycogen is stored with water and is therefore a bulky heavy fuel which we cannot store much of. As the glycogen is broken down this water is released for use by the body.

Food and carbohydrate content

For a full detailed carbohydrate list please contact sarah.leoniuk@theforum.org.au.

30 grams of carbohydrate in foods and drinks

| | |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| Cereal | 40g |
| Pasta | 2/3 cup cooked |
| Rice | 2/3 cup cooked |
| VitaWeat crackers | 8 crackers |
| Museli bar | 2 bars |
| Bread | 2 slices |
| Cous cous | ¾ cup cooked |
| Fruit | 1-2 pieces |
| Baked beans | 1 cup |
| Sports drink | 500ml |
| Fruit juice/cordial | 300ml |
| Honey/jam | 1 ½ tablespoons |
| Milk | 2 cups (500ml) |
| Yoghurt (low fat) | 200g |
| Corn | 1 cup or 1 cob |
| Sweet potato/potato | 1 cup |
| Wrap | 1 wrap |
| Sultanas | 40g |
| Jelly beans | 30g |
| Sugar | 2 teaspoons |



Before you trek each day

Eating two to four hours before exercise allows food to be digested. The meal or snack eaten before the trek should be carbohydrate-based to provide a final top-up of muscle fuel stores. Ideally, pre-exercise eating should be practiced in training to ensure tolerance.

As a guide the choice of meal, snack and fluids should:

- be easy to digest
- be rich in carbohydrates (for fuel)
- be low in fat (to avoid GI upset)
- include adequate amounts of fluid (guide: 300–600ml)
- include food and fluids that are familiar and enjoyable.

Some suitable examples of pre-exercise meals include:

- Breakfast cereal with milk and fresh fruit
- Raisin toast with peanut butter
- Bircher muesli with yoghurt and berries
- Baked beans on toast
- Porridge with sliced banana and almonds
- Toasted ham and tomato sandwich.

If solids don't sit well, or an early start prevents eating a meal or snack before a walk, a liquid source of protein and carbohydrate such as a fruit smoothie or meal replacement liquid can be a good option.

Alternatively, if you have an early start, eat a bigger dinner the night before and a smaller, carbohydrate-rich snack in the morning. Or you can simply be mindful of eating carbohydrates early and consistently during the trek to ensure your levels are topped up.



During each day's trek

Ensure that you maximise your performance with small, nutritional mouthfuls often. Tips for getting your nutrition right during the trek include:

- eating meals and snacks that are high in carbohydrates
- eating every three hours to keep on track
- meals can include sandwiches, wraps, rolls, noodle soups, rice and pasta
- snacks can include fruit, pikelets, muesli bars, bread with jam and pretzels
- plan when you'll eat – it's often hard to replenish carbohydrates once you've hit the wall.

The Australian Sports Commission recommends 30-60g of carbohydrates per hour during endurance activities for maximum performance.

For the Larapinta Trail Challenge you are scheduled to be walking for 6 to 8 hours each day, this means you should be aiming to have the following amounts of carbohydrates during walks:

| Days | Hours walking | Carbohydrates (total) * |
|-------|---------------|-------------------------|
| Day 1 | 6 hours | 180 – 360g |
| Day 2 | 6 hours | 180 – 360g |
| Day 3 | 7 hours | 210 – 420g |
| Day 4 | 8 hours | 240 – 480g |
| Day 5 | 6 hours | 180 – 360g |

* For lower intensity, aim for 30g per hour of carbohydrate

Experiment during your training periods, and eat what you're comfortable with, but make sure you average at least 30g of carbohydrate an hour, depending on how fast you're trekking.

Sodium is the most important electrolyte you can include, so it's recommended to have something salty during your trek. The sodium encourages fluid intake by driving the thirst mechanism, while also increasing absorption and fluid retention. Sports drinks may also help with salt replacement for trekkers who are heavy or salty sweaters.



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Examples of foods and drinks containing sodium:

- Salted nuts
- Vegemite sandwich
- Pretzels
- Sports drinks
- VitaWeat biscuits.

Recovery

Rest and hydration are best for your recovery, so it's important to ensure adequate recovery after each day of walking and the completion of the entire trek. Recovery nutrition has three important aspects:

- refuel muscle glycogen (carbohydrate stores)
- repair muscle (for function and development), and
- rehydrate (replace fluids lost through sweat).

Recovery meals and snacks should therefore contain carbohydrate (fuel), some protein (for muscle repair and development) and plenty of fluids and electrolytes to replace sweat losses.

A recovery meal or snack should be consumed soon after each exercise period, remembering that recovery nutrition extends well beyond the initial hours' post exercise, particularly when the next walk is the day after. Fluids

(mainly water) should also be consumed, based on estimated losses.

Tips for recovery include:

- Drinking water and eating carbohydrates and protein is important for recovery
- 15 to 30 minutes after each trek, have a snack that includes some carbohydrates and protein. This will help you recover effectively. During this time your muscles can easily absorb carbohydrate and protein
- Make sure you drink plenty of fluids 24 to 48 hours after each trek. Try sports drinks if you need to recover more quickly
- Avoid drinking alcohol after the event. It has a negative impact on the recovery of nutrition and on soft-tissue injury caused by exercise.

In your training for the Larapinta Trail Challenge, recovery meal and snack options include:

- Lean chicken and salad roll
- Spaghetti with lean beef bolognaise sauce
- Bowl of muesli with yoghurt and berries
- Chicken burrito with salad and cheese
- Fresh fruit salad topped with Greek yoghurt
- Beef burgers with cheese and salad.

For more information or an individual nutrition plan, contact

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