

What's for Dinner on the River?
 2012-2013 Food for YRQ Racers Survey

By Pat McKenna

Mars Bars at midnight? Moose Stew in the morning? Canned Oysters outside of Carmacks? Many racers struggle with what food to take on the race. Here are the results of the 2012 -13 Food Choices for Racers survey.

Food Choices while on the race – Survey Results: (in no particular order)

Bananas	energy bars	granola bars	military ration packs
Pringle Chips	pita bread with peanut butter and jam		chocolate
Trail mix	Protein Bars	Landjaeger sausage	wheat thin crackers
Salami sandwich with tomatoes		dried fruit	peanuts
Almonds	cashews	Lara Bar	shortbread cookies
Beef Jerky	canned oysters	Dried salmon	cheese
Pizza	banana bread	Snickers bars	salted baby potatoes
Caramel squares	chicken sandwiches	Cliff Bars	cooked cold pasta
Avacado	peanut butter wraps	Potato Chips	Granola
Meat Sandwiches	Bagels	Meal Replacement Shakes ('Ensure')	
Peanut Butter and Jam Sandwiches on very thin bread			canned mandarin oranges
Canned Peaches	Pears	Fruit Cups	Fig Newton cookies
Dehydrated Fruits	Bagel with Tuna and Cheese		Baby Food in Tubes
Baby Carrots	Chewy Chocolate Energy Bars		Thin Soup in Thermos
Banana/Almond Butter Wraps		Blueberries	Grapes
Honeydew Melon	Cantaloupe Pieces	Hummus	Alpine Bakery Bread
Oranges	Olives	Celery	Salami
Zucchini, Peppers and Onions sautéed in Olive Oil			Mars Bars
Tuna Salad made with onions, celery, pickles, fennel and balsamic			vinegar
Cheese sandwiches made with avocado and mayonnaise			Dried mangoes
Potato and Cheese Soup		Toast	Fish
Honey	Olives	Cake	Yogurt Tubes
Jelly Beans	Coke	Hard Boiled Eggs	Oatmeal Cookies
Bacon and Eggs	Pancakes	Subway Sandwiches	Bologna Sandwiches
Sushi Rice Rolls	Smoked Salmon with Cheese		Nutella Sandwiches
Mashed Potatoes with Parmesan Cheese and Protein Powder			Mashed Yams
Quinoa cooked in Coconut Milk		Chorizo Sausage	Fresh Apples
Cooked Greens (Kale, Broccoli, Zucchini)		Milk Pudding	Rice Pudding
Tim Horton's Sandwiches		V-8 Juice	Pizza Hut Pizza
Kraft Dinner	Gummi Bears	Sesame Sticks	Quesadillas
Plain Chips	Apricots	Mashed Potatoes with Cheese	
Chicken Broth	Peppermints	Salty Soup	Hard Candies
Home made Beef Jerky		Loaded Subway Turkey Sub	
Lindt Chocolate Truffles	Homemade Baked Chicken Pita Sandwiches		
Watermelon Chunks	Arrowroot (baby) Cookies		Cheese cubes
Goldfish Crackers			

Homemade Fudge	Baby-Bel Cheese	Riceballs	Miso Paste
Wasabi	Protein Shakes	Coconut Water	Oranges
Strawberries	Turkey Bites	Soda Crackers	Cucumbers
Homemade Energy Cookies		Gingersnaps with Nutella	
Apple Sauce	Sharkies	Macdonald's Egg McMuffin	
Tins of Tuna	Egg Salad Sandwiches		Quinoa Wraps
Plums	Cooked Rice and Vegetables		Raisins
Peanut Butter and Honey Sandwiches		Homemade Power Balls (Hemp, Quinoa)	
Pepperoni Sticks	Cooked Tortellini Pasta		Homemade Moose Jerky
Chocolate Covered Coffee Beans		Cooked Chicken Breasts with Seasonings	
Chocolate Covered Raisins		Christmas Cake	Elk Jerky
Pork Chops	Chicken Noodle Soup		
Croissant with Cream Cheese and Jam		Honey Stingers	Pretzels

A 'Go-to' Food that racers ate when other food(s) did not seem to be appealing:

Survey Results:

Apples	Fruit Salad	Lara Bars	Cheese
Home-made granola bars		Homemade Oatmeal cookies	
Ensure	Homemade Fudge	Miso Soup	Coconut Water
Watermelon	Peanut Butter & Crackers		Applesauce
Hot broth	Sharkies	Boost Drink	Mandarin Orange Cups
Rice Pudding Cup	SunRype Bars	Hard boiled egg	Beef Jerky
Powerballs	Pizza	Sandwiches	Pediasure Drink
Chicken	Milk Chocolate	Wild Turkey ☺	Banana Chips
Chomps	Protein Shakes	Energy Gels	Gu Chomps
Fig Newton cookies	Dried Salmon	Banana Bread	Avocado
Endura Optimiser	Gatorade	Endurox	Almonds
Hummus	Perpetium Drink	7-Up	Chocolate
Hammer gel	Bananas	Oatmeal	V-8 Juice
Sesame Sticks	Snickers Bar	Zantac ☺	Sugar
Peanut Butter Jam Sandwiches		Quinoa Mix	Gummies
Soft granola bars	Tanka bars	Builder's Bars	Hard Salami
Salty foods	Mac & Cheese	Mashed Potatoes	small boiled potatoes
Custard	Wasabi	M & M's	Jelly Bellies
Subway Subs	Chicken Burgers	Chicken Noodle Soup	
Cooked rice with salt	Peanut Butter & Honey		Pasta
Hamburgers	Chocolate covered Raisins & Peanuts		Salmon Jerky
Cold Pasta with oil & cheese		Honey Stingers	Ham & Olives
Pretzels			

Food Intake Tips:

- ❖ What may work for someone else may not work for you
- ❖ Try out/test drive any foods while in training – use only familiar foods during the race

- ❖ Eat something every hour
- ❖ Stopping to fiddle around to find food wastes time. Pre-packing small bite-sized snacks works best.
- ❖ Keep a small cooler or bag(s) within easy reach. Make sure you tie, clip or put your food bags on a tether - teams have dumped and lost all their food; ask the Aussies from YRQ 2012
- ❖ Have a small dry bag with 'back up' foods (non-perishable) just in case – even though I always packed it and never needed it myself, the back up was used several times to help out racers in trouble
- ❖ Choose easily digested foods
- ❖ Take a variety of foods
- ❖ Choose softer foods that you can stuff in your mouth while still paddling
- ❖ Small bites with big calories
- ❖ Fresh fruit chunks (cantaloupe, watermelon, pineapple tastes good) when you are tired
- ❖ Many racers suggest 'real' food rather than just snacks
- ❖ Pack gum and/or toothpaste to occasionally chew or rub on teeth for freshness

Fluid Intake – Survey Results:

73% of racers packed clean water in Whitehorse and refilled in Carmacks

5% drank the river water which they then treated chemically

22% drank the river water, untreated

Although dehydration is a common situation, interestingly

80% of racers felt that they had consumed enough fluid during the race

Reports of fluids consumed varied widely from 4 Litres to 12 Litres per day

Fluid Intake – Racer Tips:

- ❖ drink by sipping continually through hydration tubes: one 3 or 4L platypus tube for water and another 3 or 4L tube for electrolytes, both close at hand, clipped to PFD or within reach. If you think you will need it, pack additional water/fluid and switch bags. Fluid intake is also weather and temperature dependent; take more than you think you will need or be prepared to drink from the river (see above survey results)
- ❖ A thermos of hot tea, coffee, hot chocolate, soup or other liquid is very welcome during the night/early mornings – refill thermos in Carmacks and possibly again in Kirkman Creek
- ❖ Many racers have to force themselves to drink; especially when fatigued. Timing (ie. every 30 minutes or every hour) to have a really good drink may work better for some
- ❖ If you are not peeing regularly, you are not drinking enough. Check it - urine should ideally be clear to very pale yellow – if it is dark yellow, you are definitely not drinking enough

Electrolyte Intake – Survey Results:

83% of racers used an electrolyte replacement during the race

Electrolyte Intake – Racer Tips:

- ❖ Choose lower sugar electrolyte
- ❖ Make electrolyte slightly more dilute than the package suggests
- ❖ Electrolyte in tablet form are easier and more convenient than powdered

Gastric-Digestive Challenges – Survey Results:

70% of racers did not experience gut, GI or gastric problems during the race

30% did experience gut, GI, gastric problems during the race

Gastric-Digestive Challenges – Racer Tips:

- ❖ Zantac or some other antacid once in the morning and once at night, while on the race will prevent and/or alleviate gastric distress for some racers
- ❖ Make sure you are drinking enough fluid
- ❖ Talk to your doctor if you plan to take ibuprofen and/or acetaminophen for pain. Many racers suggest taking ibuprofen every 4 hours. Make sure that you are drinking additional fluid if taking medication.
- ❖ Prolonged sitting does not encourage digestive activity – lay back and stretch out occasionally, if you can
- ❖ Boost, Ensure, Pediasure and other high calorie drinks work for some racers when they don't have an appetite and/or feel weak – sometimes these can alleviate the gastric distress – you might consider packing a few, just in case

Thanks to all the YRQ racers who completed the 2012-2013 Food Survey.

Results were compiled by Pat McKenna B.Sc., B. Ed., and part of my course work in M.Sc. Human Nutrition. Any comments or questions can be directed to

pmckenna@northwestel.net