

Rise and Shine

Quick, delicious ideas for the morning-meal averse.

By Kate Rockwood



YOUR MOTHER WAS

→ right—breakfast really is the most important

meal of the day. Yet approximately 31 million Americans don't eat anything in the morning. "Having your first meal within an hour of waking snaps your body out of fasting mode and revs up your metabolism, so you burn more calories throughout the day," says registered dietitian Diane Kress, author of *The Metabolism Miracle*. Going without food until lunch can increase your body's insulin response, which may encourage fat storage. A nutritious breakfast, on the other hand, replenishes the glycogen stores that supply your body with energy. You'll feel more awake and focused, and less like a ravenous eating machine when lunchtime rolls around.

To get the breakfast benefit, you don't have to go all out, Kress says. Just plan a meal that contains around 300 calories, at least seven grams of protein, and two grams of fiber (both help you feel full longer). If you think you don't have the time or appetite for a morning meal, we have sweet and savory ways to change your mind. **Q**

IF YOUR EXCUSE IS...

"I don't have time."

A few minutes of prep the night before means a satisfying, homemade breakfast no matter how rushed you are.

"I'm not hungry first thing in the morning."

Even if you don't feel like you need it, start your day with something small, like a glass of milk. Then prep a quick, on-the-go meal for later.

"I hate breakfast foods."

These alternatives skip the usual suspects without making you feel as though you're eating lunch at the crack of dawn.

MAY WE SUGGEST SOMETHING SAVORY?



DIY McMuffin

If you're weighing the speed of fast food against the time it takes to fry an egg, consider this: A bacon and egg sandwich made at night takes only 60 seconds to heat in a toaster oven the next morning. Top a whole wheat English muffin with 1 tsp. butter, a scrambled egg, and 2 slices cooked bacon. Store in fridge.

320 calories, 4 g fiber, 17 g protein



Trail Mix

Trail mix doesn't have to be a sugar bomb of dried fruit and chocolate chips. Instead, fill a ziplock bag with 1 cup unfrosted shredded Mini-Wheats, 1 cup popcorn, ½ cup toasted pumpkin seeds (a good source of zinc), and ½ cup Trader Joe's Thai Lime & Chili Cashews.

309 calories, 8 g fiber, 10 g protein



Breakfast Burrito

Fill a whole wheat tortilla with ½ cup cooked black beans, ½ cup roasted peppers, and 1 Tbsp. each shredded cheese, salsa, and cilantro. Roll up the tortilla and store it in the freezer. In the morning, microwave 3 minutes.

301 calories, 12 g fiber, 14 g protein

OR HOW ABOUT SOMETHING SWEET?



Make-Ahead Oatmeal

In a small container, mix ½ cup rolled oats (which have been shown to lower cholesterol and blood pressure) with ½ cup skim milk and ½ cup Greek yogurt. Top with ¼ cup red grapes, refrigerate overnight, and eat cold.

319 calories, 4 g fiber, 18 g protein



Apple and Almond Butter

Apple slices add sweetness with less of the sugar rush (and crash) you get from jelly. Layer a whole wheat English muffin with 1 cup thin apple slices and 1 Tbsp. protein-rich almond butter. Wrap the sandwich in foil to take with you.

292 calories, 8 g fiber, 8 g protein



Cheese and Crackers

For a cheesecake-inspired breakfast, spread 3 large fiber crispbread each with 2 Tbsp. skim ricotta cheese and 2 Tbsp. sliced strawberries. The fruit contains nearly half of your daily recommended intake of vitamin C.

259 calories, 7 g fiber, 14 g protein