

ULTRA RUNNING™

“Keep It Simple”

March 2011

FOOD

Any way you slice it, when you run for more than about three hours you will need to ingest 200-300 calories per hour to keep your blood sugar in equilibrium. Doesn't sound like much,

but this can be hard to do, especially if you are racing hard or if it is hot. Most races have a variety of food to offer, but often you don't really know what you're going to see when you arrive at an aid station. Almost all races have peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. They are the perfect running food, a good mix of carbs, fat, and protein. A full PB&J sandwich has about 500 calories, so if you can get a half-sandwich down every hour or so, you'll do just fine. So, rule number one in the “keep it simple” concept is to get next to PB&Js.



I have had a long-term love affair with Vanilla GU. Energy gels come in all sorts of flavors and consistencies, some might be slightly better formulated than others, but all of them are mostly maltodextrin, an excellent energy source. Personally, I find I like almost all the flavors when I am fresh, and almost none of them when I am tired. But Vanilla GU, for me at least, is the gift that keeps on giving. I've consistently been able to choke



one down when needed almost anywhere, anytime.

Having said all of that, food intake is one area where there is a very wide variety of approaches. A few runners do only energy gels. Some do calorie supplements like Boost or Ensure. Others use moderately high caloric drinks like Hammer Nutrition's HEED. Many use some combination of food and gels. Since you will be doing a number of long training runs, this is an area where you need to experiment and find out what works best for you. But if you can do PB&Js, you will never need to turn to something to eat at an aid station.

TYPE OF PRODUCT	GRAMS OF SUGAR (APPROX.)
Sports Drinks (Heed, Cytomax, GU Brew, Gatorade)	2-22 grams (Carb grams are similar, sugar grams are NOT)
Soda (Pepsi, Coke, Mountain Dew)	30-39 grams
Gels and Chews (Hammer Gel, GU, Clif Shot, Sharkies, Chomps, Bloks, Power Bar Gel Blasts)	2-35 grams (Most are 2-12)
Sports Bars (LUNA, Clif, Met Rx, Power Bar)	12-25 grams
Liquid Diet Supplements (Boost, Ensure)	20-23 grams
Protein (Justin's Nut Butters, LUNA Protein)	2-13 grams
Protein (Power Bar Bites, Clif Shot KOKS)	16-26 grams

