

NUTRITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENDURANCE HIKERS

SOUTH AFRICA IS HOME TO SOME MAGNIFICENT NATURE TRAILS.^{1,2,3}

OTTER TRAIL 5 DAYS 42KM.¹

Figure 1.
The Otter Trail



From Hiking South Africa by Willem Boshoff, 2017, <https://www.hikingsouthafrica.co.za/the-otter-trail/>. Copyright Hiking South Africa.

AMATOLA HIKING TRAIL 6 DAYS 100KM.²

Figure 2.
The Amatola Trail



From Hiking South Africa by Arno van der Heever, 2017, <https://www.hikingsouthafrica.co.za/amatola-hiking-trail/>. Copyright Hiking South Africa.

THE DRAKENSBURG AMPHITHEATRE HIKE 1-DAY 12KM.³

Figure 3.
The Drakensburg Amphitheatre Hike



From Hiking South Africa by Kieran Allen, 2020, <https://www.hikingsouthafrica.co.za/video-hiking-the-amphitheatre/>. Copyright Hiking South Africa.

DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE THE IMPORTANCE OF ADEQUATE NUTRITION TO BUILD STRENGTH AND STAMINA THAT IS REQUIRED FOR SPENDING A LONG TIME ON YOUR FEET.⁴

THE BEST NUTRITION TO TAKE ON YOUR HIKE

CARBOHYDRATE



- Intake at the right time is imperative.⁴
- Consume carbohydrate dense foods low in water, protein, and fibre but high on glycaemic index frequently to conserve muscle and glycogen storage and maintain blood glucose concentration.⁵
- Carbohydrates are easy to digest and are fast energy.⁵
- 90g per hour for long duration activity will maintain performance.⁵

OPTIMAL NUTRITION DURING A HIKE WILL:

- Reduce risk of energy depletion.⁵
- Improve performance.⁵
- Allow faster recovery.⁵

- Endurance hiking requires daily training.⁴
- High training demands rely on muscle fuel stores.⁴
- Energy input must match energy output of activity.⁴

FAT



- Essential during hiking.⁵
- Tasty, satisfying, filling and a slow burning fuel.⁵
- Endurance training enhances athletes capacity for fat oxidation and fat oxidation contributes to energy expenditure during low to moderate exercise intensity.⁵

PROTEIN



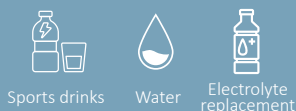
- Serves as an energy substrate during activity and maximises muscle protein synthesis.⁵
- Protein provides strength, stamina, healing, and repair.⁵
- 20g protein every 3-4 hours.⁵

TIPS



- Have a variety of foods available to prevent flavour fatigue especially on long hikes.⁴
- Consider some sweet options to enhance palatability and appeal of food.⁴

HYDRATE REGULARLY



- Dehydration can impair concentration and overall performance.⁴
- Dehydration increases the body temperature and heart rate, increasing the perception of fatigue.⁴
- Drink with all meals and snacks during the hike.⁴

AVOID OVER-HYDRATING.



- Understand your individual sweat losses and hydration needs by developing an individualised hydration plan with an accredited sports dietician.⁴

AN ACCREDITED SPORTS DIETICIAN CAN ASSIST WITH AN INDIVIDUALISED AND PLANNED FOOD AND FLUID STRATEGY THAT WILL HELP YOU TO PERFORM YOUR BEST.

To find a registered sports dietician near you contact the Association For Dietetics in South Africa www.adsa.org.za



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