

10 Energy-Boosting Breakfast Foods

By Katherine Kims, [Bon Appetit](#)

The cure for your sluggish mornings could be as simple as a smart breakfast. This list will help you choose foods that will give you sustained energy, not a short blast then a mid-day crash. Think complex carbohydrates (whole grains), high fiber, high protein, and good fats.

Eggs

Why: Rich in protein, eggs help prevent food cravings.

How: Two to three eggs make for a satisfying scramble, omelet, or on-the-go snack when they're hard-boiled. Add flavor and nutrients with fresh herbs and/or veggies.

Nutritionist's tip: "Don't forget the yolk," says registered dietitian Katherine Brooking. "It provides more than 13 important nutrients like vitamins A and zinc, which maintain immune function and tissue growth."

Oatmeal

Why: The complex carbohydrates in oatmeal provide vitamins and minerals that give us energy. (Simple carbohydrates, like those in white bread, carry the risk of being converted to fat and stored.) Go for old-fashioned or steel-cut oats. They're high in protein and soluble fiber, which lowers cholesterol and makes you feel fuller longer.

How: The topping options are endless. Try unsweetened dried, fresh or frozen fruit; flax, chia, or pumpkin seeds; spices like cinnamon or nutmeg; nuts like almonds and walnuts; or a drizzle of raw honey or grade B maple syrup.

Nutritionist's tip: "Oats benefit the brain by boosting the production of serotonin to combat stress and enhance learning and memory function," says nutritionist Keri Glassman.

Nut Butter

Why: Butter made from nuts like almonds, cashews, and peanuts are filled with vitamin E, protein, magnesium, calcium, and potassium. Concerned about fat? Nut butter contains monounsaturated fats--also found in olive oil--which are the good fats that lower bad cholesterol and increase good

cholesterol.

How: Spread nut butters on top of whole grain toast, apple or banana slices, or blend into a smoothie. Be mindful to limit your serving size to one to two tablespoons.

Nutritionist's Tip: "It's better to have some fat than to have a breakfast that doesn't satiate, leaving you hungry in an hour. Listen to what your body works best off of to keep you satisfied all morning long," says nutritionist Marissa Lippert.

Whole Grain Bread

Why: "Muffins, bagels, and low fiber cereals all give a temporary energy boost and then you'll crash," says New York Food Trainers' dietician Lauren Slayton. Instead, choose whole grains to help stabilize blood sugar levels and fill you up until your next meal.

How: Try a slice or two of whole grain bread or crackers topped with some of that nut butter. An open-faced breakfast sandwich is a good way to go, too: top a slice of bread with eggs, or try ham with avocado or tomato slices.

Nutritionist's Tip: Look for 100% whole wheat or whole grains like spelt or bran listed as the first item in the ingredient list. "Packaged bread or cereal should have 3 grams or more of fiber per serving, while granola should have 10 grams or less of sugar per serving," says Lippert.

Leafy Greens

Why: Spinach, kale, chard, and other leafy greens are nutrition powerhouses. Try to work in other veggies, too--the recommended daily serving is 2 to 3 cups. You'll fill your body with fiber, antioxidants, vitamins, and minerals.

How: Add leafy greens to your smoothie or top your egg sandwich with a lettuce or radicchio leaf. To work in other veggies, color your omelet with mushrooms and red peppers.

Nutritionist's Tip: Limit your intake of higher-glycemic vegetables like corn, peas, tomatoes, and root vegetables like carrots, beets, and potatoes, says nutritionist Ashley Koff. High glycemic foods convert carbohydrates into sugar more rapidly, which causes a sudden spike in blood sugar.

Fruit

Why: In general, fruits are filled with fiber (pears, apples, berries, and kiwis), vitamin C (papaya, oranges), disease-fighting antioxidants (strawberries, blueberries, and blackberries), and cell- and muscle-building potassium (bananas).

How: Add 1/2-1 cup of lower-glycemic fruits--blueberries, apples, pears, peaches, plums, and citrus fruits--to your yogurt or high-fiber cereal. To work in other fruits, garnish that almond butter toast with slices of strawberries or bananas.

Nutritionist's Tip: Blueberries are not only low glycemic, fiber-filled, and antioxidant rich, they also contain anthocyanins. "Anthocyanins give blueberries their immunity boosting and cholesterol-lowering power," says Glassman.

Seeds

Why: A handful of nuts and seeds such as flaxseeds and pumpkin seeds add great flavor and texture, but they also contribute protein, vitamin E, and heart-healthy monounsaturated fats and omega-3's.

How: Sprinkle ground flaxseeds (or chia seeds, sunflower seeds, or pumpkin seeds) on top of yogurt and cereal or add to a smoothie.

Nutritionist's Tip: "Flaxseeds contain lignans, which are plant estrogens that may provide protection against breast cancer," says Glassman.

Yogurt

Why: A good no-cook breakfast option, yogurt is also an excellent source of calcium and protein.

How: Sprinkle a cup of yogurt with fruit, nuts or seeds and a drizzle of raw honey for a healthy yogurt parfait. Quick-and-easy, smoothie options are limitless.

Nutritionist's Tip: Choose Greek-style or Icelandic yogurt like Siggi's, which have twice the amount of protein than other yogurts. Skip non-fat, which has more added sugar and does less to satiate. "Add a handful of arugula or spinach. Don't worry--fruit will mask the 'green' flavor," says New York-based holistic nutrition consultant Adrianna Holiat

Lean Meats

Why: Work in lean meats like ham, turkey, smoked salmon, and even turkey burger patties as an alternative to eggs for your source of morning protein.

How: Pair a slice or two of whole wheat bread with ham or turkey slices and avocado. Plan ahead, advises Slayton. "Stock up at the grocery and cook the night before, so you have little to do the next morning but warm up leftover fish or chicken. Add some spinach or other veggies for a fully nutritious and satisfying breakfast."

Nutritionist's Tip: "Look for meats with less than 350 mg sodium and 15-30 grams of carbs," says Koff.

Mozzarella Cheese

Why: Low-fat cheese provides protein and calcium.

How: Stick with mozzarella or another low-fat cheese like feta and cottage cheese. Top half a cup of low-fat cottage cheese with fruit and/or nuts or have one slice of low-fat cheddar or mozzarella with Wasa or Kavli crispbread crackers or whole grain bread.

Nutritionist's Tip: "Try sharp cheeses like Cabot 50% reduced fat Sharp Cheddar for maximum flavor in a smaller amount," says Glassman.