



Plus Ultra Trail Fueling Quick Guide

Practical fueling guidance for the miles ahead



This guide is intentionally straightforward. It is made for trail runners who want practical fueling guidance without complicated rules. It will not tell you exactly what to eat or prescribe one strategy for every run. Instead, it provides a simple framework you can adapt as you train and learn what works for you.

Fueling needs change with the miles ahead. An easy run asks something different from your body than a long day on the trail or a race. The goal is not perfect nutrition. It is to fuel the work in front of you and build a strategy you understand and trust.

Want to keep the conversation going? Join the Plus Ultra community on Reddit at [r/PlusUltraLife](https://www.reddit.com/r/PlusUltraLife) to share questions, wins and lessons from the trail.

Looking for more support with your training? My coach offers one-on-one guidance tailored to your goals, fitness level and race. Reach out at hello@goplusultra.run to learn more.

Fuel the Run in Front of You



Trail running nutrition doesn't have to be complicated.

An easy morning on familiar trails asks something different from your body than a long run, a hard training day or a race. Your fueling can change with it.

There is no single approach that works for every runner or every run. The goal is to give your body the energy it needs for the work you're asking it to do, then adapt as your training, experience and needs evolve.

One principle to carry with you

Let the run shape your fueling

Some days ask for less.

Some days ask for more.

Learning to recognize the difference is part of becoming a more confident trail runner.

Before deciding how to fuel, ask one simple question:

What does today's run require?

What Does Today's Run Ask From You?



Fueling needs change with the work ahead. Before you think about what to eat or drink, start with the run itself. Consider its duration, intensity and the demands it will place on you.

Easy or Moderate Run

Keep it simple. Normal meals are often enough to support shorter, easier sessions, and additional fueling may not be necessary. Pay attention to how you feel. Did you finish comfortable and energized?

Long Run

Plan ahead. As duration increases, carbohydrate and hydration become more important. Practice the foods, fluids and fueling strategies you may want to rely on during longer efforts or races.

Race or High-Intensity Training

Fuel deliberately. Higher-intensity and race efforts increase carbohydrate demands. Prioritize carbohydrate availability and use fueling strategies you've already practiced in training.

Remember

The harder and longer the effort, the more deliberate your fueling strategy becomes.

Before the Run



Good fueling starts before the first step. What you need depends on the run ahead. As the effort becomes longer or more demanding, preparation becomes more important.

Fuel

Match your energy to the effort. For an easy or moderate run, eat normally and consider a light pre-run snack if needed. Before a longer or more demanding run, increase carbohydrate availability. Choose foods that fit your routine, appetite and schedule.

Fluids

Begin well hydrated. Hydration is an ongoing process, not something you complete at the trailhead. Your needs change with the duration of the run, temperature, humidity, terrain and your individual sweat rate. Start hydrated, then let the conditions help shape your plan.

Gut

Prepare for comfort, too. Fiber-rich foods are an important part of everyday nutrition, but priorities can shift before demanding exercise. Before a long run or race, some runners temporarily reduce fiber to improve gastrointestinal comfort. Use familiar foods and learn what works for you during training.

Before You Go

Fuel. Fluids. Gut.

Before the Run, Quick Decisions



Start with the effort ahead.

Easy or Moderate Run

Keep your normal routine. Eat normally and consider a light pre-run snack if needed. Begin well hydrated and choose foods based on your routine and personal tolerance.

Long Run

Plan ahead. Increase carbohydrate availability before the run. Begin well hydrated and consider temporary fiber adjustments if they improve digestive comfort.

Race Day

Trust what you've practiced. Choose familiar foods and fueling strategies you've already tested in training. Avoid experimenting with new nutrition on race day.

Remember

Practice your fueling strategy during training, not on race day.

During the Run



As the miles add up, your needs can change. Longer efforts increase the importance of maintaining energy and hydration. The goal isn't to follow one rigid formula. It's to respond to the demands of the run.

Energy

Keep fuel available for the work ahead. Carbohydrates are the body's primary fuel for moderate to high-intensity trail running. During longer or more demanding runs, rapidly digested fuel can provide convenient energy when eating everyday foods becomes less practical.

Hydration

Respond to the conditions. Fluid needs change with duration, temperature, humidity, terrain and individual sweat rate. Plan ahead for longer runs and replace fluids throughout the effort as needed.

Electrolytes

Replace meaningful losses. Sweat removes both water and electrolytes. As runs become longer, hotter or sweatier, electrolyte replacement may become more important. Shorter or less demanding runs may not require anything beyond normal hydration and everyday nutrition.

On the Trail

Energy. Hydration. Electrolytes.

During the Run, Quick Decisions



As the demands change, adjust with them.

Short or Easy Run

Keep it simple. Fluid and electrolyte losses are usually more modest. Drink according to your needs. Normal hydration and everyday nutrition are often enough.

Long Run

Fuel and hydrate as you go. Carbohydrate becomes more important as the effort continues. Plan ahead for fluids and consider replacing meaningful electrolyte losses based on the duration, conditions and your individual sweat rate.

Hot, Humid or High-Sweat Conditions

Adjust to the day. Greater sweat losses can increase both fluid and electrolyte needs. Pay closer attention to hydration and adjust your strategy as conditions change.

Race Day

Use what you know. Follow the fueling and hydration strategies you've practiced during training. Adapt to changing conditions, but avoid major changes on race day.

Remember

Pay attention and keep refining.

After the Run



The run may be over, but recovery is just beginning. Training creates the challenge. Recovery gives your body the opportunity to repair, replenish and prepare for what comes next.

Replenish

Restore the energy you used. Longer and more demanding runs draw on stored carbohydrate. Eating carbohydrates after exercise helps replenish those stores and supports preparation for your next training session.

Rebuild

Give recovery what it needs. Protein provides amino acids that support tissue repair, remodeling and adaptation. After a long or demanding run, include both carbohydrates and protein as part of a balanced recovery meal.

Rehydrate

Restore fluid balance. Hydration continues after you stop running. Replace fluids and meaningful electrolyte losses according to the demands of the run and the conditions you experienced.

After the Miles

Replenish. Rebuild. Rehydrate.

After the Run, Quick Decisions



Let the effort guide your recovery.

Easy or Moderate Run

Return to your routine. Resume your normal eating and hydration habits. Include protein as part of balanced meals throughout the day.

Long or Demanding Run

Give recovery more attention. Prioritize a balanced recovery meal that includes carbohydrates and protein. Replace fluids and meaningful electrolyte losses based on the demands and conditions of the run.

Race Day

Recovery starts at the finish. Focus on restoring fluids, replenishing carbohydrates and including protein as part of your recovery plan. Then return to the balanced eating habits that support your everyday training.

Remember

The workout starts the process. Recovery completes it.

Fueling Field Notes



Every run gives you information. A fueling strategy isn't something you perfect before you start. You build it through training by paying attention to what worked, what didn't and what you might adjust next time.

Notice Your Energy

How did the effort feel? Think about whether your fueling helped you maintain energy throughout the run and finish strong.

Notice Your Gut

What felt comfortable? Pay attention to how familiar foods and fueling choices worked with your individual tolerance. Digestive comfort can change with meal timing, hydration, exercise intensity, heat, stress and the foods you choose.

Notice Your Hydration

Did your strategy match the conditions? Consider the duration, weather, sweat losses, thirst and how you felt afterward. Each run can help you better understand how your hydration needs change.

Carry It Forward

Keep what worked. Adjust what didn't.

Fueling Field Notes, Your Run



You don't need a perfect fueling plan. Pay attention, learn from the miles and carry what you discover into the next run.

The Run

Duration: _____

Conditions: _____

Energy

How steady did your energy feel? What helped you maintain energy? Where did things begin to change?

Gut

How comfortable did your fueling feel? What worked well? Is there anything you would change?

Hydration

Did your hydration match the run and conditions? Think about the weather, duration, sweat losses, thirst and how you felt afterward.

Next Time

Keep: _____

Adjust: _____

Before You Head Out



Before

Prepare for the effort.

- Match your fuel to the run ahead.
- Begin well hydrated.
- Choose familiar foods that work with your individual tolerance.

During

Respond to the run.

- Fuel longer and more demanding efforts with carbohydrates as needed.
- Adjust hydration to the duration and conditions.
- Replace meaningful electrolyte losses when sweat losses increase.

After

Support your recovery.

- Replenish carbohydrates after demanding exercise.
- Include protein to support recovery and adaptation.
- Replace fluids and meaningful electrolyte losses.

One Thought to Carry

Let the run shape your fueling.

Keep Learning on the Trail



Your fueling strategy will change as your running does. Every long run, changing season and new challenge gives you another chance to notice what works and refine your approach.

You don't need to get everything right at once.

Practice. Pay attention. Keep learning.

Until next time,
Keep elevating

Take the Trail With You



Sometimes the miles leave you with more than tired legs.

The Plus Ultra Trail Companion is a quiet place to talk through what challenged you, what surprised you and what you want to carry forward.

[Start Reflecting →](#)