

## break out of your breakfast rut

### ➤ Breakfast can be a dieter's best friend.

"It jump-starts your metabolism while keeping you from snacking mindlessly and overeating throughout the day," says David Grotto, R.D., author of *101 Optimal Life Foods*. But eating the same thing every morning can leave you feeling bored and unsatisfied over time, which makes the temptation to grab a doughnut or skip breakfast altogether that much harder to resist. Swap your usual standards for one of these tasty alternatives and you'll enjoy your a.m. meal more and stay energized until lunch. BY SHARON LIAO

### 1 the usual oatmeal

#### MAKE IT BETTER

With about 4 grams of fiber per half cup, oatmeal is a healthy and filling way to start your day, but it can taste bland without the right toppings. Grotto recommends whipping up an "oatmeal au lait": Stir together 1 cup cooked steel-cut oatmeal, 2 teaspoons instant coffee, 1 tablespoon agave syrup, ¼ cup nonfat milk, and ½ cup water; microwave

for 1 minute and 45 seconds. (Each bowl contains 363 calories and 5 grams of fat.)

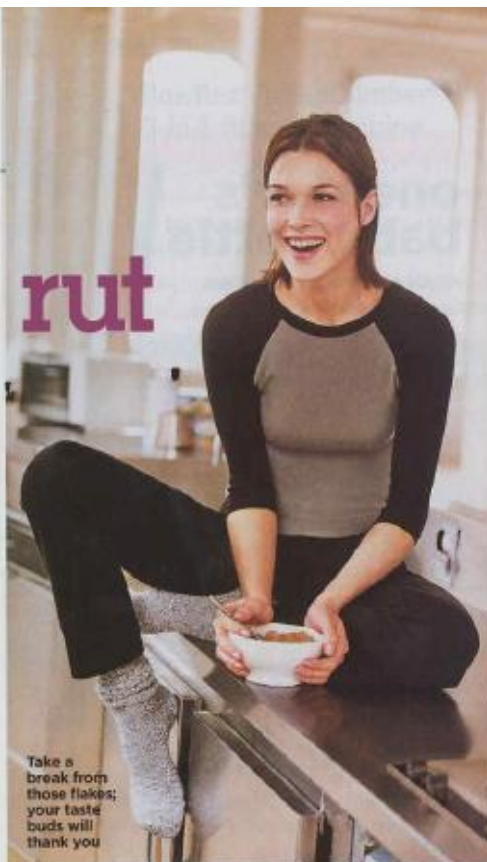
#### Tired of oats? Go with another grain, like millet.

"It has a slightly nutty flavor," says Grotto. "Plus it contains 6 grams of protein and 4 grams of fiber per half cup." Simmer it gently with water and top with fruit.

### 2 the usual toast & jam

#### MAKE IT BETTER

"Because some people don't like traditional breakfast foods, like eggs or cereal, they have something small instead—say, a slice of toast," says Daniela Jakubowicz, M.D., author of *The Big Breakfast Diet*. But carbs alone won't hold you over all morning.



Take a break from those flakes; your taste buds will thank you

### She advises having typical lunchtime fare and choosing a meal that contains protein as well.

So, instead of butter or jelly, top two slices of whole-grain toast with jelly and peanut butter, or make a "TLT" with turkey, lettuce, and tomato.

### 4 the usual deli muffin

#### MAKE IT BETTER

Oversize bakery versions can pack up to 800 calories and 41 grams of fat. Swap your staple for an English muffin topped with peanut butter, a sliced banana, and a small handful of chocolate chips.

The protein- and fiber-rich banana gives the meal staying power—and cuts 427 calories and 27 grams of fat. "Plus, chocolate triggers the release of serotonin—a feel-good hormone—and keeps your levels elevated for hours," says Jakubowicz. "So you'll be less likely to experience sugar cravings later in the day." ❧

### 3 the usual egg omelet

#### MAKE IT BETTER

"Add nutrients and flavor to a plain two-egg omelet by folding in leftovers, like chicken, sautéed spinach, or roasted squash," says Grotto. Round it out with a slice of multigrain bread and you've got a satisfying meal for less than 315 calories.

Cook eggs for two minutes before adding veggies



## eat this before your next big event

Whether you're running a race or giving a boardroom speech, we've found the foods that can help you feel calm, think clearly, and perform at your best. Dig in!

BY MATTHEW KADEY, R.D.



You've spent days, weeks, or even months prepping for your first 10K or big meeting with corporate. So don't blow it on game day by showing up feeling sluggish or stressed. "The right foods can rev your body and your brain for peak performance," says Elizabeth Somer, R.D., a SHAPE advisory board member and the author of *Eat Your Way to Happiness*. From boosting energy to soothing frazzled nerves, these delicious meals are a surefire recipe for success.

### YOU HAVE A BIG WORK PRESENTATION THIS A.M.

POWER UP WITH  
2 scrambled eggs with 1 cup red bell pepper  
strips; 1 slice whole-grain toast;  
1 cup yerba maté tea

#### SCRAMBLED EGGS WITH RED PEPPERS

Starting your day with choline-rich eggs can stop you from cracking under pressure. The nutrient increases the production of acetylcholine, a neurotransmitter that helps minimize anxiety. One cup of red peppers not only packs a punch of flavor, it also provides three times your daily dose of vitamin C—another nutrient that calms jitters. In fact, German researchers recently found that people who loaded up on vitamin C before giving a speech to a crowd had lower levels

of the stress hormone cortisol—a sign that you're feeling relaxed—than those who didn't.

#### WHOLE-GRAIN TOAST

"Having a slice first thing can replenish your glycogen stores, which dip overnight," says Somer. Whole grains are an ideal pick, she adds, since their fiber helps provide a steady supply of energy all morning.

#### YERBA MATÉ

This tea, made from the leaves of a South American shrub, can help you stay sharp. It brews up nearly as much caffeine as a cup of coffee and has theobromine and theophylline, plant compounds shown to improve memory.

Your stomach  
won't be  
growling  
with this  
high-protein meal.

