

Nutrition On The Move - How To Eat Clean When You Travel

When it comes to eating high quality food, nothing comes close to home-made meals. But that isn't always possible and we have to/want to eat out sometimes. Eating out presents some challenges, but with some practise we can train ourselves to choose wisely among the available options (and you can always 'make up' over other meals that day).

But what do you do when you are away from home all day or days at a stretch? That's when life gets a little tricky and things often start to fall apart (food-wise that is). We find that there is a dessert filled coffee shop at every corner, airports seem to only stock sweets & oily food and why is there no way to buy a fruit anywhere!! By this time, your blood pressure is rather high, you want to overhaul all airports and surely a frappewithahintofcoffeesomething (make that a Venti and decaf) will help?! No it won't; but it sure makes you feel better! We resolve to do better next time, but nothing has really changed and soon all travel feels like Groundhog Day (an old movie where a weatherman finds himself living the same day over and over again). Sound familiar?

Time to take a deep breath and face some truths:

- **Truth No 1:** You are not alone. Everyone who travels feels this way. Look up Olympics and nutrition on the internet and you will find that the number one challenge for all olympians is eating well when away from home. Sound familiar?
- **Truth No 2:** Don't stress over what you cannot control, plan for what you can.
- **Truth No 3:** Be realistic. Don't expect to have a perfect day of eating as you would at home.
- **Truth No 4:** Stop thinking, start doing!

5 rules of thumb while on the road

1. Lunch & dinner - Your activity levels will be light, so protein and vegetables are your 'go-to' foods. Build your meals around them. Protein = eggs, paneer, whey, fish & meat. Veggies = salads & dry curries.
2. Snack: Whey in water and fruit are easy snacks. Easy to pack too so take them with you!
3. Drink: Water is best. Coffee/tea without sugar is also fine.
4. Plan to keep busy while at airports - There's only so long you can browse in an airport without ending up buying some junk. Read, listen to music/podcasts, watch whatever on your device.
5. There is no 5 but glad you got this far, keep reading!

Here's a real life example following these simple rules:

I had a day trip coming up from Chennai to Bombay. I was leaving by a 6am flight and back by an 8pm flight. So here was the plan:

- Previous night - packed 1 scoop whey each in 2 small plastic bottles, 1 apple and 1 guava. Prep work took all of 2 minutes!
- 4am - Woke up, headed to airport.
- 5:30am - Black coffee at Chennai airport. Bought 500ml bottled water.
- 7am - Breakfast on flight: omelette, potato strips and baked beans. [If nothing on flight, my plan B was 1 scoop whey with water. A short snooze would be good too!]
- 830am - Out of airport. Bought second bottle of water of 500ml.
- 10am-1pm: Meetings, had water & green tea without sugar.
- 1:30pm - Lunch at client canteen: 1 cup rice, 1 cup dal, 1 cup veg curry, 1 cup salad, 1 cup yoghurt. Avoided anything oily.
- 2-6pm: More meetings, had water and masala chai.
- 630pm: In taxi to airport. Had apple and 1 scoop whey.
- 730pm - At airport, picked up third water bottle of 500ml.
- 830pm : Poor food choices on flight. Had instant dal rice, 1 scoop whey with water and guava.
- 1030pm - At home, feeling peckish - had 1 cup yoghurt.
- 11pm - In bed.

So, how did this day go? I managed 2 scoops of whey & an omelette, 2 fruits, 2 cups veggies, avoided anything oily or sweet and drank enough water. Not perfect but I would feel good after this day on the road, wouldn't you? The **game changer here** was packing the whey and fruits which meant I did not go hungry and got my protein for the day for sure.

The key message for you is 'If you fail to prepare, you prepare to fail'. So keep calm, spend all of 2-3 minutes to prepare for the day ahead and you will do just fine!

Author Note: This article was written by **Kannan Raman** for The Quad.