



NUTRITION Q & A

What are some creative ways to prepare zucchini?

A: Botanically speaking, zucchini are actually fruit—but nutritionally speaking, they're considered a vegetable. And as such, they're generally consumed cooked. Zucchini are low in calories at 15 calories per 100 grams, and also contain potassium, folate and vitamin A in appreciable amounts. My favorite, simple way to enjoy zucchini is to cut them lengthwise, coat lightly with olive oil, sprinkle with salt and pepper, and grill. Zucchini pancakes are another favorite—with breakfast, as a snack or side.

Simply wash and grate the zucchini, add flour, egg, Parmesan cheese and pepper to taste, then bake. For a special splurge, buy zucchini flowers. Stuff them with cheese, such as ricotta, lightly batter and then fry. (You can also stuff and bake them, instead of frying.)

Q: **I'm training for my first Ironman, which is in a month. I have been using a sports drink and eating energy bars and sandwiches on the bike, but I rode with a buddy last weekend who recommended a new nutrition strategy—a mixture of two new (to me) sports drinks. Should I try it?**

A: Unless you have been experiencing repeated G.I. distress (gas, bloating, nausea or diarrhea) during or after training sessions with your current nutrition strategy, then no!

I recommend sports drinks that contain both dextrose and sucrose, and extra sodium. The mixture of carbohydrates is important, as dextrose requires no digestion. Although both sugars provide rapidly available energy, they are taken up by the G.I. tract differently, which helps deliver more carbs to your working muscles, and helps maintain energy, pace and performance. Extra salt is crucial to endurance athletes, as we sweat 0.5 to 2-plus liters per hour during exercise, and 500 to 1,500-plus milligrams of sodium per liter of sweat! It's also a good idea to use a mixture of liquid calories (sports drink) and solid calories (bars and sandwiches). Most triathletes I work with do better, feel better and experience less G.I. distress during an Ironman event when they take in solid as well as liquid calories on the bike. Thirty to 50 percent of your calories consumed on the bike should come from solid foods. What you can still do at this point in your Ironman prep is to calculate your current intake of fluid, carbs and sodium per hour, and adjust, if necessary, as you fine-tune your race-day Ironman fueling strategy.

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If you'd like to have your nutrition questions answered on this page in the magazine, send an email to fuel@competitorgroup.com.