

Ask a Specialist: 10 Tips for Healthy Road Trips

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06/25/2015

Summer time is a great time for road trips. In Utah, there are many wide, vast stretches of highway between destinations, and most stops are at gas stations and tourist attractions that are known to stock sugary drinks, candies, sweets and salty snacks. It's not always easy to eat healthy foods while on the road, or any vacation for that matter, but it can be done. Consider these tips.



1. Pack a small cooler with easy-to-eat healthy snacks such as:
 - Apples (Be aware of agriculture check points that won't allow fruit to pass through, including the border into California and other locations. Buy fruit after passing through.)
 - String cheese and whole-grain crackers
 - Pre-packaged yogurt tubes
 - Trail mix and dried fruit
 - Hummus and pre-cut veggies, like carrots, radishes, snap peas and bell peppers.
 - Celery and small individual-sized containers of peanut butter (check the peanut butter aisle for the small 1-2 tablespoon packages); pretzels also can be dipped in peanut butter for an easy snack
 - Whole-grain bread and peanut butter and jam or cheese and lunch meat
 - Remember to include wet wipes and garbage bags for easy clean up
2. Take refillable water bottles to save cooler space and to avoid purchasing sugary beverages.

They can also help you save money on buying beverages. Refill the bottles each time you stop for gas and restroom breaks.
3. When eating out, seek healthier options such as fruit cups or slices, milk, wraps, salads, rice and veggie bowls and whole-grain options of breads, tortillas and rice.
4. Use a navigation app on your smartphone to look for restaurants near you beyond the ones connected to the gas station when stopping to refuel. Consider non-burger fast food restaurants for variety and possibly healthier options, such as:
 - Sandwich restaurants where you could split a larger sandwich with a family member and load up on the veggies options.
 - Chinese food places, which often have more choices of veggies than other fast food restaurants.
 - Mexican food places where you can look for beans, rice and veggie options, but remember to eat less of the high-fat fried foods.
 - Pita and wrap restaurants, which also offer fresh veggie options, but beware of high-calorie sauces.
5. Make farmers markets a destination around meal times. This is a great way to literally taste some of the local foods and culture. Most markets have more than just produce, so enjoy many other vendors selling fresh breads, homemade tamales, side salads and more. Plus, you'll get to move and stretch your legs after all that driving.
6. Visit grocery stores or local bakeries at your destination to buy meals and/or replenish your healthy snack cooler. Consider whole-grain muffins, fruit and small milk containers for breakfast or instant oatmeal packets you can make with hot water from gas stations or hotel room coffee makers.
7. Plan moving time. Search for places along the way for walking, hiking, biking or swimming adventures to break up driving time and get your body moving. It might take a little extra time, but together with choosing varieties of fruits and veggies, moving your body will help you feel more energized, help you sleep better and help keep you "regular."
8. Make gas and restroom breaks a physical activity break—walk, run, dance or do yoga or stretches. You could even have races with the family. Consider ordering your meals take-out and head to a picnic spot at a local park to enjoy fresh air and more opportunities to move your body.

9. Save treats for events and special destinations of your trip. This will save your car from sugary, sticky spills and melts, and also help reduce calories consumed.
10. Plan non-food activities in the car to pass time and to avoid the snacking-from-boredom syndrome. Listen to audio-books the whole car can enjoy, make videos of the family rocking out to a favorite song, sketch Picasso-like portraits of each other without looking at the paper, play "I Spy," bingo or read books and articles about the history of places you're going to visit.

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