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Mindful and Nutritious Snack Tips for Your Summer Road Trip

Road trips are sometimes the best way to travel. You have the freedom to make pit-stops, you can change up your route anytime you'd like, and you can pack your favorite food and drinks. With that said, it can also be challenging to make healthy food choices while on vacation, especially when you're spending hours in the car. Check out the following practical tips and snack ideas for an enjoyable and healthy road trip this summer.

1 Be mindful when eating. It's easy to eat aimlessly while driving or being a passenger in the car. Become aware of your hunger cues and recognize if you're eating out of boredom. Try reading a book or playing a car game to pass the time.

2 Bring a refillable water bottle.

This is a simple yet excellent way to stay hydrated and save money while on the road.

3 Pack food and a cooler.

Bringing non-perishable and fresh produce can help curb cravings and they can also be great for adding to meals you may grab on the go. Pack snacks such as fresh apples, grapes, clementines, bananas, individual nut and raisin packets, trail mix, popcorn, carrots, chopped peppers and cucumbers, and energy bites.

4 Purchase satisfying snacks.

Choosing foods like beef jerky, cheese sticks, fruit and nut mixes is more satisfying and nutritious compared to chips or candy.

5 Choose calorie-free drinks.

There are plenty of drinks to choose from at the gas station or rest stop, but look for calorie-free/sugar-free beverages like flavored and sparkling water, unsweetened iced tea or iced coffee.

6 Move your body.

This may seem obvious, but when someone needs to make a pit-stop, regardless of whether you need to, get out of the car and move your body. Take breaks at least every two to three hours to take a short walk or do some stretching, lunges, squats or whatever gets you moving.

Take These Seven Healthy Tips on Your Summer Road Trip, Michael Precker, heart.org, June 10, 2022.

Seven Types of Rest **WE NEED**

Build in these forms of rest throughout your day to recharge fully.

1 / Physical Rest

Physical recovery can be passive (think: sleep, relaxing on the couch) and active (any activity or self-care practice that feels restorative). Both forms are important. We know the wonderful health benefits of sleep, and active rest can help us gain a mental well-being boost of movement without “overly stressing your system,” says Melissa Urban, co-founder and CEO of Whole30.

Try easy yoga; tai chi; walking; easy hiking; stretching; foam-rolling; casual swimming; massage therapy; acupuncture; cupping; a family bike ride, rollerblade or paddle; or going bowling or to the driving range.

2 / Mental Rest

Take a mental time-out to prevent “cerebral congestion.” Research shows many important mental processes, like willpower, attention, motivation, productivity, creativity and even making memories, require downtime during the day.

Try taking a “psychological sigh” to give your brain a break: take two short inhales through the nose followed by a long exhale through the mouth.

3 / Sensory Rest

Sensory overload isn’t just a concern for kids – science suggests adults need sensory rest or “periods where our eyes, ears and maybe even noses or body parts don’t have to work so hard to process incoming information,” says Urban.

Get outside (preferably in a quieter area); turn off household items that glow, beep or make alerts; wear headphones; simply close your eyes; or wear clothing that feels comfortable.

4 / Creative Rest

Take a break from daily creation, like drafting emails, planning a vacation, posting on social media, or calendaring your family’s activities and appointments, because it’s important for problem-solving and brainstorming.

Try spending time in nature to slow down, smell the flowers, and observe the sounds around you. Or try enjoying a creative hobby that isn’t for money and where you don’t measure your performance, like knitting or coloring.

5 / Emotional Rest

“Emotional rest allows you the time and space to check in with, process, and express your own feelings and needs,” says Urban. Restore your emotional piggy bank by identifying areas of dread, anxiety, avoidance or exhaustion and think about the boundaries you can set (using clear, kind language) to restore balance.

Some examples of boundaries include: “I won’t automatically say yes to anything this week,” or “I’ll build in a pause to check in with myself first.”

6 / Social Rest

“Even if your friend and family group is supportive, loving and kind, it’s still normal and healthy to take a break from spending time with others,” Urban reminds us.

Reinstate alone time: try waking up 15 minutes early to complete your morning routine uninterrupted, taking a walk by yourself, or staying home every Friday night to rest. Take a social media break: try taking off one day a week or logging out at 6 p.m. every night.

Conversely, connect with others to recharge socially: meet a friend for coffee, enjoy a walk with a loved one, or spend 15 meaningful minutes with your spouse.

7 / Soul Rest

We need soul care, or a break from “the pursuit and expression of meaning and purpose,” to “feel restored, reconnected and reaffirmed in ourselves and our place in the world.”

Try hiking, walking or simply admiring the beauty in the world; fast from tech, alcohol or sugar; or participate in a volunteer project.

*How to Truly Rest,” Melissa Urban, whole30.com, accessed May 2, 2023.