

CARTEN 100



DR. DAF's RAMBLINGS - NUTRITION FOR A LONG RIDE

EATING

It is advisable to have a high carbohydrate breakfast about one hour before a long ride. e.g. porridge, cereal, toast, jam, bagels, peanut butter.

To get the ride in context, you are likely to burn around 5000 calories in completing the ride. This is equivalent to two days worth of food for the normal human being. Your fuel tank will therefore need to be filled up regularly during the ride. If you started the ride and took in no water or food, I'd be surprised if you got to Port Talbot (30 miles in) in any condition to continue the ride.

Conventional wisdom states that you should take on board 40 grammes of carbohydrate every 30 minutes after the first hour of a ride. That's 160 calories of carbohydrate every half hour. That's equivalent to one and a half bananas or a cereal bar. "Little and often" is a good mantra for eating on the move. If you're feeling hungry on the bike, it is probably too late; your glycogen levels will be low, so a good rest and feed before setting off would be advisable. People carry bananas, fig rolls, jelly beans, cereal bars, sandwiches, flapjacks, in fact anything offering quick carbs that can be fitted in their rear pockets and/or saddlebag.

I am able to eat large meals and keep on cycling, and so my refuelling strategy is a fig roll or banana every 10 miles, a big breakfast in Port Talbot (30 miles in), a proper lunch in Carmarthenshire (approx. 60 miles in) and a snack at Red Roses (88 miles in). I also drink water with carbohydrate powder in it, so that each 750 ml bottle provides me with roughly 150 calories of carbs (as well as a few minerals which the body loses through sweat). There are many different approaches, some cyclists even revert to alcohol I'm told, in an attempt to gain quick carbs.....

The important thing is that you consider how you will refuel your engine, and that you are always carrying a little something that will get you that few miles to the next petrol station/shop/cafe/pub.

On arrival at Tenby, conventional wisdom states that you should have a high carb meal within an hour of arrival. Please remember lager is not a meal.

HYDRATION

With all this cycling and eating, you may forget to have a drink! Conventional wisdom states you should have 250-500 ml of fluid immediately before a ride, then approximately 250ml every half hour. That figure will be higher in hot temperatures.

I work on a rule of thumb for myself of 750ml (a large water bottle size) every 25 miles. For any ride over that distance, I carry two water bottles. If you have the facility to carry 2 water bottles on your bike, I suggest you do so. Camelbacks tend to be 1 litre or more, so should be fine. In both cases, please ensure you refill your bottles each time you stop, so you don't get caught out. As with the eating, if you feel thirsty, it is too late, and you are already dehydrated. If you are out of water, ease off and conserve your energy, filling up at the earliest opportunity. As this ride is largely busy roads through plenty of urban areas, there is usually an opportunity to fill up every few miles along the route.

As I mentioned earlier, I use carbohydrate powder (lemon and lime flavour) added to water, which tastes nice, and provides more energy than just plain water. People use whatever they like as fluid replacement – water, orange juice, squash, lucozade – anything that rehydrates the body that the stomach can deal with over a long day in the saddle.

A quick note of caution – It's not advisable to drink something "new" on an event like this. It's advisable to use a rehydration fluid you are used to. Stomach problems are common on rides this long and longer, and using say a carbohydrate powder that you haven't tried on a training ride could cause stomach problems. Please remember that despite lager tasting great on a long ride, it does in fact cause dehydration – I know, I can't understand that one either.....