



Breakfast of champions?

Cycle tourists, like armies, march on their stomachs. So what should you fuel up with? Nutritionist **Chris Fenn** assesses your options

If you want plenty of calories for breakfast the full fried option will provide around 1,000. For men, this is roughly a third of what you would need for a steady day of cycle touring. Women will need less. If you choose a fry up for breakfast, go easy for the rest of the day to avoid putting on weight.

The fried breakfast will keep you feeling full for longer. Fats are complex molecules and take several hours to digest. The grease-soaked fried bread will still be in your stomach four or five hours after breakfast, giving you that well-fed feeling, compared with carbohydrate foods such as cornflakes and orange juice.

However, too much of this type of artery-clogging saturated fat is not healthy. With a few adjustments, you can enjoy a more suitable version of the full English breakfast at your B&B. Ask for grilled tomatoes and poached eggs instead of fried. Raw mushrooms and white bread are like sponges: they soak up fat from the frying pan. So ditch the fried mushrooms, enjoy half a slice of fried bread, one sausage, and ask for more baked beans. The overall effect will be to reduce the total calories to around 700, bump up the carbohydrate content, and provide a healthier amount of fat – which will still keep hunger pangs at bay until lunchtime.

Captain oats

Many B&Bs offer a choice of sugary muesli or frosted cereals. These may seem a good option, but the high refined sugar content can send your blood sugar level rocketing and out of balance. The best cereal is porridge. It provides a fabulous mixture of fast and slow release carbohydrates, a good dose of B vitamins and a useful amount of fibre to keep your guts working well.

Although porridge is a wonderful food, if you can't face

the stuff – don't eat it. Life is too short to have to force down a bowl of cooked oats if it does not excite your soul and stomach. Food should add to the pleasures of cycling as well as supplying the right nutrients. An alternative to porridge would be a good quality, unsweetened muesli containing dried fruits, nuts and seeds.

A continental breakfast is not a good choice. It has too much poor quality fat, not enough bulk and is severely lacking in B vitamins.

Breakfasts broken down			
B&B full fry up	Fat (grams)	Carb (grams)	Total calories
Fried eggs (2)	16	trace	220
Bacon grilled (3 rashers)	15	trace	190
Sausages (2) grilled	18	15	250
Fried bread, 1 medium slice	12	35	180
1 fried tomato	8	4	100
Fried mushrooms	12	trace	110
Baked beans	1	15	100
Totals	82	69	1150
Scottish/carbo breakfast			
Porridge + milk and sugar	4	25	250
2 slices wholemeal toast	trace	30	150
Butter on each	12	trace	120
Jam/honey or marmalade	0	8	40
Fruit juice, 1 glass	0	15	80
Totals	16	78	640
Continental			
2 croissants	20	40	360
Marmalade/jam	0	8	40
Large milky coffee	3	7	120
Totals	23	55	520