KITCHEN ESSENTIALS

As an athlete, you are constantly on the move, which can be challenging when trying to meet your nutrition goals. Below is a list of food preparation and storage equipment that will be useful when preparing meals and snacks at home and when travelling. Although it can be tempting to buy cheap cooking equipment, investing in some higher quality items will save you some heartache and money in the long run.

EQUIPMENT

- **Slow cooker**: This is a huge timesaver when batch cooking or cooking tougher cuts of meat. It’s an essential piece of kitchen equipment for any athlete! See the slow cooker fact sheet for more information.
- **Pans**: in various sizes and a good non-stick frying pan: This will make washing up easier and usually means that you use less fat in cooking to stop food from sticking!
- **Sharp knives**: This will make food preparation much quicker. Keep knives sharp with a knife sharpener.
- **A good blender**: This can be used to make smoothies, soups and sauces. Cheap options are available but if you use a blender regularly it may be worth investing in one with a more powerful motor. Blenders with multiple cups or attachments are very useful.
- **Metal measuring cups**: Great when measuring portions of foods or fluids.
- **Chopping boards**: Buy at least two and keep one for raw meat and one for veg/salads.
- **Essential utensils**: can opener, vegetable peeler, grater, wooden spoon, spatula, colander and kitchen scissors.
- **Silicone muffin pan**: This can be used to make healthy muffins, egg breakfast muffins and freeze food in individual portions.

FOOD STORAGE

- **Plastic Containers**: Plastic containers in all different shapes and sizes are useful for freezing and carrying meals of different sizes. Invest in quality containers with great seals to avoid nasty leaks in your training bag.
- **Mason Jars**: Mason jars are the food storage equipment de jour. They are heavier than plastic so if you bike or walk to campus this may not be the best option for you. The jars are upright so make great containers for salads. By putting the dressing at the bottom of the jar, the rest of your salad remains dry so avoids getting soggy. When its time to eat, just shake it to mix the dressing and salad. Mason jars are also useful as they don’t stain as easily as plastic, and tend to retain less of the smell of strong smelling foods.
- **Bento box**: Bento boxes are a great way to keep foods from mixing until you are ready to eat them. They can also be useful to help manage portion sizes if that is part of your nutrition plan.
- **Freezer bags and food storage bags**: These are excellent for food storage especially when you batch cook and want to freeze individual portions of a meal and eat at a later date. Write the date of freezing (and what food it is!) on the outside of the bag. Frozen meals can be kept for approximately 6 months.
- **Thermos**: A well-insulated thermos can keep drinks, pastas, soups, stews and chilli’s hot for hours.
FOOD SAFETY

There are numerous things to be aware of when it comes to preparing food like washing utensils, hand washing, and not contaminating chopping boards with raw meat. It is important to pack foods and minimize bacterial growth to reduce the risk of food poisoning. Did you know that it only takes 20 minutes room temperature for bacteria to double in number? After 2 hours, bacteria have multiplied to such a high number that the food is no longer considered safe to eat.

- If you don’t have access to a fridge to store your food on campus, it’s important to keep your lunch box or bag cool by some other means. Invest in mini freezer packs, insulated lunch bags or freeze a water bottle to keep high-risk foods cool (e.g. meat, eggs, cheese or yogurt).
- Reheat any food, which has been at room temperature thoroughly until it is piping hot and heated all the way through. Throw out any leftovers.

** See nutrition plans for more packable food ideas **