

## **Eating and Drinking for your Music Enjoyment**

(Written for the Telluride Bluegrass Festival)

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Wahoo! There is nothing like four days in the sun (hoping the weather prediction holds true), eating and drinking to your heart's content while listening and dancing to fun-filled music. Add in the high altitude factor and you may be courting protests from your body. Here are some helpful hints to enhance your enjoyment and provide Festivarian stamina.

Let the words Blood Sugar and Hydration be your mantra. Tending to both will keep you going strong.

Festival or no festival, keeping your blood sugar on an even keel throughout the day is an essential move. When your blood sugar is stable, your energy is consistent, your moods are even and your sleep more sound. You've heard of being in "the zone"? That is the blood sugar place where you are tolerant, kind, patient, awake and focused. If you are irritable, unable to focus, often drowsy and experience insomnia – your blood sugar is likely out of whack.

How to balance your blood sugar? By eating meals and snacks throughout the day that are balanced in protein, fat and carbohydrate. All three play important roles in your energy maintenance.

Breakfast sets the tone for the whole day. With a coffee and bagel start, you are in for a rollercoaster ride of a day. Carbohydrate and caffeine meals go down very easily but cause your blood sugar to spike. Although this can feel really good, what goes up must come down. When your blood sugar then drops within a couple of hours, you can be impatient, jittery, wanting to eat everything in sight and not able to focus on the band. Choose eggs or put lox on that bagel to start your day.

Opt for well balanced snacks. Pretzels and beer equals carbohydrate, with more of the same results as above. Nuts, fruit, cheese and crackers along with any alcohol consumed alternated with water will keep you on a better balanced course. If you load up on carbs, make sure your next meal choice is a protein one.

Dinner? Enjoy all the wonderful food Telluride has to offer. Just remember to make your selections balanced ones. Eat and drink in moderation so that you can sleep well, waking refreshed and ready for another day of music and dance. Large, late meals cause fitful sleep as the body is busy digesting instead of doing festival recovery. Alcohol tends to wake you up during the night, usually between the hours of 1-3 a.m. and hangovers are just no fun.

To keep hydrated, drink plenty of pure water. The rule of thumb: drink one half ounce of water for every pound of body weight. For example, if you weigh 140, you must drink 70 ounces or 8 - 9 glasses of water per day. That is a minimum.

The quantity must be increased with high altitude, sweating in the sun, dancing to bluegrass bands and drinking alcohol.

Coffee, tea and alcohol are diuretics, pulling water from your body's stores and leading to further dehydration. Not a good thing in high altitudes. For every cup or glass of one of those beverages, replace them at least one for one in your consumption of water.

Alcohol is also absorbed directly into the bloodstream from the stomach, which is great for an immediate rush, but will spike your blood sugar and blood alcohol content. These consequences can be detrimental to long days in the sun. To have food in your stomach before you drink any alcohol will serve to slow down its absorption, wreaking less havoc to your blood sugar, your energy and your focus.

It is now clearly understood through research that the vibration of music affects every cell of your body, as does your food, your drink, your thoughts and your feelings. Don't let the health benefits resounding through your bodies of this weekend's wonderful music and good fun be disrupted by poor choices of food and drink. Make it a win-win for your health. Have a great weekend!