



# The Benefit of Oats for Breakfast for the Student Athlete

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## What Are Overnight Oats?

Overnight oats are an easy, no-cook way to prepare oatmeal. Rather than warming the oats on the stovetop or in the microwave, you simply soak them in cold milk overnight, and let your tastebuds reap the rewards when the morning comes!

*March is a big month for celebrating nutrition. Not only is it National Nutrition Month®, it's also when we celebrate National School Breakfast Week!*

*With March Madness around the corner as well, there is no better way to kick off your mornings than with some delicious delights! Join us in celebrating National School Breakfast Week along with National Nutrition Month® with an oat-load of my favorite morning meal, overnight oats!*

## Are Overnight Oats a Good Option for Student Athletes?

Absolutely, yes! Overnight oats are not only effortless to prepare, but it is a high-quality breakfast with a combination of complex carbohydrates and powerful protein that athletes need to succeed both academically and on the field. Let's dive into some tasty facts. Oats are a great source of whole grains and provide approximately 4 grams of fiber per ½ cup serving (dry.) And, while a serving of dry oats alone only provides about 4 grams of protein, here is a little secret. Soaking your overnights oats in one cup of protein-rich cow's milk adds an additional 8 grams of protein. You can increase the protein content even more by stirring in some Greek yogurt. With these hacks and information, "gymstagram" stories are bound to take off!

## How do you Boost the Nutrient Content in Overnight Oats?

Get creative with overnight oats and add in flavorful ideas and protein powerhouse ingredients. Dry oats and milk are the two main ingredients, while Greek yogurt is also key for those who want higher protein, but it doesn't stop there. This is where you can boost the nutrient content of your oats by stirring in fruits, nut butters, seeds, spices, and other ingredients. Here are some of my favorite, nutritious choices:

- Milk: Provides high-quality protein to help build and repair muscle tissue and strengthen the immune system. It is also an excellent source of calcium and vitamin D.
- Greek yogurt: Not only is it made with milk, providing a high-quality protein source, but it also contains live and active cultures that support gut health.



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- **Rolled oats:** These whole-grain, complex carbohydrates are full of soluble fiber, which supports heart health and digestion. They also contain thiamin, phosphorus, and magnesium.
- **Chia seeds:** They contain omega-3 fatty acids, fiber, and protein, along with vitamins and minerals such as calcium, phosphorus, and zinc. They absorb moisture and help make overnight oats thicker and creamier.
- **Fruit:** Absolutely refreshing and of course, filled with antioxidants, vitamins, and minerals! Select fresh or frozen fruits of your choice. Be sure to defrost all the frozen fruits and top your oats with fruit before serving.
- **Nut butter:** Almond butter and peanut butter provide a healthy source of fat and make these oats creamier. Pick your favorite!

## Classic Overnight Oats

### Ingredients

- 1/2 cup milk
- 1/2 cup Greek yogurt
- 1/2 cup rolled oats
- 1 teaspoon chia seeds or flax seeds
- 1/2 cup fruit (bananas, blueberries, strawberries, or apples)
- 1 tablespoon nut butter (peanut butter or almond butter)

### Optional Ingredients

- 1 teaspoon cinnamon and nutmeg (for a pumpkin spice flavor)
- 1/4 cup walnuts, almonds, pecans
- 1/4 cup dried fruits (cranberries, dates, raisins), optional in lieu of fresh fruit
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract or almond extract
- Drizzle of maple syrup or honey

### Instructions

Stir all ingredients together in a small jar or bowl. Cover and leave in the refrigerator overnight. For a thicker consistency, use less liquid; for a thinner consistency, use more milk. When breakfast time rolls around, serve the oats cold or heat them up in the microwave.

Note: Overnight oats will last in the refrigerator for up to five days. Stir them up and enjoy!

*In honor of this year's National Nutrition Month® theme, Celebrate a World of Flavors, try one of these overnight oat recipes, which are filled with flavors from around the globe.*

## Savory Turmeric Overnight Oats

### Ingredients

- 1/2 cup oats
- 1/4 cup milk
- 1/2 cup plain Greek yogurt
- 1/2 teaspoon turmeric powder
- 1 tablespoon minced green onions
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- 1/8 teaspoon ground black pepper
- Pinch of salt
- 1 tablespoon chopped pistachios

### Instructions

Stir all ingredients together in a small jar or bowl. Cover and leave in the refrigerator overnight. Stir before eating.

## Coconut Curry Cashew Overnight Oats

### Ingredients

- 1/2 cup oats
- 1/4 cup milk
- 1/2 cup coconut-flavored Greek yogurt
- 1/2 teaspoon curry powder
- Pinch of salt
- 1 tablespoon cashews, chopped
- 1 tablespoon unsweetened shredded coconut

### Instructions

Stir all ingredients together in a small jar or bowl. Cover and leave in the refrigerator overnight. Stir before eating.



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