

# THE BEST SNACKS FOR YOUR BODY



**Between-meal bites should do more than just tide you over. These inspired ideas will bring you extra nutrients and bonus energy.**

Even if you eat healthy meals, you can't always pack in all the vitamins, minerals, fats, protein and produce that your body needs every day. Which is why your snacks (almost a quarter of your daily calories, FYI) have to work harder and fill in any nutritional holes. You should aim to eat every three to five hours, says Stephanie Middleberg, R.D.N., the founder of Middleberg Nutrition in New York City. "Noshing more

often than that means you're not really hungry or that your last meal wasn't big enough. And if you wait too long, you'll be ravenous."

If you need a snack between breakfast and lunch, keep it at 100 to 150 calories. To bridge the much longer gap between lunch and dinner, which for many people is six hours or more, aim for 150 to 250 calories. And whenever you snack on fruits or vegetables, add

some protein and a little healthy fat to keep you satiated and help you eat less later on.

Here are a few tasty nibbles to break you out of your carrots-and-hummus rut when you feel the urge for a snack coming on.



## Upgrade your cheese and crackers.

Top a fiber-rich oatcake with ricotta, red grapes and a sprinkle of flaked sea salt, suggests Elizabeth Stein, the founder and CEO of Purely Elizabeth, a whole-foods company.

## Make Japanese avocado “toast.”

Top squares of nori with sliced avocado and a sprinkle of sesame seeds for a savory snack that’s chewy, creamy and crunchy, says Middleberg. Seaweed is rich in vitamins and minerals, and avocado is full of healthy fat.

## Savory yogurt makes a great snack.

Yogurt is delicious as a tart and creamy base for vegetables, says Cheryl Sternman Rule, the author of *Yogurt Culture*. Mix a pinch of sea salt into six ounces of plain yogurt and top with thinly sliced radishes and cucumbers. Drizzle with olive oil, sprinkle with chopped dill and finish with a pinch more of sea salt.

## Make sweet and savory celery sticks.

Healthy-lifestyle gurus Jasmine and Melissa Hemsley, the co-authors of *Good + Simple*, give the childhood favorite “ants on a log” a grown-up makeover. Fill celery sticks with tahini and dot them with dried cranberries

(or swap in raisins, goji berries or chopped dried apricots) for a crunchy treat with a nutty-sweet taste that’s high in protein, fiber and calcium.

## Whip up Italian guacamole.

Give your guac a dose of energizing magnesium with this Mediterranean twist from Allison Day, the Yummy Beet healthy-food blogger: Mash avocado with chopped sun-dried tomatoes and basil. Use pita chips or sliced cucumber for dipping.

## Give dates a cheesy makeover.

With their intense sweetness and hearty chewiness, just a few Medjool dates can satisfy a sugar craving. Amp up their flavor by stuffing them with a salty cheese like chèvre or feta, Middleberg suggests.

## Bake up a crunchy chickpea snack.

Roast a batch of chickpeas on the weekend and all week long you’ll have a crunchy, nutty, addictive snack that’s high in fiber and protein. This recipe from chef and author Ariane Resnick is customizable: Drizzle 2 cups drained chickpeas with 1 to 2 tablespoons vegetable or algae oil, and sprinkle with seasonings to taste. (For a tropical flavor, try ground ginger, coconut sugar and orange zest; for a ranch flavor,

use garlic powder, dried dill, salt and pepper.) Spread on a rimmed baking sheet and roast at 375°F for about 20 minutes, stirring once or twice.

## Get a boost from mango-chia pudding.

Chia is perfect post-gym, says chef Julie Morris, the author of *Superfood Snacks*. In a blender, process the flesh of 2 mangoes, 1/2 cup light coconut milk and 1 tablespoon agave syrup until smooth. Add more agave to taste and 3 tablespoons of chia seeds; pulse to incorporate. Pour into two small bowls. Refrigerate for at least 30 minutes and up to a week. Enjoy topped with coconut.

## Enjoy pumpkin-pie nut-butter dip.

Blend 1/2 cup nut butter with 1 cup pumpkin puree and 1 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice. Enjoy the dip with chopped vegetables. Low-cal pumpkin adds a potent dose of vitamin A, which helps keep skin, teeth and muscles healthy.

