



Is it really possible for a serious athlete (let alone your average gym goer) to perform her best without eating any meat? Mary Whipple and Dotsie Bausch often get asked this question; the two Olympic hopefuls are top contenders to represent the United States in the 2012 summer games starting in July. Pausing in their training to compete for spots on Team USA, they tell us how they fuel their bodies on veg diets.

EATING TO Veg athletes vie for Olympic gold **WIN**

Mary Whipple CHAMPION COXSWAIN

Mary Whipple was born a vegetarian. Her family's meat-free diet heeds the call of their Seventh Day Adventist faith to live healthfully. The 32-year-old Californian believes that eating veg gives her an edge as a coxswain: "It helps me stay lean," says the two-time Olympian, who earned a gold medal in 2008 and silver in 2004. "Unlike some other coxswains, I've never had to cut back or skip meals to manage my weight."

Whipple's job of steering the boat and seeing to it the race plan is followed doesn't require brute strength or lung power—aside from shouting commands and encouragement to her rowing team. Yet "Whip" (as she's known by her crew) trains up to six hours a day and joins the team for running and weight-lifting sessions when she's not on the water. To make sure Whipple's body is properly replenished, a nutritionist at the Olympic Training Center keeps tabs on her diet. "I've never been protein deficient," Whipple says.

Eating for maximum performance means lots of complex carbohydrates for Whipple, whose favorite pre-workout fare is oatmeal with sliced almonds, bananas, and raisins. "You want some-

OLYMPIC-CALIBER SNACKS

Dotsie Bausch's pre-workout nosh

"POWER" TOAST

Toast 1 slice of seeded whole-grain bread; top with avocado, sliced tomato, chia seeds, and a dash of chili powder. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Mary Whipple's post-workout pick-me-up

GREEN SMOOTHIE

Blend together $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 cup shredded kale leaves (stems removed), 1 to 2 tablespoons ground flaxseeds, $\frac{1}{2}$ frozen sliced banana, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup frozen strawberries, and $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ cup milk.

thing filling enough to get you through the workout but not a gut bomb that will slow you down," she explains. After a sweat session, she opts for a green salad topped with garbanzo or kidney beans and cheese, or a snack such as apples and Brie, Greek yogurt with blueberries and almonds, or a smoothie made with kale (see recipe, above).

Despite her proven record, Whipple won't be resting on her laurels in the upcoming games. "My experiences in Athens and Beijing taught me that there isn't a foolproof recipe in making a successful team," she says. "If you try to re-create what you did last time around, you close yourself off to what you could become."

Dotsie Bausch TRACKCYCLIST

Two years ago, a volunteer job at an animal shelter proved life-changing for Dotsie Bausch. Working with strays, some abused, prompted the Kentucky native to investigate what animals endure before ending up on a plate. "My number-one concern is animal cruelty," says the seven-time U.S. national champion bike racer. "It makes no sense to me that anything would have to undergo one second of suffering so that I could enjoy it."

At age 39, Bausch may be 10 years older than most of her competitors, but keeping up isn't a problem. "Eating



Track the progress of Mary Whipple and Dotsie Bausch, along with the achievements of their fellow U.S. Olympic hopefuls, at teamusa.org.

MITCHELL HAASETH

plant-based makes me feel stronger and more resilient than any meat diet ever did," she says. "Because my food digests more quickly, I have more energy for my training. My body is always able to function at its peak because my digestive system isn't working overtime."

Bausch considers whole grains, including wild rice, quinoa, barley, and millet, her "powerhouse foods": she eats them at almost every meal in tandem with fats from plant sources, such as almond butter and avocado, for staying power. Before working out, she snacks on cooked yam drizzled with olive oil and sprinkled with curry powder, or her "power" toast (see recipe, above).

Healthful eating hasn't always come easily for the former model, who battled a near-fatal eating disorder in her 20s. It was during her recovery that she got hooked on cycling—and within a few years, she'd pedaled her way to a place on the U.S. national team. In 2007, Bausch decided to give track cycling (racing on a specially designed track called a velodrome) a try, and captured two national titles the very same year.

Her answer for anyone who doubts her ability to go the distance on a plant-based diet? "I tell them to try not eating meat for two weeks, then come and tell me that they aren't recovering faster, sleeping better, and feeling more energetic than they ever have," she says. 🍋