

Whether you're fueling up at home or on the run, the rich and filling taste of these hard-shelled fruits of nature can give you just the energy you need.

BY NICKI MILLER AND JUSTIN MCCHESENEY-WACHS



NUT BUTTER POWER!



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Runners have long-fueled with peanut butter—but in the past few years, other nut butters have angled for the spotlight on our sandwiches and spoons. From almond to pistachio, any nut can be ground into a creamy or crunchy paste, so how do you choose? Here are our top picks for which nuts runners should go for. The recipes taste just as good if you buy the butters pre-made (and we included our favorite brands), but homemade mixes are usually more economical and often more natural too!

Peanuts

The most common nut butter is a staple in many pantries, but most runners don't realize just how healthy it is. Peanuts (officially legumes) are high in the complex B-vitamin biotin, which helps regulate blood sugar, as well as manganese, which is good for bones. Peanuts contain a number of antioxidants (including red wine's resveratrol), which means these legumes are effective for fighting off cancer.

DIY TIP

If you like the taste of Skippy add a spoonful of sweetener to your mix. Get creative and try local honey, real maple syrup, brown sugar or coconut sugar.

FOR A BLUEPRINT RECIPE ON HOW TO MAKE ANY NUT BUTTER, TURN TO PAGE 67.

Peanut Soup

Inspired by African and Asian dishes, this version is simple to make but will still impress. (Just make sure no one has a nut allergy, since the nuts are not immediately apparent!)

Serves 6-8

- 1 Tbsp. canola oil
- 1 medium onion, diced
- ½ fennel bulb, diced
- 3 carrots, diced
- 1 red bell pepper, seeded and diced
- 14.5 oz. can diced tomatoes
- 2 cups water
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Pinch of cayenne (or more to taste)
- 2 cups broth
- 1 cup peanut butter
- Juice of 1 lime
- Lime zest
- 3 scallions, chopped

Heat oil in soup pot over medium heat. Sauté onions, fennel and carrots till onions are translucent, about 5 minutes. Add red pepper and sauté another 5 minutes. Add tomatoes, water, salt, pepper and cayenne, and cook for 20-30 minutes, or until carrots are soft. In a small saucepan, heat broth to boiling. Turn off heat and whisk in peanut butter; pour this into a blender and add about half of the cooked soup. Blend until smooth, and pour back into soup pot. Stir to combine and add lime juice. Garnish each serving with lime zest and scallions.

Pecans

This is one of the commercial nut butters that's much more difficult to find. Good thing you can make your own (see page 67). The antioxidant levels in pecans are especially high and they also deliver a good dose of magnesium, which studies have shown reduces inflammation in the arteries and can help arthritis.

DIY TIP

Chocolate and nut butters are a combo you may not be able to resist. Try adding cacao nibs to your recipe for a little cocoa crunch.

Gluten-Free Pecan Bites

These are such easy cookies to make, and they are so quick, you can toss them together for guests at the last minute. The first three ingredients are staples (though you can use a different nut butter or make it egg-free) and you can get creative with your own add-ins.

Makes about 18 cookies

- 1 cup pecan butter
- 1 cup coconut sugar (or sugar), plus more for rolling
- 1 egg
- 1 Tbsp. ground chia seeds
- 1 Tbsp. ground flaxseed

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper and set aside. Mix ingredients together in a bowl or with a food processor. Put extra sugar in a small bowl. Roll a small ball of cookie dough in extra sugar with your hands or spoons, and place on baking sheet. Allow room between cookies for them to spread out while baking. Bake for 10-12 minutes. Allow to cool for 1 minute before transferring to a cooling rack.

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Artisana Organics Pecan Butter Squeeze Packs (\$2, artisanaorganics.com)



Essentially Coconut Honey Pecan (\$12, essentiallycoconut.com)



Bobo's Oat Bars Gluten Free Maple Pecan (\$3, bobos oatbars.com)

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Bliss Nut-Butters Cinnamon Chia Seed Peanut Butter (\$7, blissnutbutters.com)



Wild Friends Chocolate Coconut Peanut Butter (\$1.10 for 1.15 oz., wildfriendsfoods.com)



Larabar Peanut Butter Cookie (\$1.80, larabar.com)

Almonds

Almond butter is available in most grocery stores, often right alongside peanut butter. Almonds are great for runners, since they are particularly high in vitamin E, an antioxidant that protects against toxins, and they deliver a punch of potassium, which encourages muscle recovery.

DIY IDEA
Adding sea salt to homemade nut butter gives it a little extra zing. Start with less than you think you need and add to taste.



Romesco Sauce

This Spanish sauce is a great dip with crusty bread or works well with grilled meat or veggies.

Serves 6-8

- 1 large tomato, quartered
- 1 large roasted red pepper
- ½ cup almond butter
- 1 slice crusty bread, toasted and cut up
- 2 garlic cloves, smashed
- 2 Tbsp. red wine vinegar
- ½ tsp. smoked paprika
- 1 tsp. kosher salt, or more to taste
- 2 Tbsp. Italian parsley, chopped
- ¼ cup olive oil

Pulse all ingredients, except the olive oil, in a food processor until smooth. Continue to pulse and slowly add the olive oil until combined. Serve room temp, or you can heat it up.

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Barney Butter Almond Butter Crunchy
(\$1 for 0.6 oz., barneybutter.com)



Justin's Maple Almond Butter
(\$12, justins.com)



Perfect Bar Almond Acai Lite
(\$3, perfectbar.com)

Pistachios

These nuts are a good fuel for athletes, thanks to their combo of protein and high potassium—both great for muscles. Pistachios are also linked to healthy cholesterol levels, immune systems, skin and eyes. There aren't many products that include pistachios, but now that you can buy shelled pistachios more easily (thank you, Costco), you can make your own.

Pistachio Sorbet

No ice cream maker required for this delicious sorbet that tastes as creamy as gelato. You'll need a powerful blender and a tamper to mash down the ingredients. If you want to start this recipe with pistachios, you can make the nut butter and then add the other ingredients. (We used 1½ cups roasted and salted pistachios.)

Serves 6

- 1 14-oz. can low-fat coconut milk, frozen into ice cubes
- 1 cup pistachio butter
- ¼-½ cup honey (depending on how sweet you want it)
- 1 tsp. salt (if nut butter is unsalted)
- Chopped pistachios for topping

Place coconut milk, pistachio butter, honey and salt (if needed) in a high-speed blender. Use the tamper to push everything down and blend on high until smooth, about 2 minutes. Transfer to chilled serving bowls and garnish with chopped nuts, or place in freezer for a firmer frozen treat.

DIY IDEA
Get fruity with dried cranberries, tart cherries, blueberries, goji berries or coconut. If you're using larger dried fruits, chop them up before you press the power button.



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Wilderness Poets Raw Pistachio Butter Snackers
(\$17 for 4-pack, wildernesspoets.com)



Sky Island Organics Pistachios Alive!
(\$24, skyislandorganics.com)



Mediterra Yogurt & Oat Bar With Apricot & Pistachio
(\$2, mediterranutrition.com)

Walnuts

Walnuts are rich in omega-3 fatty acids, which help with inflammation and even prevent the breakdown of bone. This richly flavored nut means a little can go a long way, and its hearty taste is perfect for when temperatures are cooling down.

Kale-Walnut Pesto

This nutritious pesto works as well with hot pasta as it does on bruschetta. You can also use this as a spread on sandwiches or atop chicken or pork.

Makes about 2 cups

- 1 bunch Lacinato (dino) kale, stems removed
- ¼ cup walnut butter
- 1 garlic clove, smashed
- ¼ cup Parmesan cheese, grated
- Zest of one lemon
- Juice of one lemon
- ¾ cup olive oil
- Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

Blanch kale in a large pot of boiling water for 1 minute. Drain and place kale in a bowl of ice water to stop the cooking and preserve the color. Remove from the ice water and squeeze out the excess water. Process all ingredients in a food processor until your desired smoothness is reached. Adjust seasoning, lemon juice, Parmesan and olive oil to your taste and desired consistency.

DIY TIP

Turn to your spice rack for this butter, and consider adding cinnamon, nutmeg, allspice, ground cloves, ginger and even cardamom for a chai tea flavor.

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Blind Spot Nut Butters Squirrelly Tail (\$11, blindspotnutbutters.com)



Bogg's Trail Butter Mountaineer Maple (\$5 for 4.5 oz. pouch, trailbutter.com)



Earnest Eats Apple Ginger Energy Bar (\$21 for 12 bars, earnesteats.com)

Cashews

The delicate flavor of cashews makes a tasty versatile nut butter that you don't want to overpower with other ingredients. Cashews have less fat than most other nuts and most of that fat is the heart-healthy kind found in olive oil. They are also high in copper, which aids your body in using iron and is good for the development of both bone and connective tissue.

DIY TIP

Up the nutrition quotient—and texture—of your spread, and toss in some chia seeds or flaxseed.

Nutsy Sauce

This Asian-style sauce is quite versatile. Use it as a dipping sauce for potstickers or veggies, toss with some noodles or whisk in some water (or extra oil and vinegar) to thin it out and use as a salad dressing.

Makes about 1 cup

- ½ cup cashew butter
- 3 Tbsp. olive oil
- 2 Tbsp. rice vinegar
- 1 Tbsp. soy sauce
- Juice of 1 lime
- ½ tsp. red pepper flakes
- ¼ tsp. kosher salt
- ½ tsp. pepper
- 2-3 Tbsp. water

Whisk all ingredients except water in a small bowl. Add water at the end to thin the sauce if it's too thick.

DIY Nut Butter

You can make just about any nut butter if you have a powerful blender (like a Vitamix) and 10 minutes to spare. Food processors work too, but you may get a slightly courser consistency.

Makes about 2 cups

- 2½ cups nuts (raw, salted, sprouted or roasted—see which you like best!)
- 2 Tbsp. oil, optional (if you want a smoother consistency)
- Honey, maple syrup, brown sugar or coconut sugar, to taste, optional

Put everything in your choice of machine and blend until smooth. Push the tamper down if using a blender, and stop a few times to scrape the sides if you have a food processor. Butter will keep for up to 2 weeks in the fridge in an airtight container. Enjoy!



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Crazy Richard's Cashew Butter (\$9-\$10, crazyrichards.com)

Probar Bite Chocolate Cherry Cashew (\$2, theprobar.com)



NuttZo 2go Power Fuel (\$1.40 for 0.5 oz., nuttzo.com)