

MINI GUIDE

Fuel Like a *Girl*

The Formula

There is no one meal plan for a female athlete, because you are not the same athlete every day. Your body moves through **four seasons every month**, and your training changes every day. So instead of a rigid plan, here is a formula you can run for the rest of your life. This is **fueling, never dieting**. On your hardest days you eat the most, not the least. When in doubt, the answer is always more.

The formula, in three steps

1 Know your season

Check in with your body and your symptoms to find your phase: winter (your period), spring (follicular), summer (ovulation), or autumn (luteal). Each asks for slightly different fuel.

2 Know your load

Is today a rest or easy day, a moderate day, or a hard training day or game? The harder the day, the more carbohydrate and fluid you need around it.

3 Build your plate

Start from the base plate below, dial the carbs up or down for your load, then layer your season's priorities on top.

Your base plate, every day

- **A palm of protein** (eggs, chicken, fish, beef, tofu, yogurt, beans), two palms on your hardest days.
- **A cupped hand of whole-food carbs** (rice, potato, oats, fruit, sourdough), two to three around hard training or games.
- **Half the plate plants and color**, for the vitamins, minerals, and fiber.
- **A thumb of healthy fat** (olive oil, avocado, nuts, seeds).
- **Water with a pinch of quality salt or minerals**, more on sweaty days.

The whole formula: your base plate, dialed to today's training load, with your season's priorities on top. Learn it once and you will never need an app to tell you what to eat.

Dial it to your load

Rest or easy day	The base plate, carbs on the lower end.
Moderate day	The base plate plus extra carbs around your session.
Hard day or game	Eat by the clock. Carbs 2 to 3 hours before, carbs plus protein within an hour or two after, and more fluid and salt all day.

Then add your season

Winter

MENSTRUAL · YOUR PERIOD

Iron plus vitamin C, and magnesium for cramps. Warm, easy-to-digest meals. Do not cut carbs because you feel bloated, that is water, not food.

Spring

FOLLICULAR · THE RISE

Carbs around your hard training, protein at every meal, gut-friendly and cruciferous foods, and healthy fats to build hormones.

Summer

OVULATION · THE PEAK

Appetite can dip, so eat on schedule, especially before a game. Fiber, hydration, and salt. Carbs before, protein after.

Autumn

LUTEAL · THE WIND DOWN

Eat MORE, your body is burning more. Complex carbs, magnesium and B6, protein at every meal, and extra fluid and sodium.

The red flag that matters: a period that is often late, very irregular, or missing is your body asking for MORE food and rest, never less. It is a warning light, not a badge. Talk to a parent and a doctor. Getting your cycle back is a sign of strength.