



MAS EDGE

Science-Based Supplements for Runners

— FUEL YOUR IRON STORES

IRON-RICH RECIPES FOR RUNNERS

24 iron-boosting meals to build your stores, sharpen recovery, and keep you training at full strength.

24

Iron-rich
recipes

4–11mg

Iron per
serving

18%

Avg daily
value

- ✓ Iron content + % DV on every recipe
- ✓ Runner-specific timing and absorption advice
- ✓ Heme & non-heme sources for maximum uptake
- ✓ Free interactive grocery planner included










masedge.com

Every recipe includes iron per serving, % daily value, a runner's performance tip, and an absorption note to help you get the most from every meal.








● BREAKFAST

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● LUNCH

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**Also Included: Iron Absorption Cheat Sheet & Interactive Meal Planner**Cheat sheet on p. 34. Download your free interactive grocery planner at masedge.com

Why Iron Matters for Runners

The nutrient most endurance athletes aren't getting enough of

Iron is the engine behind your aerobic performance. Without enough of it, your body can't deliver oxygen to working muscles efficiently — and no amount of training will fix that.

56%

of female endurance athletes are iron deficient

35%

of male distance runners show low ferritin levels

70%

more iron needed by runners vs sedentary adults

Iron powers hemoglobin (oxygen transport in blood), myoglobin (oxygen storage in muscle), and the mitochondrial enzymes that generate ATP during aerobic work. Low iron degrades all three — before your hemoglobin even drops enough to flag as "anemic."

WHY RUNNERS LOSE MORE IRON THAN MOST

Foot-strike hemolysis — the mechanical destruction of red blood cells from repetitive impact — is unique to runners. Add GI bleeding from heavy training loads, iron lost in sweat, and post-exercise signals that suppress absorption, and it becomes clear why runners need to be deliberate about dietary iron in a way sedentary people simply don't.

SIGNS OF DEFICIENCY

- Unusual fatigue and heavy legs
- Elevated heart rate at easy paces
- Slower-than-expected race times
- Brain fog and poor focus
- Frequent illness and slow recovery

BENEFITS OF OPTIMAL IRON

- Higher VO₂max and aerobic ceiling
- Better lactate clearance
- Faster recovery between sessions
- Stronger immune function
- Sharper mental focus on long runs

Key insight: Low ferritin hurts performance even when hemoglobin is still technically normal. Most sports medicine physicians recommend endurance athletes maintain ferritin above 35–50 ng/mL — well above the clinical deficiency cutoff of 12 ng/mL.

Iron Sources & Absorption

What to eat — and when — for maximum iron uptake

HEME IRON

15–35% absorbed

Found only in animal products. Absorbed directly — not affected by other foods in your meal.

Chicken liver	11mg/3oz
Beef & lamb	2–3mg/3oz
Mussels & clams	6–9mg/3oz
Salmon & sardines	1–2mg/3oz
Turkey & chicken	1–2mg/3oz

NON-HEME IRON

2–20% absorbed

Found in plants, legumes, and fortified foods. Absorption varies based on what you eat with it.

Lentils & chickpeas	3–6mg/½ cup
Spinach (cooked)	3.2mg/cup
Blackstrap molasses	3.6mg/tbsp
Pumpkin seeds	4.2mg/oz
Dark chocolate 70%+	3mg/oz

ABSORPTION: WHAT HELPS & WHAT HURTS

ENHANCES ABSORPTION

- ↑ Vitamin C — can triple non-heme uptake
- ↑ Combining heme + non-heme in the same meal
- ↑ Cooking in cast iron, especially acidic foods
- ↑ Fermented foods (improve gut environment)

INHIBITS ABSORPTION

- ↓ Coffee and tea — 60–80% reduction
- ↓ Calcium supplements taken with iron meals
- ↓ High-phytate foods (bran, unsoaked legumes)
- ↓ Hard exercise immediately after eating

TIMING TIPS FOR RUNNERS

PRE-RUN

Eat iron-rich foods 2–3 hrs before; avoid calcium & coffee

POST-RUN

Pair iron with vitamin C within 30–60 min of finishing

DAILY HABIT

Delay morning coffee 1 hour after an iron-rich breakfast

BREAKFAST

Iron-rich breakfast recipes built for runners. Every meal includes iron per serving and absorption tips.



BREAKFAST

Iron-rich breakfast recipes built for runners. Every meal includes iron per serving and absorption tips.

SERVINGS
2PREP + COOK
10 minIRON / SERVING
3.8 mgDAILY VALUE
21%

Spinach and Mushroom Scrambled Eggs

A 10-minute iron hit to start your training day right.

• Heme + Non-Heme Iron

INGREDIENTS

- 4 large eggs
- 2 cups baby spinach
- 1 cup cremini mushrooms, sliced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tbsp milk or water
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 2 slices whole grain toast
- Fresh chives or parsley for garnish

DIRECTIONS

- 1 Heat olive oil in a nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add mushrooms in a single layer and cook 3–4 minutes without stirring until golden. Add garlic and cook 30 seconds.
- 2 Add spinach and stir until wilted, about 1 minute. Season lightly with salt and pepper.
- 3 Whisk eggs with milk, salt, and pepper. Reduce heat to medium-low and pour eggs into the pan. Fold gently with a spatula every few seconds until just set — slightly underdone is perfect.
- 4 Serve immediately over whole grain toast. Garnish with fresh chives or parsley.

RUNNER'S TIP

Mushrooms are a stealth iron source — one cup of cooked cremini mushrooms has about 1.4 mg. Combined with the eggs (1.2 mg each) and spinach, this quick breakfast stacks iron from multiple sources. Cook mushrooms first and get them golden — wet mushrooms won't develop flavor.

ABSORPTION TIP

Have a glass of orange juice alongside this. The vitamin C sharply increases absorption of the non-heme iron in spinach and mushrooms. Skip the coffee for 30–45 minutes after eating.

SERVINGS
2PREP + COOK
10 minIRON / SERVING
5.2 mgDAILY VALUE
29%

Black Bean Breakfast Burrito with Eggs and Salsa

Everything your body needs before a morning run, wrapped up.

• Heme + Non-Heme Iron

INGREDIENTS

- 1 can (15 oz) black beans, drained and rinsed
- 4 large eggs
- 1 cup baby spinach
- 2 large whole wheat tortillas
- 1/4 cup salsa (jarred is fine)
- 1/2 avocado, sliced
- 2 tbsp shredded cheese (optional)
- 1/2 tsp cumin
- 1 tsp olive oil
- Hot sauce to taste

DIRECTIONS

- 1 Warm black beans in a small pan with cumin and a pinch of salt over medium heat, 2–3 minutes. Mash lightly with a fork so they hold together in the burrito.
- 2 In the same or another pan, heat olive oil over medium-low. Add spinach and wilt 30 seconds. Crack in eggs and scramble gently until just set.
- 3 Warm tortillas in a dry pan or microwave 20 seconds. Layer beans, eggs, avocado, cheese, and salsa down the center of each tortilla.
- 4 Fold the sides in, roll up from the bottom, and slice in half. Serve with hot sauce.

RUNNER'S TIP

Black beans are one of the highest-iron foods you can eat for breakfast — about 3.6 mg per cup. Adding eggs brings heme iron that your body absorbs at 2–3x the rate of plant-based iron. This is a solid pre-run meal if eaten 2+ hours before a workout — protein and complex carbs with no GI surprises.

ABSORPTION TIP

The salsa and avocado both contain vitamin C, which helps unlock the non-heme iron in the beans. If you want to push absorption further, squeeze fresh lime juice over the top before rolling.



Ψ9

SERVINGS
1PREP + COOK
5 min + overnightIRON / SERVING
4.6 mgDAILY VALUE
26%

Overnight Oats with Blackstrap Molasses and Tart Cherries

Make it the night before. Wake up, grab it, go.

• Non-Heme Iron

✓ Meal Prep Friendly

INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 cup rolled oats
- 3/4 cup milk or oat milk
- 1 tbsp blackstrap molasses
- 1 tbsp chia seeds
- 1/4 cup dried tart cherries
- 1 tbsp almond butter
- 1/4 tsp cinnamon
- 1 tsp honey (optional)

DIRECTIONS

- 1 Combine oats, milk, chia seeds, and cinnamon in a jar or container with a lid. Stir well.
- 2 Drizzle in blackstrap molasses and honey. Stir again to distribute evenly.
- 3 Top with dried tart cherries and a dollop of almond butter. Seal and refrigerate overnight (or at least 4 hours).

RUNNER'S TIP

One tablespoon of blackstrap molasses delivers 3.6 mg of iron — nearly 20% of your daily value in a single ingredient. Chia seeds add another 1 mg per tablespoon. Dried tart cherries bring anthocyanins that reduce post-run muscle soreness. Make 4–5 jars on Sunday and you have breakfast handled for the work week.

ABSORPTION TIP

The chia seeds contain phytic acid which can mildly inhibit iron absorption. The molasses counteracts this by delivering a large iron load. Eat a piece of fruit alongside — even half an orange — for the vitamin C boost.



Ψ9

SERVINGS
1PREP + COOK
8 minIRON / SERVING
5.1 mgDAILY VALUE
28%

Spinach Spirulina Smoothie Bowl with Pumpkin Seeds

The most iron-dense breakfast you can make in 8 minutes.

• Non-Heme Iron

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup frozen spinach
- 1 frozen banana
- 1 tsp spirulina powder
- 1/2 cup almond or oat milk
- 1 tbsp pumpkin seeds (pepitas)
- 1/4 cup granola
- 1/2 cup mixed berries
- 1 tsp honey
- 1 tbsp almond butter

DIRECTIONS

- 1 Blend frozen spinach, frozen banana, spirulina, and almond milk until thick and smooth. Add liquid sparingly — you want it spoonable, not drinkable. If it needs sweetening, add honey.
- 2 Pour into a bowl and spread out evenly.
- 3 Top with pumpkin seeds, granola, berries, and a drizzle of almond butter. Eat immediately — it warms up quickly.

RUNNER'S TIP

Spirulina is one of the most iron-dense foods on earth — one teaspoon packs about 2 mg of iron. Frozen spinach adds another 1.5 mg (concentrated vs. fresh), and pumpkin seeds round it out with another 1.4 mg per tablespoon. The frozen banana keeps it thick and cold without needing ice.

ABSORPTION TIP

The berries on top aren't just for color — strawberries, blueberries, and raspberries all contain vitamin C that significantly boosts non-heme iron absorption from the spirulina and spinach. Don't skip them.

SERVINGS
1PREP + COOK
10 minIRON / SERVING
3.4 mgDAILY VALUE
19%

Poached Egg Avocado Toast with Hemp Seeds

A runner staple, upgraded with serious iron content.

• Heme + Non-Heme Iron

INGREDIENTS

- 2 slices sprouted grain or whole wheat bread
- 2 large eggs
- 1/2 ripe avocado
- 1 tbsp hemp seeds
- Red pepper flakes
- Juice of 1/4 lemon
- Flaky sea salt and black pepper
- 1 tsp white vinegar (for poaching)

DIRECTIONS

- 1 Bring a small pot of water to a gentle simmer. Add white vinegar. Create a gentle swirl with a spoon, crack in an egg, and poach 3 minutes for a runny yolk. Repeat with second egg.
- 2 Toast bread. Mash avocado onto each slice with lemon juice, salt, and pepper.
- 3 Place a poached egg on each slice. Sprinkle hemp seeds generously over the top, add red pepper flakes and flaky salt.

RUNNER'S TIP

Hemp seeds contain about 2.4 mg of iron per 3 tablespoons — one of the most iron-dense seeds you can put on toast. Sprouted grain bread has notably higher iron and mineral bioavailability than regular whole wheat because the sprouting process breaks down phytic acid.

ABSORPTION TIP

The lemon juice on the avocado is functional, not just flavor. Vitamin C from citrus increases non-heme iron absorption from the hemp seeds and bread. The yolk of the egg adds heme iron — the form your body absorbs most readily.



SERVINGS
2

PREP + COOK
15 min

IRON / SERVING
4.2 mg

DAILY VALUE
23%

Whole Wheat Banana Pancakes with Blackstrap Molasses Syrup

The pre-race morning fuel that actually builds your iron stores.

• Non-Heme Iron

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup whole wheat flour
- 1 ripe banana, mashed
- 1 egg
- 3/4 cup milk or oat milk
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

MOLASSES SYRUP:

- 2 tbsp blackstrap molasses
- 1 tbsp warm water
- 1 tsp honey

DIRECTIONS

- 1 Whisk together flour, baking powder, and cinnamon in a bowl. In a separate bowl, mash banana, then mix in egg, milk, and vanilla.
- 2 Combine wet and dry ingredients, stirring until just smooth. Don't overmix — some lumps are fine.
- 3 Heat a nonstick pan over medium heat and grease lightly. Pour 1/4 cup batter per pancake. Cook 2–3 minutes until bubbles form on the surface, flip, cook 1–2 minutes more.
- 4 Stir together blackstrap molasses, warm water, and honey until combined. Drizzle over warm pancakes.

RUNNER'S TIP

Whole wheat flour contributes about 1.5 mg of iron per cup, and the blackstrap molasses syrup adds another 3.6 mg per tablespoon. The banana replaces most of the added sugar and provides potassium for muscle function. This is a solid 2-hour pre-run meal when you need carbs plus iron.

ABSORPTION TIP

Avoid having coffee with these pancakes. The polyphenols in coffee can cut iron absorption by up to 50% when consumed alongside iron-rich foods. Drink your coffee before — or wait 30 minutes after eating.



LUNCH

Iron-rich lunch recipes built for runners. Every meal includes iron per serving and absorption tips.



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SERVINGS
2

PREP + COOK
5 min

IRON / SERVING
5.4 mg

DAILY VALUE
30%

White Bean and Tuna Salad with Capers and Lemon

A 5-minute lunch that punches way above its weight in iron.

• Heme + Non-Heme Iron

↳ Meal Prep Friendly

INGREDIENTS

- 1 can (15 oz) white beans (cannellini), drained
- 1 can (5 oz) tuna in olive oil, drained
- 2 tbsp capers, rinsed
- 1/4 red onion, finely diced
- 1/4 cup fresh parsley, chopped
- 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- Salt and pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

- 1 Combine white beans, flaked tuna, capers, red onion, and parsley in a bowl.
- 2 Whisk together olive oil, lemon juice, and Dijon mustard. Pour over the salad and toss gently so the beans don't break down completely.
- 3 Season with salt and pepper. Serve over arugula, in a wrap, or with crusty bread. Keeps in the fridge for 3 days — flavor improves overnight.

RUNNER'S TIP

White beans deliver about 3.9 mg of iron per cup and tuna adds 1.5 mg of heme iron per can. Together they make a lunch that rivals many cooked meals. No heat required. The Dijon and capers add enough punch that this doesn't need anything else.

ABSORPTION TIP

The lemon juice in the dressing does more than brighten the flavor — it's a direct absorption booster for the non-heme iron in the beans. Eat this with fresh fruit or a handful of cherry tomatoes if you want to push iron uptake higher.

ψ9

SERVINGS
1PREP + COOK
5 minIRON / SERVING
6.2 mgDAILY VALUE
34%

Sardine Avocado Toast with Arugula and Lemon

The fastest high-iron lunch in this book. Five minutes, no excuses.

• Heme + Non-Heme Iron

INGREDIENTS

- 1 can (4.4 oz) sardines in olive oil, drained
- 2 slices sourdough or whole grain bread, toasted
- 1/2 ripe avocado
- 1 handful fresh arugula
- Juice of 1/2 lemon
- Red pepper flakes
- Flaky sea salt
- Cracked black pepper

DIRECTIONS

- 1 Toast bread. Mash avocado onto each slice with lemon juice, salt, and pepper.
- 2 Layer arugula over the avocado. Top with sardines, breaking them up slightly.
- 3 Finish with red pepper flakes, a pinch of flaky salt, and a final squeeze of lemon.

RUNNER'S TIP

Sardines are one of the most iron-dense foods per calorie — one can delivers around 4.4 mg of heme iron that your body absorbs at 2–3x the rate of plant-based sources. They're also loaded with omega-3s for inflammation and calcium for bone density. If you've never eaten sardines, this toast is the entry point.

ABSORPTION TIP

Arugula contains vitamin C that helps unlock non-heme iron from the bread and avocado. The fat from the olive oil in the sardines aids absorption of fat-soluble nutrients. Sourdough is a better choice than regular bread here — fermentation reduces phytic acid and improves mineral bioavailability.

SERVINGS
2PREP + COOK
8 minIRON / SERVING
4.8 mgDAILY VALUE
27%

Chickpea, Feta and Roasted Red Pepper Wrap

Meal prep it Sunday, eat it all week. Iron-dense and actually satisfying.

• Non-Heme Iron

↳ Meal Prep Friendly

INGREDIENTS

- 1 can (15 oz) chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 2 large whole wheat tortillas
- 3 oz roasted red peppers (jarred), sliced
- 2 oz feta cheese, crumbled
- 2 large handfuls baby spinach
- 2 tbsp hummus
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 1/2 tsp smoked paprika
- Salt and pepper

DIRECTIONS

- 1 Toss chickpeas with lemon juice, smoked paprika, salt, and pepper.
- 2 Spread hummus over each tortilla. Layer spinach, chickpeas, roasted red peppers, and feta.
- 3 Roll up tightly, slice in half. Serve immediately or wrap in foil and refrigerate for up to 3 days.

RUNNER'S TIP

Chickpeas carry 4.7 mg of iron per cup and are one of the few high-protein, high-iron foods that require zero cooking when using canned. The smoked paprika isn't just flavor — it contains small amounts of iron and pairs well with the chickpeas. Keep a jar of roasted red peppers in your fridge and this wrap takes under 5 minutes.

ABSORPTION TIP

Roasted red peppers are exceptionally high in vitamin C — one pepper has more than an orange. This makes them one of the best absorption-boosting ingredients you can add to an iron-rich meal. The lemon juice doubles the effect.



SERVINGS
2

PREP + COOK
10 min

IRON / SERVING
5.6 mg

DAILY VALUE
31%

Edamame Brown Rice Bowl with Sesame Ginger Dressing

10 minutes from frozen. A plant-based iron bowl that actually fills you up.

• Non-Heme Iron

↳ Meal Prep Friendly

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups frozen shelled edamame
- 2 pouches (or 2 cups) microwaveable brown rice
- 1/2 cucumber, thinly sliced
- 1 cup shredded carrots
- 2 tbsp sesame seeds

DRESSING:

- 2 tbsp soy sauce
- 1 tbsp sesame oil
- 1 tbsp rice vinegar
- 1 tsp fresh ginger, grated
- 1 tsp honey

DIRECTIONS

- 1 Microwave edamame according to package (usually 3–4 minutes). Microwave brown rice pouches separately.
- 2 Whisk together soy sauce, sesame oil, rice vinegar, ginger, and honey in a small bowl.
- 3 Divide rice between two bowls. Top with edamame, cucumber, and shredded carrots. Drizzle dressing over everything. Finish with sesame seeds.

RUNNER'S TIP

A cup of edamame contains about 3.5 mg of iron plus 17g of complete plant protein — unusual for a legume. Brown rice adds another 1 mg per cup. This meal works because every component is available frozen or shelf-stable, which means zero excuses on busy training weeks.

ABSORPTION TIP

Soy-based foods like edamame contain phytates that can reduce iron absorption, but the rice vinegar and the fermentation notes in soy sauce partially offset this. Add a squeeze of lime or some sliced bell pepper for a meaningful vitamin C boost.

SERVINGS
4PREP + COOK
15 minIRON / SERVING
5.1 mgDAILY VALUE
28%

Mediterranean Quinoa Salad with Spinach and Sun-Dried Tomatoes

Make a big batch Sunday. Iron-loaded lunches sorted for the week.

• Non-Heme Iron

✓ Meal Prep Friendly

INGREDIENTS

- 1.5 cups dry quinoa
- 3 cups baby spinach, roughly chopped
- 1/3 cup sun-dried tomatoes in oil, sliced
- 1/4 cup Kalamata olives, halved
- 1/2 English cucumber, diced
- 1/4 red onion, finely diced
- 3 oz feta cheese, crumbled

DRESSING:

- 3 tbsp olive oil + 2 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 tsp dried oregano, salt and pepper

DIRECTIONS

- 1 Cook quinoa per package directions (1.5 cups dry → ~3 cups cooked). Spread on a sheet pan to cool for 5 minutes.
- 2 While quinoa cools, whisk together olive oil, lemon juice, oregano, salt, and pepper.
- 3 Combine cooled quinoa, spinach, sun-dried tomatoes, olives, cucumber, and red onion. Toss with dressing. Fold in feta last.
- 4 Store in airtight containers for up to 4 days. The salad holds well and the flavors improve overnight.

🏃 RUNNER'S TIP

Quinoa is a complete protein and delivers about 2.8 mg of iron per cup cooked. Sun-dried tomatoes contribute another 1.3 mg per quarter cup plus concentrated lycopene. This salad doesn't get soggy, which makes it genuinely reliable for meal prep — unlike most dressed greens.

ABSORPTION TIP

The lemon juice in the dressing is doing real work here. Vitamin C from citrus can increase non-heme iron absorption from quinoa and spinach by up to 6x. Don't skip it or sub with balsamic — the switch matters for absorption.

ψ

SERVINGS
4

⌚

PREP + COOK
15 min active26
Fe
IronIRON / SERVING
5.9 mg

⚡

DAILY VALUE
33%

Black Bean and Sweet Potato Soup

Batch cook it once. Iron-rich lunches for 4 days straight.

• Non-Heme Iron

↗ Meal Prep Friendly

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cans (15 oz each) black beans, drained
- 1 large sweet potato, peeled and diced small
- 4 cups low-sodium vegetable broth
- 1 can (14 oz) diced fire-roasted tomatoes
- 1 small onion, diced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1.5 tsp cumin
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- Juice of 1 lime
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- Cilantro and sour cream to serve

DIRECTIONS

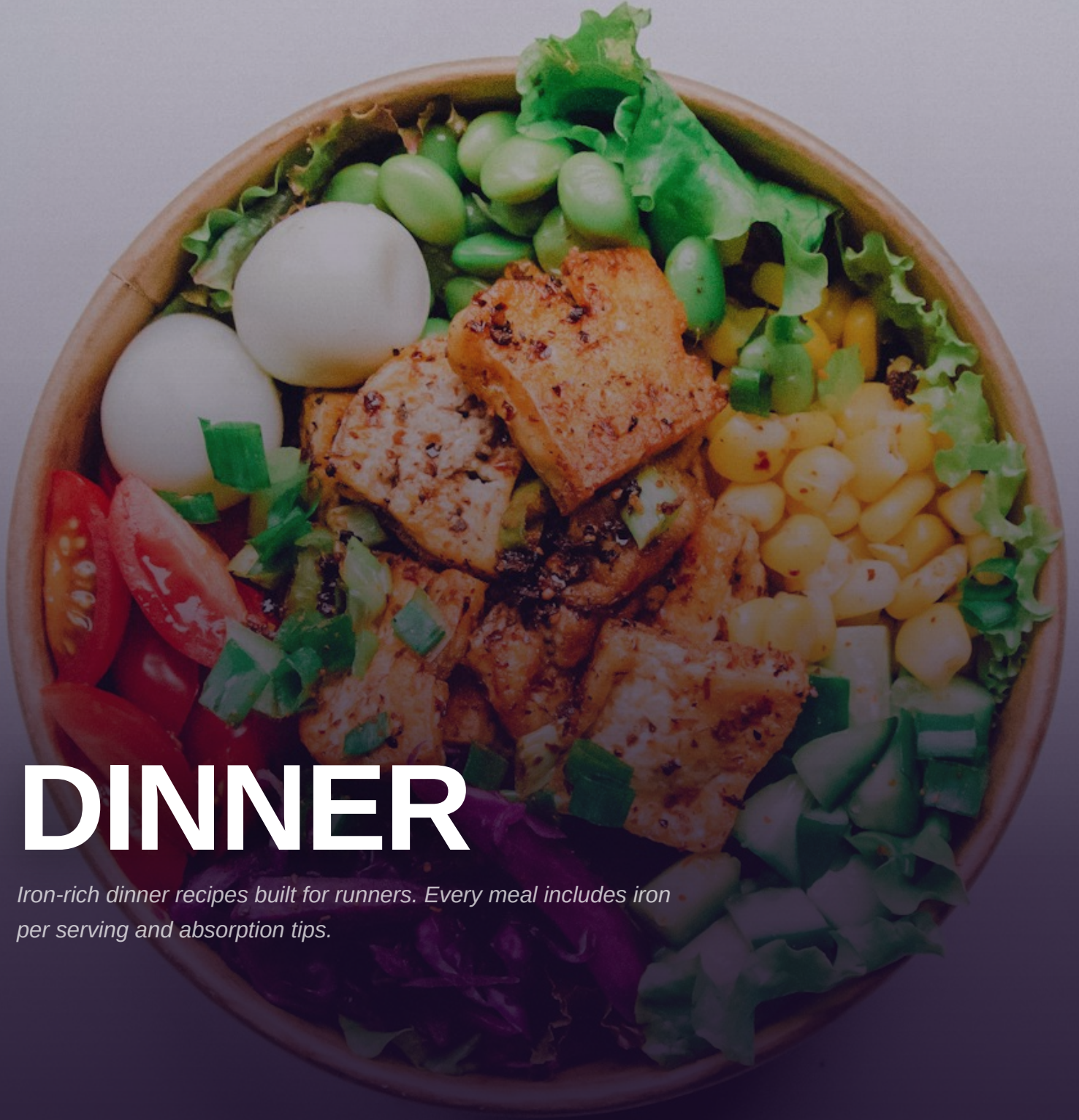
- 1 Heat olive oil in a large pot over medium-high heat. Cook onion 3 minutes until soft. Add garlic, cumin, and smoked paprika. Stir 30 seconds.
- 2 Add sweet potato, black beans, diced tomatoes, and broth. Bring to a boil, then simmer 12 minutes until sweet potato is tender.
- 3 Use an immersion blender to partially blend the soup — blend about a third of it for a thicker consistency while keeping most of the beans whole.
- 4 Squeeze lime juice over the top. Serve with cilantro and a small dollop of sour cream. Stores 4–5 days refrigerated.

🕒 RUNNER'S TIP

Black beans deliver 3.6 mg of iron per cup. Sweet potato adds complex carbs for glycogen replenishment and a small amount of iron. The fire-roasted tomatoes add both iron and concentrated vitamin C from the cooking process. Make this on Sunday and reheat portions through the week — it actually gets better on day two.

🍊 ABSORPTION TIP

The lime juice finish is worth it every time. Vitamin C from citrus significantly increases how much non-heme iron from the beans you actually absorb. Avoid adding dairy toppings with every serving — calcium can mildly compete with iron absorption when consumed in large amounts simultaneously.



DINNER

Iron-rich dinner recipes built for runners. Every meal includes iron per serving and absorption tips.



49

SERVINGS
2

🕒

PREP + COOK
45 min

26
Fe
Iron

IRON / SERVING
6.2 mg

📈

DAILY VALUE
34%

Seared Steak Bowl with Chimichurri and Roasted Sweet Potato

Your post-long-run recovery meal. Protein, iron, and carbs in one bowl.

● Heme + Non-Heme Iron

INGREDIENTS

- 8 oz flank steak (or sirloin)
- 2 medium sweet potatoes, cubed
- 1 cup cooked quinoa
- 2 cups baby spinach
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste

FOR THE CHIMICHURRI:

- 1/2 cup fresh parsley, finely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tbsp red wine vinegar
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- Pinch of red pepper flakes

DIRECTIONS

- 1 Preheat oven to 400°F. Toss sweet potato cubes with 1 tbsp olive oil, salt, and pepper. Spread on a baking sheet and roast for 25 minutes, until tender and caramelized at the edges.
- 2 While potatoes roast, make the chimichurri: combine parsley, garlic, red wine vinegar, olive oil, and red pepper flakes. Set aside.
- 3 Season the flank steak generously with salt and pepper. Heat a cast iron skillet over high heat. Sear steak 4 minutes per side for medium-rare. Let rest 5 minutes, then slice thin against the grain.
- 4 Build your bowls: layer quinoa on the bottom, add spinach (the residual heat will wilt it slightly), top with sweet potatoes and sliced steak. Drizzle chimichurri over everything.

📌 RUNNER'S TIP

The vitamin C in the parsley chimichurri boosts absorption of the non-heme iron from spinach and quinoa. Flank steak is one of the most iron-dense cuts you can buy, and sweet potatoes add the glycogen-replenishing carbs your muscles need after a long effort.

📌 ABSORPTION TIP

Eat this 3+ hours post-run. Hepcidin (a hormone that blocks iron absorption) spikes right after hard exercise and stays elevated for several hours. Timing this meal later gives your gut the best shot at absorbing what's on the plate.



SERVINGS
2



PREP + COOK
45 min



IRON / SERVING
6.2 mg



DAILY VALUE
34%

Seared Steak Bowl with Chimichurri and Roasted Sweet Potato

Your post-long-run recovery meal. Protein, iron, and carbs in one bowl.

• Heme + Non-Heme Iron

INGREDIENTS

- 8 oz flank steak (or sirloin)
- 2 medium sweet potatoes, cubed
- 1 cup cooked quinoa
- 2 cups baby spinach
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste

FOR THE CHIMICHURRI:

- 1/2 cup fresh parsley, finely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tbsp red wine vinegar
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- Pinch of red pepper flakes

DIRECTIONS

- 1 Preheat oven to 400°F. Toss sweet potato cubes with 1 tbsp olive oil, salt, and pepper. Spread on a baking sheet and roast for 25 minutes, until tender and caramelized at the edges.
- 2 While potatoes roast, make the chimichurri: combine parsley, garlic, red wine vinegar, olive oil, and red pepper flakes. Set aside.
- 3 Season the flank steak generously with salt and pepper. Heat a cast iron skillet over high heat. Sear steak 4 minutes per side for medium-rare. Let rest 5 minutes, then slice thin against the grain.
- 4 Build your bowls: layer quinoa on the bottom, add spinach (the residual heat will wilt it slightly), top with sweet potatoes and sliced steak. Drizzle chimichurri over everything.

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ψ9

SERVINGS
4

PREP + COOK
45 min

IRON / SERVING
5.8 mg

DAILY VALUE
32%

Lentil and Roasted Tomato Soup

Warm, filling, and loaded with plant-based iron. A weeknight staple.

• **Non-Heme Iron**

INGREDIENTS

- 1.5 cups dried green or brown lentils, rinsed
- 1 can (14 oz) fire-roasted diced tomatoes
- 4 cups low-sodium vegetable broth
- 1 medium yellow onion, diced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 medium carrots, diced
- 1 tsp cumin
- 1/2 tsp smoked paprika
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- Juice of 1 lemon
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Fresh parsley for garnish

DIRECTIONS

- 1 Heat olive oil in a large pot over medium heat. Add onion and carrots, cook 5 minutes until softened. Add garlic, cumin, and smoked paprika and stir for 30 seconds until fragrant.
- 2 Add lentils, fire-roasted tomatoes, and vegetable broth. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer 25–30 minutes until lentils are completely tender.
- 3 Squeeze in the lemon juice and season with salt and pepper. For a creamier texture, blend half the soup with an immersion blender and stir it back in.
- 4 Serve hot, garnished with fresh parsley and a drizzle of olive oil.

RUNNER'S TIP

Lentils are the quiet powerhouse of plant-based iron. One cup of cooked lentils packs about 6.6 mg of iron. The lemon juice here does double duty: it brightens the flavor and the vitamin C significantly increases how much non-heme iron your body absorbs.

ABSORPTION TIP

Avoid drinking coffee or tea within an hour of eating this soup. The tannins and polyphenols in both can reduce non-heme iron absorption by up to 50%.




 SERVINGS
12 bites


 PREP + COOK
15 min + chill


 IRON / SERVING
2.4 mg


 DAILY VALUE
13%

Dark Chocolate Cherry Recovery Bites

A grab-and-go snack with a surprising iron punch.

• **Non-Heme Iron**

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup rolled oats
- 1/3 cup dark chocolate chips (70%+ cacao)
- 1/4 cup dried tart cherries, roughly chopped
- 1/2 cup almond butter
- 3 tbsp honey
- 2 tbsp ground flaxseed
- 2 tbsp raw cacao powder
- Pinch of sea salt

DIRECTIONS

- 1 Combine oats, cacao powder, ground flaxseed, and sea salt in a large bowl.
- 2 Add almond butter and honey. Mix until everything holds together. If the mixture feels too dry, add another half tablespoon of honey.
- 3 Fold in dark chocolate chips and dried tart cherries.
- 4 Roll into 12 roughly equal balls (about 1.5 inches each). Place on a parchment-lined tray and refrigerate at least 30 minutes until firm. Store in the fridge for up to a week.

RUNNER'S TIP

Dark chocolate with 70%+ cacao content carries about 3.4 mg of iron per ounce. Tart cherries bring anthocyanins that research suggests can reduce post-run muscle soreness. These bites travel well for pre-race morning fuel or a between-meals bridge on high-mileage weeks.

ABSORPTION TIP

Cacao is rich in iron, but also contains compounds that can slightly inhibit absorption. Pair a bite or two with a glass of orange juice or a few strawberries for the vitamin C boost.



ψ9

SERVINGS
3



PREP + COOK
25 min



IRON / SERVING
5.4 mg



DAILY VALUE
30%

Spinach and White Bean Pesto Pasta

Comfort food that earns its place in your training plan.

• Non-Heme Iron

INGREDIENTS

- 8 oz whole wheat penne (or your preferred pasta)
- 1 can (15 oz) white beans (cannellini), drained
- 3 cups fresh baby spinach
- 1/3 cup prepared pesto (basil)
- 2 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan
- Red pepper flakes to taste
- Salt and pepper

DIRECTIONS

- 1 Cook pasta according to package directions. Reserve 1/2 cup pasta water before draining.
- 2 In a large skillet over medium heat, warm olive oil. Add sliced garlic and cook 1 minute until just golden. Add white beans and cook 2–3 minutes until warmed through and slightly crispy.
- 3 Add spinach in handfuls, stirring until wilted. Add drained pasta, pesto, and lemon juice. Toss everything together, adding a splash of pasta water if it needs loosening.
- 4 Serve topped with Parmesan, red pepper flakes, and a crack of black pepper.

RUNNER'S TIP

This is a carb-loading meal that actually contributes to your iron intake. White beans add 3.9 mg of iron per cup plus protein and fiber. The whole wheat pasta adds another 1–2 mg. If you're a runner who struggles with iron, making this your go-to pre-long-run dinner is an easy win.

ABSORPTION TIP

The lemon juice paired with the spinach and beans is strategic. Vitamin C from citrus can increase non-heme iron absorption by up to 6x. Two tablespoons of lemon juice is enough to make a measurable difference.



SERVINGS
2



PREP + COOK
22 min



IRON / SERVING
5.6 mg



DAILY VALUE
31%

Sesame Ginger Beef and Broccoli Stir-Fry

Fast, flavorful, and iron-stacked. Better than takeout.

• **Heme + Non-Heme Iron**

INGREDIENTS

- 8 oz sirloin steak, sliced thin against the grain
- 3 cups broccoli florets
- 1 red bell pepper, sliced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tbsp fresh ginger, grated
- 1 tbsp sesame oil
- 1 tbsp avocado oil

FOR THE SAUCE:

- 3 tbsp low-sodium soy sauce
- 1 tbsp rice vinegar + 1 tbsp honey
- 1 tsp cornstarch mixed with 1 tbsp water
- Sesame seeds for garnish

DIRECTIONS

- 1 Whisk together soy sauce, rice vinegar, honey, and cornstarch slurry. Set aside.
- 2 Heat avocado oil in a wok or large skillet over high heat until it just starts to smoke. Add sliced beef in a single layer. Sear 2 minutes without moving, flip and cook 1 more minute. Remove to a plate.
- 3 In the same pan, add sesame oil, broccoli, and bell pepper. Stir-fry 3–4 minutes until broccoli is bright green and crisp-tender. Add garlic and ginger, cook 30 seconds.
- 4 Return beef to the pan, pour sauce over everything, and toss 1 minute until sauce thickens. Serve over rice, garnished with sesame seeds.

RUNNER'S TIP

Sirloin packs about 3.5 mg of heme iron per serving. Broccoli adds another 1 mg of non-heme iron, and the red bell pepper — one of the richest vitamin C sources out there — supercharges absorption of the plant-based iron. This comes together in under 15 minutes.

ABSORPTION TIP

Red bell peppers contain almost 3x more vitamin C than oranges by weight. Having them in the same meal as iron-rich foods is one of the simplest absorption strategies that actually works.



ψ9

SERVINGS
1

🕒

PREP + COOK
8 min

²⁶
Fe
Iron

IRON / SERVING
4.8 mg

📈

DAILY VALUE
27%

Fortified Oat Bowl with Pumpkin Seeds and Berries

A 5-minute breakfast that quietly builds your iron stores.

• Non-Heme Iron

INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 cup fortified rolled oats
- 1 cup milk (or oat/almond milk)
- 2 tbsp pumpkin seeds (pepitas)
- 1/2 cup mixed berries (strawberries, blueberries)
- 1 tbsp blackstrap molasses
- 1 tbsp almond butter
- Pinch of cinnamon

DIRECTIONS

- 1 Cook oats with milk on the stovetop or microwave according to package directions. Stir in blackstrap molasses and cinnamon while still hot.
- 2 Top with mixed berries, pumpkin seeds, and a dollop of almond butter.
- 3 Eat within 20 minutes. Oats get gummy if they sit too long, and the berries are best at room temperature.

🕒 RUNNER'S TIP

Blackstrap molasses is a sleeper ingredient. One tablespoon has about 3.6 mg of iron — nearly 20% of your daily value. Pumpkin seeds add another 2.5 mg per ounce. Fortified oats round things out with 4–8 mg depending on the brand. Check the label and pick oats that list iron fortification.

ABSORPTION TIP

If you drink coffee every morning, try to finish it at least 30 minutes before eating this bowl. Coffee's polyphenols can cut non-heme iron absorption by up to 50%. Tea is even worse. Have your coffee, wait a bit, then eat.



ψ9

SERVINGS
2



PREP + COOK
18 min



IRON / SERVING
4.2 mg



DAILY VALUE
23%

Blackened Salmon Salad with Tahini Dressing

Light enough for warm days, iron-dense enough to matter.

● Heme + Non-Heme Iron

INGREDIENTS

- 2 salmon fillets (5–6 oz each)
- 4 cups mixed greens (spinach, arugula, kale)
- 1/2 cup edamame, shelled
- 1/4 cup dried apricots, chopped
- 2 tbsp pumpkin seeds
- 1/4 red onion, thinly sliced

BLACKENING SPICE:

- 1 tsp smoked paprika, 1/2 tsp garlic powder
- 1/4 tsp cayenne, salt and pepper

TAHINI DRESSING:

- 2 tbsp tahini, 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 tbsp warm water, 1 clove garlic grated

DIRECTIONS

- 1 Mix blackening spices together and press onto both sides of the salmon fillets.
- 2 Heat a skillet over medium-high heat with a drizzle of oil. Cook salmon skin-side up for 3–4 minutes, flip, and cook another 3–4 minutes until barely translucent.
- 3 Whisk tahini, lemon juice, warm water, garlic, and a pinch of salt until smooth.
- 4 Build salads: pile mixed greens, edamame, dried apricots, red onion, and pumpkin seeds. Break salmon into large chunks on top. Drizzle with tahini dressing.

RUNNER'S TIP

This salad hits iron from 5 different sources: salmon (heme), spinach, edamame, pumpkin seeds, and dried apricots. Stacking multiple iron-containing foods in one meal is smarter than relying on one big source.

ABSORPTION TIP

Tahini contains phytates that can reduce iron absorption, but the lemon juice in the dressing counteracts this. With 5 iron sources on one plate, you're still well ahead.



ψ9

SERVINGS
2

PREP + COOK
18 min

IRON / SERVING
4.2 mg

DAILY VALUE
23%

Blackened Salmon Salad with Tahini Dressing

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Ψ9

SERVINGS
3PREP + COOK
25 minIRON / SERVING
5.1 mgDAILY VALUE
28%

Turkey and Black Bean Taco Skillet

Taco Tuesday, but make it iron-focused.

• Heme + Non-Heme Iron

INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb ground turkey (dark meat if available)
- 1 can (15 oz) black beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 cup corn kernels (fresh, frozen, or canned)
- 1 red bell pepper, diced
- 1 small jalapeño, minced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tbsp chili powder + 1 tsp cumin
- 1/2 tsp smoked paprika + juice of 1 lime
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- Cilantro, avocado, hot sauce for topping
- Corn tortillas or lettuce wraps

DIRECTIONS

- 1 Heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add ground turkey and break apart with a wooden spoon. Cook 5–6 minutes until browned.
- 2 Add garlic, jalapeño, chili powder, cumin, and smoked paprika. Stir for 1 minute until fragrant.
- 3 Add black beans, corn, and diced red bell pepper. Cook 4–5 minutes until pepper softens. Squeeze lime juice over the top.
- 4 Serve in corn tortillas or lettuce wraps. Top with cilantro, avocado, and hot sauce.

🕒 RUNNER'S TIP

Dark meat ground turkey has about 2.5 mg of iron per serving — roughly double what you'd get from chicken breast. Black beans add another 3.6 mg per cup. Make a double batch on Sunday for 3–4 days of lunches.

ABSORPTION TIP

Go dark meat turkey for iron. The difference is 2–3x the iron content vs. light meat. Check the label for 'dark meat' ground turkey.

Iron Absorption Cheat Sheet

Quick reference — pin this to your fridge

TOP IRON SOURCES BY CATEGORY

FOOD	SERVING	IRON	% DAILY VALUE	TYPE
Chicken liver	3oz cooked	11.4mg	63%	Heme
Mussels	3oz cooked	9.3mg	52%	Heme
Lentils	½ cup cooked	6.6mg	37%	Non-Heme
Beef sirloin	3oz cooked	5.9mg	33%	Heme
Pumpkin seeds	1oz	4.2mg	23%	Non-Heme
Blackstrap molasses	1 tbsp	3.6mg	20%	Non-Heme
Spinach (cooked)	1 cup	3.2mg	18%	Non-Heme
Dark chocolate 70%+	1oz	3.1mg	17%	Non-Heme

BOOST ABSORPTION

- ↑ Add vitamin C to every iron-rich meal
- ↑ Combine heme + non-heme iron in the same meal
- ↑ Wait 1 hr before coffee or tea after iron meals
- ↑ Cook acidic foods in cast iron

LIMIT AT IRON MEALS

- ↓ Coffee & tea (polyphenols bind iron)
- ↓ Calcium supplements (compete for same receptors)
- ↓ High-bran cereals (phytic acid)
- ↓ High-intensity exercise immediately after eating



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