



# THE CASE FOR PEANUT BUTTER

Don't fall for the siren song of chicer nut butters. This simple spread should be a triathlete's BFF. (Unless, you know, you're allergic to it.) **BY MATTHEW KADEY, M.S., R.D.**

Pity poor peanut butter: The Forrest Gump of the nut butter world, it's become the underdog to tonier spreads like almond, cashew and coconut. But jars of peanut butter once again should find a home in your pantry. For starters, the peanuty stuff has more protein than most of its competitors (4 grams per tablespoon versus 2 grams in almond butter). If you eat PB, you'll also benefit from plenty of heart-healthy monounsaturated fat and good amounts of vitamin E, a nutrient thought to bolster bone strength and brainpower. Besides, it's budget-friendly and just flat-out delicious. So when something is so awesome, why relegate it to a slice of toast? Here are six fun ways to sneak PB back into your life—or get more of it, if you never strayed.

## **PB&J energy balls**

Grind  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup rolled oats and  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup unsalted roasted peanuts into small pieces in a food processor. Add 1 cup pitted dates, 1 cup dried cherries,  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup peanut butter and a couple pinches of salt. Blend until mixture clumps together. Roll into 1-inch balls. Eat as snacks or take along on a long ride in a small zip-top bag.

## **PB salad dressing**

Whisk together  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup creamy peanut butter, 2 tablespoons rice vinegar, 1 tablespoon water, 2 teaspoons honey, 1 teaspoon Sriracha, 1 teaspoon lime zest, 1 teaspoon grated fresh ginger and a couple pinches of salt until smooth. If needed, add more water, 1 teaspoon at a time, to reach a pourable consistency. Serve over salads or mix into slaws.

## **PB hummus**

Blend together one 15-ounce can drained and rinsed chickpeas,  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup peanut butter, juice of half a lemon, 2 tablespoons olive oil, 1 minced garlic clove, 1 teaspoon smoked paprika,  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon cumin powder and  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt. If needed, blend in 1 tablespoon warm water at a time until smooth. Serve with tortilla chips or sliced vegetables, or slather on rice cakes.

## **PB grilled cheese**

Spread 1 tablespoon peanut butter on a slice of whole-grain bread. Top peanut butter with 2 tablespoons fig jam, 1 ounce sliced Brie cheese and  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup arugula. Top with a second slice of bread. Heat a pat of butter in a skillet over medium-low heat. Place sandwich in skillet with melted butter and heat until bread is golden on both sides and cheese has melted, about 3 minutes per side.

## **Ants on a log**

Stir together  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup creamy peanut butter, 1 tablespoon honey or maple syrup and  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon cinnamon. Stuff centers of celery sticks with nut butter mixture and top with dried cranberries. Slice each celery stick into thirds.

## **Chocolate PB "ice cream"**

Process 1 chopped frozen banana in a food processor until reduced to the size of small pebbles. Scrape down sides of bowl, add  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup plain Greek yogurt, 2 tablespoons peanut butter, 2 tablespoons cocoa powder, 2 teaspoons honey,  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon vanilla extract and  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon cinnamon; continue blending until creamy.

## A BETTER GRIND

These peanut butter products make it easy to skip over Skippy.



**Big Spoon Roasters Peanut Butter**  
\$10 for 10-ounce jar,  
[Bigspoonroasters.com](http://Bigspoonroasters.com)

Small batch, made-to-order peanut butter made with roasted heirloom peanuts and wildflower honey.



**Once Again Old Fashioned Natural Creamy Peanut Butter**  
\$5 for 16-ounce jar,  
[Onceagainnutbutter.com](http://Onceagainnutbutter.com)

With just peanuts and a touch of salt, this uncompromised buttery spread is spoon-worthy.



**Justin's Peanut Butter Banana Chip Snack Pack**  
\$1.99 per pack,  
[Justinsnutbutter.com](http://Justinsnutbutter.com)

Whether for a snack, dessert or post-training fuel, you'll love dipping crispy banana chips into creamy PB.



**GU Peanut Butter Energy Gel**  
\$1.45 per packet,  
[Guenergy.com](http://Guenergy.com)

Creamy and sweet at once, these PB gels are all the motivation you need to go hard and long.