



BIKING
AMERICA

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Carb-loading and other food crazes

Chicago-based Jerry Soverinsky is riding coast-to-coast and documenting his trip weekly in the Herald. Soverinsky is a contributor to National Lampoon and is a graduate of Chicago's Second City Training Program. He was also the founder of a bicycle touring company, and is the author of "Cycle Europe: 20 Tours, 12 Countries."

By **JERRY SOVERINSKY**

SPECIAL TO THE HERALD

I've never been one to follow popular fads, and so this sudden obsession with "nutrition" — eating right: to fuel the body, maintaining efficient metabolic something or other ... well, blah, blah, blah. I mean, carbohydrates? Proteins? Monounsaturated fats?

But yesterday I embarked on an ambitious dieting experiment: While cycling along the Columbia River Gorge (on the Washington-Oregon border) in 105-degree heat, I committed to eating and drinking only Snickers bars and Cherry Coke. Here's what I found:

8:05 a.m. — There's a two-mile climb early into the day's route, so I prepare by downing two Snickers and a 20-ounce Coke. I smile as I lick the caramel goodness from my fingers, knowing I'd have to eat almost five bananas to generate the same amount of carb loading. I'm ready to ride.

8:21 a.m. — A surge of power jets me several hundred yards up the day's first climb. I'm really flying, feeling stronger than ever.

8:22 a.m. — Holy crap, that's a steep hill. I stop my bike and nearly inhale a 12-ounce Coke. It does the trick, and I reach the top in no time, whistling an obscure r & b tune in perfect sync to my racing heart arrhythmia.

2:40 p.m. — The heat is overwhelming and I need a rest. I stop when I see my third-grade teacher standing roadside, holding a sign that reads, "Did you return your hall pass?" I always had a crush on Ms. Mattheson, so I'm pleased when she seems attentive as I describe my bike trip. As I lean forward to kiss her, I realize that I'm talking to sand. Fourteen miles to Walla Walla.

4:55 p.m. — Walla Walla! Or is it Walla Walla Walla? I stagger to my hotel room and collapse on the bed.

11:03 p.m. — I manage the 9-foot walk to my bathroom with minimal falling. I drink a glass of water and return to bed, falling asleep in my biking clothes.

I wake the next morning and elect an unscheduled rest day. In hindsight, maybe the nutritionists are onto something. I feel awful.

I head for the breakfast room where I proceed to finish a bowl of oatmeal, a banana and a glass of skim milk. My head is pounding, but there's a lot to see in Walla Walla. I grab my camera, water bottle and bag of Twizzlers, and head for the sites.

That's strawberry Twizzlers. Gotta eat your fruit.

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