



Why Some Meals Just Don't Last

Have you ever finished eating and found yourself back in the kitchen twenty minutes later, not really hungry but looking for something? This is not a willpower issue, and it is not about a missing nutrient. It comes down to how your body processes what you just ate and how long that takes.

Some foods move through your digestive system quickly, while others take more time, not because they are heavy or rich, but because your body has more to work with: more structure, more bulk, more water, more complexity. That difference separates a meal that carries you through the afternoon from one that disappears before you even clear the table.

The usual advice skips over this. “Add a protein.” “Balance your macros.” These sound like instructions, but they do not explain what is actually happening, and they are not how people eat. Most satisfying meals are not assembled from nutrient checkboxes. They are built from real food that takes time to move through your system.

Think about a bowl of pasta with vegetables, something like pasta e fagioli or a simple puttanesca. That kind of meal can carry you for three or four hours, not because anything was strategically added, but because the ingredients themselves—the pasta, the beans or vegetables, the olive oil, the volume of the whole thing—give your body something to work through. The same logic applies to a grain bowl, a hearty soup, or a plate of roasted vegetables over farro.

Now think about a bowl of cereal or a handful of crackers with something spreadable. These can be satisfying in the moment, but there is not much there to slow anything down, so they clear out quickly and you feel it.

The same thing can happen with meals that look “healthy” on paper but just do not provide enough to carry you. A big salad, for example, can check a lot of boxes but still leave you looking for something else soon after if it is just vegetables and does not include beans, tofu, whole grains, avocado, or nuts.

The difference comes down to a few recognizable patterns. Meals that wear off fast tend to share some things: they are built mostly from refined grains like white bread, crackers, sweetened cereals, or pastries; they are small, closer to a snack than a meal; they are dense but low in volume, so they do not add much once eaten; or they are mostly liquid and move through before your body has much time to register them.

Meals that hold up look different. They are built around whole or minimally processed foods—grains with their structure intact, beans and lentils, vegetables, fruit. They have real volume and water content, not just calories. They take a little longer to eat, like pasta, grain bowls, oatmeal, a big salad with something substantial in it, anything that requires more chewing.

You do not need to audit every meal and snack for macros. You just need to look at your plate and ask whether it is something your body is going to work through for the next few hours, or whether it will be gone before you sit back down.

Curried Chickpeas and Sweet Potatoes with Farro



This is a good example of a meal that holds up without needing to overthink it. The chickpeas, sweet potatoes, vegetables, and farro all digest at different speeds and provide enough volume to carry you for a few hours.

Ingredients:

- 5 cups sweet potatoes, peeled and diced (about 1½ lbs)
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 large onion, diced
- 1 tablespoon fresh ginger, minced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 scallions (white and light green parts), chopped
- 2 large red bell peppers, diced
- 1 teaspoon salt, divided
- 2 tablespoons curry powder
- 2 (15-ounce) cans chickpeas, with liquid
- 1 tablespoon cider vinegar
- ⅓ cup chopped fresh cilantro

For serving:

- 1 cup dry farro
- 3 cups water
- Pinch of salt

Instructions:

1. Cook the farro first. Combine farro, water, and a pinch of salt in a saucepan. Bring to a boil, then reduce to a simmer and cook until tender, about 25–30 minutes. Drain any excess water if needed.
2. While the farro cooks, steam the sweet potatoes until tender, about 10 minutes.
3. In a large pot, heat the olive oil over medium heat. Add the onion, ginger, garlic, scallions, red peppers, ½ teaspoon salt, and curry powder. Cook for 3–5 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables begin to soften.
4. Add the chickpeas with their liquid and simmer uncovered for about 5 minutes.
5. Stir in the vinegar and remaining ½ teaspoon salt, then gently fold in the sweet potatoes. Cook over low heat for a couple of minutes, just until everything is heated through and the sweet potatoes begin to soften slightly. Stir in the cilantro.
6. Serve over farro.