

U.S. athletes getting an early taste of Russia

By Stephen Wayne Kasica, *Outside*

Behind the Olympic-caliber athletes scarfing down 5,000-plus daily calories at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs is a hardworking chef creating the food that fuels peak performance.

And with 350 weary, ravenous athletes walking into the dining hall each day, you get a pretty good idea of executive chef Jacque Hamilton's job.

Besides making sure there's enough milk – OTC athletes gulp down about 15,000 gallons of the stuff annually – she keeps meals fresh and nutritious by varying menu items.

Recently, that's meant a variety of Russian-themed cuisine in preparation for the February games in Sochi. Popular items include wild-mushroom stroganoff, a delicious meatless alternative for vegetarian athletes. Other big hits include eggplant caviar served on blini, a Russian-style pancake.

Perhaps the most popular dish is Borscht. Hamilton's take on the traditional beet-based soup includes more beets for extra antioxidants and more meat for a little more muscle-fueling protein.

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