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TOPS® News

Real People. Real Weight Loss.®

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2026



Global Flavors

A FOODIE ADVENTURE FROM THE FAMILIAR
LANDSCAPE OF YOUR OWN KITCHEN

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Charlene Giles, TOPS CA 1934 Lincoln, poses with her loyal companion Pepper.



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Peanut Butter

THE SILENT HERO OF THE CUPBOARD

By Joe "Kirsch" Curcio, TOPS online member

It's a truly curious matter how, in the dead of night, I can clearly hear the call of a leftover slice of pizza or the sing-song murmurs of that takeout tin of macaroni and clams beckoning from inside the refrigerator: "Jo-eeeeey! We're waiiiiii-ting for yooooo!"

Very curious indeed—especially since there's never a peep out of the Greek yogurt or the low-fat cottage cheese. Never! OK, maybe an occasional yawn. Otherwise, not a peep! This makes me realize that the only truly dignified resident of the fridge-and-cupboard community is the peanut butter.

High in calories, yet somehow healthy in fat. The power food. Always at the ready to aid in everything from muscle repair to lasting satiety—never boastful, never pushy. It just sits there with quiet confidence, a reliable provider since I was a kid—knowing that sooner or later I'll be back with spoon in hand. Because in this community, when all else fails, like a good neighbor, PB is there.

Now, I may not be a nutritionist—or apparently an ad man either—but I've ripped the gusset out of enough slacks to know a little something about eating. Not to mention I've lost seventy pounds. With those credentials, I think I'm at least qualified enough to share my personal dessert ritual with you.

The ultimate "kitchen closed" signal to my brain: a hit of sweetness, fat satisfaction and that oh-so pleasurable blast of carb comfort. An evening routine that completes my eating day every day with a smile on my face is one tablespoon of peanut butter on a very crunchy piece of toasted bread.

"Mmm-mmm-mmm."

It sounds simple, but there's actually some fairly interesting science behind it—and it works! You see, blood glucose tends to drop about two to three hours after eating, which signals your brain that an energy shortage may be just ahead. At the same time, an exaggerated notice gets sent Pony Express to the rest of your sofa-bound self, announcing:

"Hey, better get to the cupboard and dig into that Costco-size bucket of cheese balls. Quick! There's a famine a-comin'!"

A carb-crash hunger that can trigger a feeding frenzy so severe you can hear the throbbing "dundun-dun-dun" of the "Jaws" theme in your head as you frantically scurry toward the start of a compulsive graze. Not good.

But the simple combination of peanut butter and toast becomes a kind of psychological life jacket—reassuring both brain and belly that you're not going to "need a bigger boat" ... or a larger cheeseball vessel.

Here's why: Peanut butter alone brings fat and protein. Bread alone is often just a quick carb spike. But together they create a balanced trio of fat, fiber and complex carbohydrates that slows digestion and stabilizes glucose absorption. The result is steadier blood sugar and longer satiety—no glucose dips or spikes. You feel fuller for longer!

Yep—and for roughly 150 calories, that modest PB-and-toast nightcap quietly delivers a few other benefits, too:

- Stabilizes late-night hunger.
- Provides a portion-controlled indulgence that gives you a satisfying dessert.
- Prevents your brain from building up reward-based entitlement which can lead to weekend "atta-boy" fast-food binge eating.
- Reduces decision fatigue—you already know what the evening finale will be.

You know as well as I do: To succeed in this life of ours, people like us need a little quiet help—gentle guide rails and predictable anchors. A few simple and comforting pleasures. Just something satisfying enough to stop our brain from negotiating for cookies. As for me, peanut butter and toast are exactly that. It isn't just dessert. It's a consistent closing ceremony—the moment my kitchen officially says lights out for the evening.

With a cuppa-cawfee in hand, not a single peep from the fridge-and-cupboard community, and my gym-bound self, free of yellow cheese-ball fingers, it's finally time to settle in for the night—a smile on my face as I acknowledge the quiet confidence of the one dignified resident who knew I'd be back all along: peanut butter.

Joe "Kirsch" Curcio, a TOPS online member from Brooklyn, New York, is a former ABC radio and networks employee. Now retired, he is the author of "Ah-Shpet: 101 Words You'll Need to Survive the Neighborhood" and "The Welcome to Greenpoint Manuscript." See more from Joe at his website, www.greenpointmusic.com.

