



Carrots

Food \$ense Guide to Eating Fresh Fruits and Vegetables

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Utah Local Fresh Season: June-October

Availability: Carrots are available year-round with the peak from October through April.

Eating: Carrots are delicious eaten fresh, thrown in your favorite salads, cooked, added to soups or stir-fry, and made into carrot juice.

Selecting: Good quality carrots will be firm, smooth-skinned, straight-shaped and well-colored. The deeper the orange color of the carrot, the higher the beta carotene content. Carrots are available and in season all year long.

Avoid carrots that are wilting, soft, crooked, are split or are growing thin hair-like roots. Those with large green areas at the top or that have dark blemishes or brown coloring of any kind are also undesirable.

Variety: There are many varieties of carrots, but the variety typically found in supermarkets is from 7–9 inches in length. Carrots are usually sold packaged in plastic bags. Baby carrots were once longer carrots that have been peeled, trimmed to 1-1/2–2 inches in length and packaged. True baby carrots are removed from the ground early and actually look like miniature carrots.

Cleaning and Preparing: Wash carrots under running water, scrub thoroughly with a

vegetable brush. Although carrots lose some of their vitamins when peeled, dishes prepared with peeled carrots taste fresher and better.

Cooking: Cook carrots in a small amount of water until they are tender, or save time and cook them in the microwave.

Storing: Carrots can be stored in your refrigerator's crisper drawer for a few weeks if placed in a perforated plastic bag. Carrots are best stored between 32°-50°F in the crisper section of the refrigerator. Storing them in the refrigerator will preserve their flavor, texture, and the beta-carotene content. Do not store carrots with fruits. Fruits produce ethylene gas as they ripen. This gas will decrease the storage life of the carrots as well as other vegetables. This is why it is best to store fruits and vegetables separately.

Most carrots are sold without the tops because they have been shown to draw moisture from the roots. Yet many people buy carrots with tops to ensure the product is fresh. However, in order to store carrots longer, remove the tops.

Nutrition Highlights: Carrots have little saturated fat or cholesterol. They are an excellent source of dietary fiber, vitamin A, vitamin C, vitamin K and potassium. They are also a good source of thiamin, niacin, vitamin B6, folate and manganese.

Growing: Carrots germinate best in warm, moist soil. To assure germination of successive plantings during the late spring and summer months, it may be necessary to supply water by sprinkling. In the heat of summer, some shade may be necessary to keep the tiny seedlings from burning off at the soil line. Young carrot seedlings are weak and grow slowly. It is essential to keep weeds under control for the first few weeks.

Preserving Carrots: Carrots can be canned and frozen (may need to be blanched first). Blanching slows or stops enzyme action which can cause loss of flavor, color and texture.

References:

1. www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov
2. www.produceoasis.com
3. www.utahsown.org
4. <http://foodsensefoodies.blogspot.com/2009/08/spicy-carrot-soup.html>
5. <http://www.carrotrecipes.net/spicy-carrot-soup.html>
6. <http://urbanext.illinois.edu/veggies/carrot.cfm>

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Spicy Carrot Soup

8 carrots, roughly chopped
5 celery sticks, cut into pieces
2 cloves garlic, chopped
1 large onion, chopped
4 cups water
1 T olive oil
1 tsp curry powder
1 can light coconut milk
Salt (to taste)

Heat the olive oil in a frying pan; sauté the chopped garlic and chopped onion for 4-5 minutes. Add a teaspoon of curry powder, stir. Add all of the remaining ingredients except the salt and coconut milk and cook until the vegetables are tender. Mix in a blender until the soup is smooth. Add coconut milk and salt to taste and serve.

Adapted from <http://www.carrotrecipes.net/spicy-carrot-soup.html>

Pasta Salad with Carrots

Janet Anderson and Tammy Vitale

1 pound pasta
1/2 - 1 cup grated carrots
1-2 cups cooked asparagus
2-3 cups seasonal chopped raw vegetables (radishes, bell peppers, green onions, tomatoes)
1/4 cup plus 2 T olive oil
1/4 cup red wine vinegar
Salt and pepper to taste
1 T chopped parsley

Cook the pasta according to package directions. Rinse in cold water. Chill. Cook the asparagus using the method of your choice just until tender. Shock in cold water and drain. Cut into bite-size pieces. Combine pasta and vegetables in large bowl. Whisk oil and vinegar in small bowl to blend. Add the dressing to the salad (to taste). To serve, sprinkle with chopped parsley. Other optional ingredients: cheese cubes, tuna, hard-boiled eggs, olives.