Eat Well! A Newsletter for Healthy Eating

What's Cooking With Carrots?

By Kathy Savoie, Extension Educator

Carrots are a common orange vegetable enjoyed by both children and adults. Carrots are also a member of the parsley family and were grown in New England as early as the 1600s. Maine-grown carrots are available from July through February.

Most of us remember being told “carrots are good for your eyes” in a parent’s attempt to convince us to eat these colorful vegetables. The deep yellow to deep orange color of carrots indicates that they are an excellent source of carotene, which your body turns into the antioxidant vitamin A. They are also a good source of vitamin C (also an antioxidant) and fiber.

Selection:
When choosing carrots, choose smooth, well-colored, firm carrots. Avoid carrots that are wilted, flabby, or cracked, or that have large green areas at the top. Small carrots are more tender than large ones. If you buy carrots with the tops still on, make sure that they are bright green and fresh looking.

Storage:
Store carrots in a closed plastic bag or container in the refrigerator, and wash carrots just before you prepare them. Carrots will keep well in the refrigerator for up to two weeks. Remove the leafy green tops before storing, because they absorb moisture from the carrots and cause them to shrivel. If carrots do become wilted, they can be re-crisped in cold water.

### Preparing Carrots

Carrots are inexpensive! At just $0.18 per ½ cup serving, there are many ways to prepare carrots. Try the four methods below to find your favorite!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>RAW</strong></td>
<td>Carrot sticks are a colorful addition to a vegetable platter. Shred or slice carrots to add to a salad. To make raw carrots easier to chew, briefly steam or microwave them until they are tender.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>STEAMING</strong></td>
<td>Peel and cut carrots into quarter-inch slices. Steam until crisp-tender (8 to 10 minutes for 2 cups). To steam, bring an inch of water to a boil and place a colander or a collapsible steaming basket in the pot. Put the vegetables in the colander or steamer and cover it tightly. Reduce heat to medium-low, but make sure that the temperature is high enough to keep the water bubbling.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>MICROWAVING</strong></td>
<td>Peel and cut carrots into quarter-inch slices and place in a 1-quart covered dish. Add 2 tablespoons of water and microwave. Microwave 2 cups of cut carrots at high power for 3 to 7 minutes. Make sure to stir once during cooking.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ROASTING</strong></td>
<td>Wash and peel carrots and cut into 1 to 1 ½ inch pieces. Toss vegetables with 1 tablespoon of vegetable oil and add your favorite herbs and spices. Place carrots on a lightly greased pan or baking sheet in a single layer. Roast in a 400°F oven until browned on the bottom, about 10 minutes, Stir and roast until tender, about 10 more minutes.</td>
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Kid’s Korner

Roasted Carrot Chips
With Cumin

A healthy and nutritional snack!

Ingredients:

1 ½ pounds of carrots
2 teaspoons canola or olive oil
1 teaspoon ground cumin
½ teaspoon salt

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 400° F.
2. Lightly grease baking sheet with non-stick spray.
3. Wash carrots and peel.
4. Cut carrots into ¼ inch wide strips, or “coins” if you want to call them carrot chips
5. Place carrots, olive oil, cumin and salt in bowl and toss to coat evenly.
6. Place carrots on baking sheet.
7. Roast until lightly browned on bottom, 12 to 15 minutes. Flip and roast until tender about, 5 to 10 minutes more.
8. Cool slightly and enjoy!

Makes 10 servings  Serving size: ½ cup

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1/2 cup (69g)
Servings Per Container 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount Per Serving</th>
<th>Calories from Fat 10%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calories</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Fat</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturated Fat</td>
<td>0g 0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trans Fat</td>
<td>0g</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cholesterol</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sodium</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Carbohydrate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dietary Fiber</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sugars</td>
<td>4g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protein</td>
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Vitamin A 100%  •  Vitamin C 8%
Calcium 2%  •  Iron 2%

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:
Calories: 2,000  2,500

Total Fat Less than 65g  65g  80g
Saturated Fat Less than 20g  20g  25g
Cholesterol Less than 300mg  300mg  300mg
Sodium Less than 2,400mg  2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate 300g  375g
Dietary Fiber 25g  30g

Calories per gram: Fat 9  •  Carbohydrate 4  •  Protein 4
Deborah Barnett has worked with the University of Maine Cooperative Extension’s Eat Well Nutrition Education Program in Kennebec County since 2011. Her passion is working with children. Deborah and her family live in East Winthrop along with their dog, an American Perador puppy, Jed.

Q. My family thinks carrots are boring, what can I do to jazz them up?

A. When I was younger, I was told to eat my carrots because they were good for my eyesight. They were crunchy and sweet so this wasn’t a difficult task. As I got older, I wanted to explore different ways to include carrots in my diet.

**Carrots for breakfast?** YES! Make an omelet, frittata or scrambled eggs, add some grated or diced carrots along with chopped green or red bell peppers, onion, and your favorite low-fat cheese for a colorful complete breakfast.

**Super snack idea!** Just wash a few carrots with water and a veggie brush, toss them in a plastic container or sandwich bag, take along some peanut butter or low-fat salad dressing and you have a super fast super snack.

**Delicious dinner addition!** When making stews or soups don’t forget to add a few fresh or frozen carrots to the pot. Grate a carrot or two and combine with pineapple and raisins for a fresh side salad. Cut your carrots into small thin sticks, like matchsticks, steam or blanch, combine with sautéed onions, and sprinkle with fresh parsley.
Food Safety Corner
Cleaning and Sanitizing in Your Home

Prevent the spread of germs by cleaning and sanitizing areas where your food is prepared. Cleaning gets rid of dirt and grime you can see. Sanitizing gets rid of germs you can't see.

Steps to kitchen cleanliness

Be sure to clean and sanitize kitchen surfaces both before you prepare foods and immediately after preparing foods. Surfaces include counters, cutting boards, dishes, knives, utensils, pots and pans.

1. Clean:
   • Clean all surfaces with warm, soapy water.
   • Rinse with clean water.
   • Air dry OR dry with a clean paper towel.

2. Sanitize:
   • Dip, wipe or spray cleaned surfaces with homemade sanitizing solution.

Homemade Sanitizer Recipes

For Food Contact Surfaces: Combine 1 scant teaspoon (6%) chlorine bleach with 1 quart water. Store in a labeled spray bottle with snug top out of direct sunlight. Replace each week.

Some things to remember:

• Bleach is inactivated when mixed with soapy water.
• Too little bleach in your sanitizing solution will not kill germs.
• Too much bleach in your sanitizing solution is toxic.
• Do not use chlorine bleach with added fragrance — this is not food safe.
Quick and Easy Eat Well Recipe
Carrot Fried Rice

INGREDIENTS
2 teaspoons vegetable oil
1 small onion, chopped
1 tablespoon fresh ginger, chopped
1 tablespoon garlic, diced
2 eggs, beaten
3 cups cooked rice
1 ½ cups carrots, peeled and cut into ¼ inch rounds
2 tablespoons light soy sauce

DIRECTIONS
1. Heat oil in a large skillet.
2. Over medium heat, sauté onions, ginger and garlic until fragrant.
3. Add eggs, scramble.
5. Continue to stir over low heat for 5 to 6 minutes and serve hot.

VARIATIONS
Add ground turkey or beef, chicken, shrimp or tofu in step #3.
Add broccoli, snow peas or celery in step #4.

Servings: 5   Serving size: 1 cup
Price per recipe $1.69    Price per serving $.39