

The Carrot

Carrots must be our most versatile winter crop. From the unpeeled and raw snack, to the sublime sweetness of a creamy soup, the brightness of this vegetable will cheer any eater.

Carrots have a long growing season, so they must be weeded early and often. Once they are dug from the earth, they are washed for storage. Their lacy green tops are removed when stored for the season (and when you purchase carrots in the warm months, remove the greenery before storing at home). When you select carrots at the market, look for firm and unwrinkled veggies. Be sure to ask your farmer what kind of carrots they grew to learn new flavors. You may become a fan of Chantenay, French Round, Thumbelina, or the Purple Dragon!

Commercially grown carrots have nothing on our locally grown beauties. Carrots, delicious and appealing in their raw form, have been rendered tasteless and less nutritious when they are pre-peeled, cut, (or whittled down to “baby carrots”) and bagged. If you know someone who is not convinced of the superiority of local produce, a carrot can be the best test for a flavor revelation.

Their bright color (orange for the most part, but there are yellow and purple varieties) indicates lots of beta carotene, or vitamin A. They also supply vitamin C and dietary fiber.

Enjoy carrots this season roasted, baked into a cake, pureed into soup, or raw!

*“Do you carrot all for me? If we cantaloupe,
My heart beets for you. Lettuce marry:
With your turnip nose, Weed make a swell pear.”
And your radish face,
You are a peach. Traditional Vegetable Poem*



Recipes and information from Seacoast Eat Local (www.seacoasteatlocal.org) made possible by a grant from Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (www.sare.org).

Hot Carrot Sauce

5 cloves LOCAL garlic, unpeeled
1 cup chopped LOCAL carrot
1 cup roughly chopped white onion
8 medium orange habanero chiles, stemmed
3/4 cup LOCAL apple cider vinegar
2 teaspoons salt
1/4 teaspoon LOCAL honey

1. Dry roast the garlic in a skillet over medium heat, turning regularly until soft and blackened in spots, 10 minutes. When cool, peel.
2. In a small saucepan, combine the carrot, onion and habanero chiles with the vinegar and 1 cup water. Partially cover and simmer over medium-low heat until the carrots are thoroughly tender, about 10 minutes.
3. Pour into a blender or food processor, add the roasted garlic, salt, and honey. Blend until smooth.

Carrot Ginger Salad

1 pound of LOCAL carrots
Salt
1/2 teaspoon toasted cumin seeds
1 inch piece of ginger minced or grated
1/2 teaspoon of paprika
Juice of 1/2 a lime
2 Tablespoons olive oil

1. Cut carrots into matchsticks, and boil in salted water briefly (enough to make pliable but still crisp).
2. Drain and toss with salt, cumin, ginger, and paprika. Allow to marinate for 2 hours or overnight in the fridge.
3. Before serving, add lime and olive oil.

Carrot-Honey Cake

2 cups shredded LOCAL carrots
1/4 cup fresh lemon juice
3/4 cup LOCAL whole wheat flour
1 1/2 cups all purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
2 LOCAL eggs
10 tablespoons LOCAL butter, melted, cooled
3/4 cup LOCAL honey (grease measuring cup for easier pouring)

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Combine carrots and lemon juice.
3. Combine all dry ingredients in a large bowl.
4. With a whisk or mixer, add eggs, butter, honey, and then carrots to dry ingredients. Beat briefly till well-mixed.
5. Pour batter into a buttered 8 inch cake pan or bundt pan. Bake till tester comes out clean, about 30 minutes.