

Carrot

Daucus carota

Nutrition Facts:

Serving Size = 1/2 c cooked

- Calories – 35
- Proteins (g) – 0.9
- Carbohydrates (g) – 8
- Fiber (g) – 2.6
- Fat (g) – 0.1
- Vitamin A (I.U.) – 19,152
- Vitamin B₆ (mg) – 0.19
- Iron (mg) – 0.5
- Potassium (mg) – 177

Carrots are a good source of beta carotene, an antioxidant and the precursor to vitamin A. They also contain calcium pectate which can lower "bad" cholesterol levels.

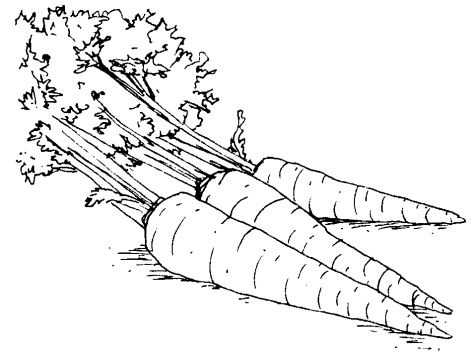
Carrots are available year round.

Carrots are members of the Umbelliferae family and close relatives of celery, cilantro, dill, parsley, parsnip, and Queen Anne's Lace, or wild carrot. They originated in middle Asia and have been cultivated in Afghanistan 2000-3000 years ago. The first carrots grown were purple and pale yellow. Their early use was primarily medicinal and was touted as prescribed to cure stomach problems as well as liver and kidney ailments. It was not until the 17th century in the Netherlands that orange carrots were cultivated.

What to Look for When Purchasing

Carrots may be sold in bunches with their tops on, loose without their tops, or in bags. Select carrots that are brightly colored and firm. Do not purchase carrots that are shriveled, soft or cracked. Carrots with small cores are sweeter than those with large, woody cores. Because you can't see the core at the time of purchase, look for carrots with smaller shoulders—the top of the carrot where the leaves are attached.

Buy one pound of carrots for 3-4 people (about 3 cups grated or 4 cups diced).



Storage Tips

Remove carrot tops if they are still attached at the time of purchase to reduce water loss in storage. Refrigerate in a plastic bag and use within 1-2 weeks.

Cooking Tips

Wash with cold water and scrub with a vegetable brush before using. Carrots may be eaten raw or steamed, stir-fried, or boiled in a soup, stew or casserole. When cooking carrots, cook with a little vegetable oil. Beta carotene is fat soluble and the oil will aid the body's absorption of beta carotene. Don't overcook carrots as this will decrease the carotene level.

Uses

- ▶ Eat raw as a snack or with dip
- ▶ Add chopped or grated carrots to soups and tomato sauces to sweeten them
- ▶ Carrot juice
- ▶ Puree with onions or leeks to make a creamy soup
- ▶ Carrot slaw with apples or dried fruit