

# CARROTS

**Carrots** are rich in beta carotene, as their name implies. Beta carotene is an organic compound that is converted into vitamin A in the body and is beneficial for eye sight. Today's carrots provide consumers with 75% more beta carotene than those available 25 years ago and provide 30% of the vitamin A in the American diet. Carrots are also a good source of vitamins C and K, potassium, and fiber. This tasty vegetable is also low in calories: 1 cup of chopped carrots provides only 52 calories.

The carrot has a somewhat obscure history, but evidence shows different varieties were cultivated pre-900s in Afghanistan and surrounding areas and by the 1000s in Iran, northern Arabia, Syria, and North Africa. The carrot was introduced to the United States in the 17<sup>th</sup> century but did not become popular until after World War I. Approximately 2 billion pounds of carrots are grown in the United States each year, the majority of which are grown in Texas, California, and Michigan.

Carrots are most commonly orange but can also be red, purple, yellow, white, and black. The orange type is dominant world-wide. Regardless of variety, look for carrots that are smooth, firm, and well-colored. If the carrots still have their green tops on, make sure they are bright green and fresh looking.

Carrots can be enjoyed in a variety of ways:

**Raw.** Try them raw with some dip or shredded on a salad or sandwich.

**Steamed.** Steamed carrots are a great addition to any meal. Add a little black pepper and violá— you have a wonderfully delicious and easy side dish.

**Roasted.** Slice them and roast them in the oven with some potatoes and olive oil.

**Boiled.** Carrots are a perfect addition to a stew or soup.

## Fun Fact:

Orange carrots—carotene carrots—are thought to have been cultivated before the 8<sup>th</sup> century in the regions around Turkey.

## Carrots with Tomatoes & Macaroni

### Ingredients:

- 1 cup elbow macaroni
- 1 Tablespoon olive oil
- 1 small chopped onion
- 4 chopped plum tomatoes
- ½ cup of tomato juice
- 6 large carrots, peeled and sliced
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- ¼ teaspoon sugar
- 2 Tablespoons fresh parsley, chopped
- 1 teaspoon butter

### Instructions:

1. Cook elbow macaroni according to package instructions.
2. In a saucepan, sauté the onion in the oil over medium heat until soft. Add the tomatoes, tomato juice, carrots, salt, pepper, and sugar.
3. Cover and simmer for 5 minutes. Remove the cover and continue to simmer, stirring often, for another 5 minutes, or until the carrots are tender and the tomatoes are cooked down to a sauce.
4. Stir in the parsley. Mix the butter with the cooked elbow macaroni, then stir in the carrot mixture and serve.

Makes 4 servings.

Source: USDA Recipe Finder

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"Growing a Healthier You, Nutrition from the Farm to Your Table" is available at [www.cnpp.usda.gov/knowyourfarmer.htm](http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/knowyourfarmer.htm).

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