



## CARROTS

*The crunchy texture and oh-so-sweet flavor of fully matured fresh carrots is something I always look forward to. Besides their rich flavor either raw or cooked, carrots are a top source of beta-carotene, a major cancer prevention hedge also important for good eye health.*

*These colorful crispy roots are now available from seed in a rainbow of colors besides orange, including yellow, dark purple and satiny white, each with different antioxidant properties. Enjoy raw carrots in salads and slaws and keep them available as a cooking mainstay, whether simply tossed in oil and roasted, or in sautéés, stir-fries, stews and casseroles.*

### Growing Carrots

Dig the bed over well before planting, but avoid using fresh manure. To help space tiny carrot seeds, mix them with sand before sowing. Plant directly in a well-prepared fine-textured seedbed. Be patient; seed can take 2 weeks to germinate. Keep the seedbed evenly moist so seeds don't dry out while germinating. To enhance germination, spread a piece of burlap or floating row cover over the seedbed just until the seeds germinate (lift to check daily), to conserve moisture more reliably.

It's vital to carefully thin your young carrot seedlings several times starting when they are just an inch or two tall. Seedlings need to be about 2 inches apart, giving roots room to mature. Don't harvest too early; best flavor develops only when carrots are sized up and fully colored.

Sow several successive crops for a constant supply. Carrots "store" well in the ground, so you can pull them as desired over the season. In late fall, give the carrot bed a thick mulch to protect them, and you can harvest your carrots right through early winter.

### MINT-GLAZED CARROTS

*Simple preparations are best, especially when carrots are young and sweet. In this tasty side dish, carrots are lightly steamed, glazed and then tossed with mint fresh from the garden.*

**1 pound carrots, peeled and thinly sliced**  
**2 tablespoons butter**  
**1 teaspoon lemon juice**  
**1-1/2 tablespoons sugar**  
**1/3 cup chicken broth**  
**salt and freshly ground pepper**  
**2-1/2 teaspoons finely chopped fresh mint**

In a small saucepan, steam the carrots over boiling water until just tender-crisp. Drain and set aside.

Warm the butter in a deep skillet. Add the carrots, lemon juice and sugar. Cook over medium heat, shaking the pan to coat carrots evenly. Add the chicken broth and continue cooking slowly, stirring occasionally, until liquid is evaporated and the carrots are light golden. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Stir in mint and mix well. Serve immediately.

*Serves 4*

### BLUSHING CARROTS

*Move everyday carrots from ordinary to extraordinary with this dish that poaches them with pears, red wine and lemon thyme, and finishes with a light spiced glaze.*

**1 tablespoon butter**  
**1 medium onion, finely chopped**  
**1 pound carrots, peeled and sliced 1/2-inch thick**  
**about 1 cup Zinfandel or other full-flavored red wine**  
**1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg**  
**1 large, firm, ripe pear, cored and cut into 1-inch chunks**  
**3 tablespoons brown sugar**  
**1 tablespoon chopped fresh lemon thyme\***  
**salt and freshly ground pepper**

In a medium skillet over medium heat, warm the butter. Add the onion and sauté slowly for 3 minutes. Increase heat to medium-high, add the carrots and stir-fry for 3 minutes. Add 1/2 cup of the wine and the nutmeg. Cover and simmer until carrots are almost tender. Add pears, brown sugar and enough extra wine so that pears are partially covered with liquid.

Cook, uncovered, for 5 to 10 minutes, until carrots and pears are tender, liquid has evaporated and pears and carrots are coated in a light glaze. Stir in the lemon thyme and add salt and pepper to taste. Serve immediately.

*Serves 4*

\*If lemon thyme is not available, use 2 teaspoons chopped fresh regular thyme and 1/2 teaspoon lemon zest.

### SAUTÉED CARROTS WITH GARLIC CLOVES AND FENNEL

*The savory richness of slow-cooked whole garlic cloves accents sweet carrots and the sweet anise flavor of fennel. A perfect dish for fall, pairing well with hearty roasted meats or poultry.*

**2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil**  
**1 pound carrots, peeled, and cut diagonally into 1/2-inch slices**  
**12 cloves garlic, peeled (left whole)**  
**1/2 cup chopped onion**  
**1/2 cup chopped fennel bulbs (reserve tops for garnish)**  
**salt and freshly ground black pepper**  
**2 teaspoons chopped fresh tarragon**  
**2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley**

### GARNISH

**2 tablespoons finely chopped fennel tops**

In a heavy (preferably nonstick) skillet with a tight-fitting lid, warm the oil over medium heat. Add the carrots, garlic, onion and fennel, and toss to coat with the oil. Cover the pan, lower the heat, and sauté slowly over very low heat, stirring frequently, for 10 to 15 minutes, or until vegetables are tender. Add salt and pepper to taste, tarragon and parsley, and toss to combine. Garnish with chopped fennel tops and serve.

*Serves 4*

