

Vegetable Main Dish Recipes Vol. 2

Enjoy Carrots

—Eat Smart and Improve Your Immunity!

Carrots, which go well with all types of cuisine and are readily available throughout the year, are a popular vegetable in almost every household. This issue shows you a few easy ways for you to eat and enjoy more of these nutritious vegetables.

BY Makiko Hei



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Main Health Benefits of Carrots

Carrots contain far more carotene than other vegetables. Carotene is a nutrient that has important functions, converting into vitamin A in the body to maintain health.

To be specific, carrots help strengthen the mucous membranes in the nose and throat, which makes it easier to fight off infection by the cold virus. They are also an antioxidant that helps maintain the immune system. In addition, carrots reportedly have a positive effect on maintaining skin health and preventing night blindness*.

Carrots also have an abundance of dietary fiber, which improves bowel movements and helps absorb fat, sugar, sodium, and so on and expel them from the body. In addition, carrots seem to help prevent and improve conditions such as obesity, high cholesterol, diabetes, and high blood pressure.

*Night blindness: A condition in which patients' eyesight deteriorates significantly, making it difficult to see in dim light or darkness.

They Are Best Unpeeled

Please try to eat unpeeled carrots because their skin contains an abundance of carotene. In addition, eating carrots cooked with oil will help increase the body's absorption of carotene.

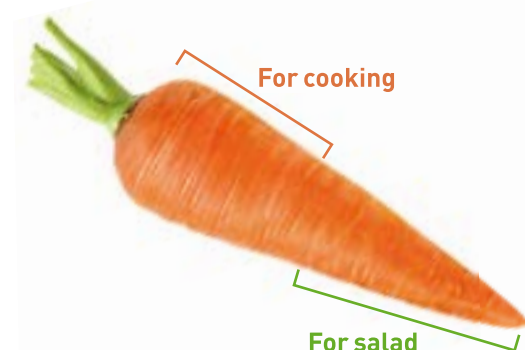
How to Store Carrots

Wrap carrots in newspaper or put them in a plastic bag and store them in a cool place, because carrots are easily damaged by exposure to air blowing on them. It's best to store them in a vegetable crisper, if your refrigerator has one.

Tips for Eating Different Parts of the Carrot

The part of the carrot closest to the stalks and leaves has thicker fibers, because the tissue here is more mature. This part has a richer flavor, too, so it's best for dishes where the carrot is boiled, sautéed or grated instead of eating it raw.

On the other hand, the narrow part of the carrots toward the tip is fresh and delicious to eat raw. This part is still growing, so the fibers are tender and the skin is thin.



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Carrot and Minced Pork Salad

(4 servings)

The key is not only to use an unpeeled carrot, but also to make sure you don't overcook it when you're sautéing this dish.

[Ingredients]

180 g carrot (1 medium-size)

50g watercress (if available)

300g minced pork

1 clove garlic

● 2 teaspoons sake

● 2 teaspoons soy sauce

● 2 teaspoons mirin (sweet cooking sake)

1 tablespoon sesame oil x 2

Water as needed



Sauce

1 or 2 green chilies (more or less depending on your preference)

1 tablespoon miso (Gochujang or Japanese miso)

1 tablespoon honey

1 tablespoon roasted white sesame

1 tablespoon sesame oil

1 teaspoon ginger (grated)

* You can store the sauce in the refrigerator for about two weeks.

[Preparation]

1. Slice the unpeeled carrot into 1cm thick rounds. Separate the watercress leaves and stems and cut the stems to half their original length. Combine the sauce ingredients and mix well.
2. Heat sesame oil in a frying pan and cook the carrots on both sides. Several times during this process, pour about one tablespoon of water into the pan, making sure that the carrot's texture remains crunchy. Remove them from the pan.
3. Pour sesame oil and garlic into the same frying pan used in the (2) above and heat them, and when the aroma of the garlic comes out, add the patty of minced pork. Flatten the pork with a spatula, and let it cook for 2~3 minutes, until it turns light brown. Then, turn it to cook the other side. Remove excess oil with a paper towel as needed, cut the pork into bite-sized pieces, and cover them with the sauce minced meat into one bite size, and thoroughly cover them with the liquid seasonings (above ● ● ●).
4. Add cooked carrots and watercress stems to (3) and mix thoroughly. Put them into the bowl, put watercress leaves on top, and finally, pour sauce over the dish.



Carrot and rice potage (6 servings)

This is a healthy soup, bulked up with rice instead of dairy products and wheat flour.

[Ingredients]

300g carrot
100g onion
80g rice (cooked)
800cc chicken bouillon
1 tablespoon olive oil

1/2 teaspoon salt
Pepper (to taste)
Mixed nuts (to taste) (chop in advance)
Extra virgin olive oil (to taste)



[Preparation]

1. Thinly slice the unpeeled carrot, and chop the onion into 3mm pieces.
2. Put olive oil and (1) in pot and cook on medium heat until onion becomes tender, then add rice and bouillon and boil until the vegetables become soft.
3. Mix (2) in a blender, return to heat when smooth, season with salt and pepper.
4. Serve in a plate, drizzle with circles of olive oil, and top with mixed nuts.

Profile

Makiko Hei

She runs a vegetable cooking school a “vege vege vege*” (Meguro, Tokyo)

HP: <https://vege3.jp/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/makichanshokudo/>

* The school teaches a careful approach to preparing of vegetables in ways to create glamorous vegetable dishes, with the motto “Love vegetables, make delicious daily meals.”

