



CARROTS

Uses

Carrots should be firm and brightly colored from top to bottom. Near the leafy crown of the root, there may be a greenish tinge, but dark or black coloring is an indication of age. Keeping carrots refrigerated in moisture-retaining packaging will preserve them for up to a month. The green leaves should be twisted off before storage, because they wilt quickly and draw moisture from the carrots. Fruits that produce ethylene gas as they ripen, such as apples or pears, should not be stored in the same bag with carrots.

With the exception of beets, carrots contain more sugar than any other vegetable. They are a satisfying snack when eaten raw and are a tasty addition to a variety of mixed dishes. Grated raw carrots may be added to fruit or vegetable salads, mixed with peanut butter as a sandwich filling, or used in baking cakes, muffins, or breads. Cooked carrots enhance the flavor of casseroles, soups and stews. Pureed carrot spay be used in cookies, puddings and souffles.

Recipe

Super Carrot Raisin Salad

2-3 medium carrots (2 cups peeled and shredded)

1/2 cup raisins

1/2 cup chopped fresh or canned pineapple

1 Tblsp. chopped cilantro

Dressing

2 Tblsp. canned coconut milk

1/4 tsp turmeric

1/2 Tblsp honey

1 tsp orange zest

1 Tblsp fresh lemon juice

1 Tblsp extra virgin olive oil

salt and pepper to taste

Blend all dressing ingredients together in blender adding olive oil a little at a time at end.

Shred carrots in food processor. Depending on how big they are, it will take about 2 or 3 carrots. If you don't have a food processor, this can be done with hand grater. It will take a little longer. Mix with raisins and pineapple, and toss with desired a mount of dressing. Stir in chopped cilantro.

Varieties

Many varieties of carrots are grown throughout the world. Colors range from white to yellow to crimson. A carrot may be as short as 3 to 6 inches and as long as several feet. However, most carrots on the US market today are orange and 7 to 9 inches long. Mini-peeled carrots are cut from the smaller, sweeter "caropak" carrots, which have been grown tightly together especially for this purpose. Despite packaging and labeling claims, mini-peeled carrots are not baby carrots. True baby carrots are carrots harvested earlier than usual and do, in fact, look like miniature carrots. They are often sold with their green tops still on them in specialty food stores.

Description

The carrot plant is a member of the parsley family, characterized by light, feathery leaves. Other member of this family include fennel, dill, and celery. The edible root of the plant is usually orange and shaped like a long cylindrical cone. A fibrous channel or core runs the length of the vegetable; usually, the smaller the core, the younger and sweeter the vegetable.

Nutrient Content

Carrots are an excellent source of vitamin A. In addition, they are a very good source of vitamin C, vitamin K, dietary fiber and potassium.

Availability

Carrots are available year round and will keeping the refrigerator in a plastic bag up to 10 days. Removing the green tops will help to lengthen the shelf life of carrots.

Origin

The first carrots, which were white, purple and yellow, were cultivated in Afghanistan and then brought to the Mediterranean area. Today's orange carrots descend from Dutch-bred carrots and have been grown in the United States since colonial times. Domestically, California produces about 60 percent of the United States crop, 25 percent of which goes into the production of mini-peeled carrots.

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