



# Connecting School Foods to Curriculum, NJ Farms, and the Kitchen Table

## Carrots are the featured produce item for Garden State on Your Plate!

### A Garden State on Your Plate Carrot Tasting

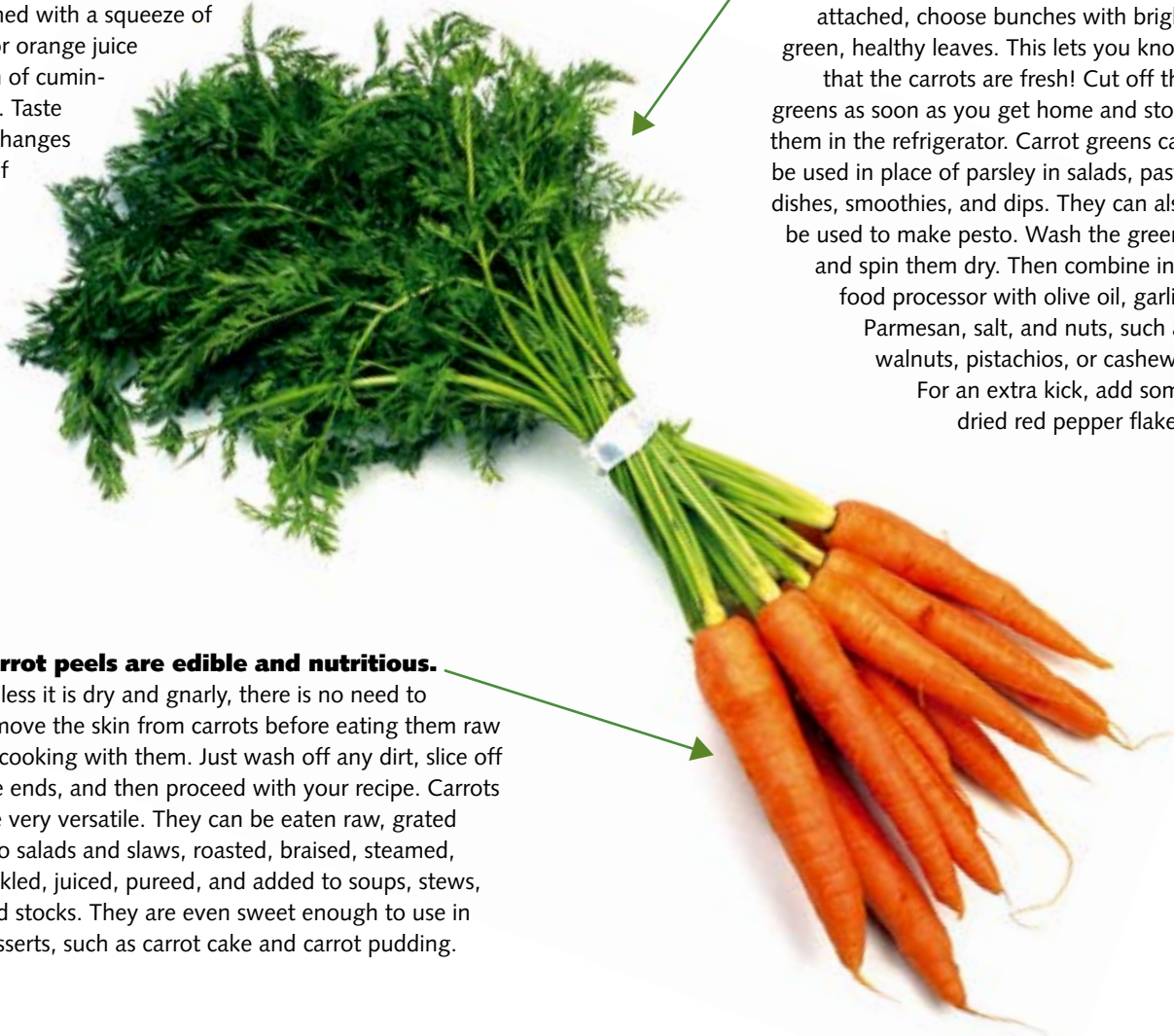
To conduct your own Garden State on Your Plate Carrot Tasting, begin by tasting a slice each from two different colors of locally grown carrots. Note any differences in flavor. Then taste roasted carrots, first plain and then seasoned with a squeeze of fresh lime or orange juice and a pinch of cumin-infused salt. Taste how each changes the flavor of the carrots.

### Don't throw away those carrot tops!

When buying carrots with the tops still attached, choose bunches with bright green, healthy leaves. This lets you know that the carrots are fresh! Cut off the greens as soon as you get home and store them in the refrigerator. Carrot greens can be used in place of parsley in salads, pasta dishes, smoothies, and dips. They can also be used to make pesto. Wash the greens and spin them dry. Then combine in a food processor with olive oil, garlic, Parmesan, salt, and nuts, such as walnuts, pistachios, or cashews. For an extra kick, add some dried red pepper flakes.

### Carrot peels are edible and nutritious.

Unless it is dry and gnarly, there is no need to remove the skin from carrots before eating them raw or cooking with them. Just wash off any dirt, slice off the ends, and then proceed with your recipe. Carrots are very versatile. They can be eaten raw, grated into salads and slaws, roasted, braised, steamed, pickled, juiced, pureed, and added to soups, stews, and stocks. They are even sweet enough to use in desserts, such as carrot cake and carrot pudding.



See Garden State on Your Plate photos on our website at [PSGCOOP.org](http://PSGCOOP.org)

## Quick Roasted Carrots

Roasting brings out the sweetness in carrots and makes a quick and tasty side dish. Use the list of *Ingredients That Go Well With Carrots* (below left) to get ideas for seasoning your roasted carrots.

Heat oven to 400°F. Wash carrots and peel only if needed. Cut carrots into thick disks, on the diagonal, or lengthwise into quarters or sixths and then into 2-inch pieces. Toss in olive oil, salt, pepper, and an herb or spice, such as thyme, or chili powder and cumin. Spread in a single layer on a low-sided baking sheet and roast, stirring occasionally, until tender.

## Eating the Rainbow

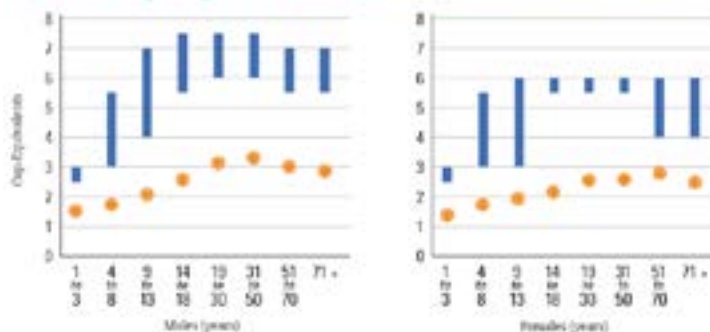
How many red-orange-yellow veggies do you treat yourself to each week?

– [Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2015-2020, A Closer Look](#)

### Average Vegetable Subgroup Intakes in Cup-Equivalents per Week by Age-Sex Groups, Compared to Ranges of Recommended Intakes per Week



#### Red & Orange Vegetables



## Ingredients that Go Well with Carrots

allspice • almonds • apples • basil • bay leaf • beets • burdock • butter cabbage • caraway • cardamom • cashews • celery • chervil • chickpeas chives • cilantro • cinnamon • clove • coconut • coriander • cumin dill • fennel • ginger • leeks • lemon • lime • mint • mustard • nutmeg olives • orange • parsley • parsnips • rosemary • sesame • shallots tarragon • thyme • turmeric • turnips • vinegar • walnuts • yogurt

## Words that Describe the Flavor, Color, and Texture of Carrots

bitter • cardboardy • carroty • cloves  
 cloying • crisp • earthy • firm • fruity  
 green grass • harsh • hay-like • juicy • musty  
 orange • perfumey • piney • salty • sharp  
 sweet • turpentine • umami • waxy • woody

### GARDEN STATE ON YOUR PLATE CARROT FACTS

Carrots come in different shapes — round, cylindrical, fat, thin, short, and long — and colors, including orange, purple, red, yellow, and off-white.

Carrots are root vegetables. A carrot is actually a taproot, which is a big main root that grows straight down and puts off lots of smaller side roots.

Carrots are in the Umbelliferae family — the same plant family as parsley, celery, parsnips, dill, fennel, and Queen Anne’s Lace.

Carrots contain more natural sugar than any other vegetable, except beets. Carrots can be eaten raw, roasted, boiled, steamed, pickled, juiced, and grilled.

“Baby” carrots are actually large carrots that have been peeled and polished until they turn into short, round-ended baby carrots.

Carrots are one of the best sources of Vitamin A — providing 30% of the vitamin A in American diets. Vitamin A is good for vision, bones, and teeth. The Vitamin A and antioxidants in carrots protect the skin from sun damage.

Carrots are one of the ten most economically important vegetable crops in the world. Americans eat, on average, 10.6 pounds of fresh carrots per person per year.

The domesticated carrot that we know today originated from the wild carrot *Daucus carota*, which is native to Europe and southwestern Asia.

Carrots are loaded with beta-carotene, a natural chemical that the body turns into vitamin A. The deeper orange the carrot, the more beta-carotene you’re getting.

Carrot leaves are edible. They have an earthy, herbal flavor and can be made into pesto or chopped and added to salads.



**Garden State on Your Plate** is a series of seasonal produce tastings in the cafeterias at Princeton Public Schools. The emphasis is on a New Jersey produce item, its growth requirements, the different ways it can be prepared, and how the flavor can be altered by the chef and the students. Students learn about farming, climate, and cooking, and they gain flavor power—the ability to personalize their item using salt and citrus. The tastings illustrate and amplify curriculum in the classroom, in the cafeteria, and in the district’s Edible Gardens.



Founded in 2005, Princeton School Gardens Cooperative fosters garden- and food-based education in the classroom, cafeteria and community PSGCOOP.ORG

## Quick Carrot-Apple Salad

Serves 6.

Grate about 1 pound of carrots into a medium mixing bowl. Add one peeled and chopped sweet-tart apple, peeled. Stir in ½ cup of plump raisins and ½ cup of toasted nuts or sunflower/pumpkin seeds, if desired. Mix together ¼ cup of plain yogurt, 1 tablespoon mayonnaise, 1 tablespoon lemon juice and a dash of salt. Dress salad, tossing gently to coat.

## Elote Carrots

Adapted from Plates and Pairings: <https://www.platingsandpairings.com/oven-roasted-carrots-elote-style/>

- 1-1/2 pounds small to medium carrots (peeled and halved lengthwise)
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1/2 teaspoon chili powder (ancho or guajillo chile powder, plus more for serving)
- 1/2 teaspoon cumin
- 2 tablespoons mayonnaise
- 1/3 cup lime juice
- 1 jalapeno, thinly sliced
- 2 cloves garlic, grated or pressed
- 1 teaspoon honey
- 1/2 cup cilantro, finely chopped
- 2 ounces cotija (queso fresco, parmesan, or feta, grated/crumbled)
- Salt and pepper to taste

1. Heat oven to 450°F.
2. Arrange carrots on baking sheet and drizzle with olive oil, toss with chili powder and cumin, and season with salt & pepper.
3. Roast 15-20 minutes, until tender when pierced with a fork.
4. Meanwhile, combine mayonnaise, lime juice, jalapeno, garlic and honey in a small bowl. Season with salt and pepper, to taste.
5. Arrange carrots on a serving platter and drizzle with sauce. Sprinkle with cilantro and crumbled cheese. Serve hot or at room temperature.

## Red Lentil Soup with Carrot and Lemon

Adapted from a Turkish soup, mercimek corbasi, by Melissa Clark, *The New York Times*: <https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/1016062-red-lentil-soup>

4 servings

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|--|---|
| 3 tablespoons olive oil, plus more for drizzling | Pinch of chili powder or ground cayenne, plus more to taste |
| 1 large onion, chopped                           | 1 quart chicken or vegetable broth                          |
| 2 garlic cloves, minced                          | 1 cup red lentils   |
| 1 tablespoon tomato paste                        | 1 large carrot, peeled and diced                            |
| 1 teaspoon ground cumin                          | Juice of 1/2 lemon, more to taste                           |
| Salt and black pepper                            | 3 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro                        |

1. In a large pot, heat 3 tablespoons oil over high until hot and shimmering. Add onion and garlic, and sauté until golden, about 4 minutes.
2. Stir in tomato paste, cumin, ¼ teaspoons each salt and black pepper and the chili powder, and sauté for 2 minutes longer.
3. Add broth, 2 cups water, lentils and carrot. Bring to a simmer, then partly cover pot and turn heat to medium-low. Simmer until lentils are soft, about 30 minutes. Taste and add salt if necessary.
4. Using an immersion or regular blender or a food processor, purée half the soup, then add it back to pot. The soup should be somewhat chunky.
5. Reheat soup if necessary, then stir in lemon juice and cilantro. Serve soup drizzled with good olive oil and dusted lightly with chili powder, if desired.

## Roasted Carrots with Herbed Yogurt

Adapted from *Zaitoun: Recipes from the Palestinian Kitchen*, by Yasmin Khan: <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/food-and-drink/recipes/zaitoun-cookbook-rainbow-carrots-roast-chicken-sumac-cooking-instructions-a8459716.html>

4 servings

2 pounds (1 kg) carrots	1 garlic clove, crushed
3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil	1 teaspoon finely chopped fresh dill or ½ teaspoon dried dill
Sea salt	1 teaspoon dried mint
Freshly ground black pepper	1/2 teaspoon nigella seed
3 tablespoons plain yogurt	3/4 teaspoon sesame seeds

1. Heat oven to 400°F/200°C
2. Clean carrots, peeling if necessary, and slice them diagonally into thick wedges.
3. Toss with 2 tablespoons of olive oil and ¼ teaspoon salt. Roast for 30-35 minutes or until tender but still have some bite.
4. Meanwhile, in medium mixing bowl, whisk together all the remaining ingredients, beginning with reserved oil, except for the seeds and with ¼ teaspoon each salt and pepper
5. Cool carrots to room temperature; add to dressing and mix well. Taste and adjust seasonings.
6. Transfer to serving bowl; scatter nigella and sesame seeds. Eat immediately, or allow to rest for about an hour before serving. Refrigerate leftovers.

*In honor of the Persian New Year, which in 2024 falls on Tuesday, March 19*

## Persian-Style Carrots and Black-eyed Peas

Adapted from *Soframiz: Vibrant Middle Eastern Recipes from Sofra Bakery and Cafe*, by Ana Sortun and Maura Kilpatrick

6-8 servings

1 cup dried black-eyed peas	1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt, plus more to taste	1/2 teaspoon coriander
Pinch of saffron	1/2 teaspoon pepper
2 tablespoons water	1/4 teaspoon cardamom
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil	1 teaspoon finely chopped garlic
1 small onion, finely chopped	Freshly ground black pepper
4 cups thin carrot rounds	1 teaspoon freshly squeezed lemon juice
1 red bell pepper, stemmed, seeded, and finely chopped	2 teaspoons honey
2/3 teaspoon cumin	2 tablespoons chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley leaves

1. In a medium-sized saucepan, combine the black-eyed peas and 4 cups water and bring to a boil over high heat. Lower the heat and simmer until tender, about 25 minutes. Off the heat, add the salt and set aside while the peas absorb some salt for 10 minutes. Drain.
2. Meanwhile, put the saffron and water in a small bowl. Mix and set aside for at least 15 minutes and as long as overnight.
3. Place a large sauté pan over medium-low heat and add the olive oil, onion, carrots, and red bell pepper, stirring until the peppers start to soften and the onion is translucent, about 10 minutes. Add the saffron (and its blooming water), spices, garlic, and black-eyed peas. Season the carrots and peas with salt and pepper to taste and stew until the carrots and peppers are tender and the black-eyed peas are glazed.
4. Remove from the heat and set aside to cool. Stir in the lemon juice, honey, and parsley. Serve cold or at room temperature.

## Carrot-Ginger Dressing

Dress any salad greens with this Japanese-inspired riff

Adapted from Eric Kim, *The New York Times*: <https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/1023298-crunchy-greens-with-carrot-ginger-dressing>

4 servings

- 1 large carrot, peeled and coarsely chopped
- 1 (2-inch) piece fresh ginger, peeled and coarsely chopped
- 1/2 cup neutral oil (such as grapeseed)
- 4 tablespoons rice vinegar
- 3 teaspoons soy sauce
- 1 teaspoon granulated sugar
- 1/3 white onion (or 2 teaspoons onion powder)
- Salt
- 2 tablespoons cold water
- Dash of roasted sesame oil
- 1 teaspoon sesame seeds, if desired

1. In a food processor, purée the carrot, ginger, olive oil, rice vinegar, soy sauce, sugar, onion, a pinch of salt, 2 tablespoons cold water and sesame oil until as smooth as possible, 1 to 2 minutes.
2. Dress salad; garnish with sesame seeds.

## Ma Kauthar's Fresh Carrot Drink

From *In Bibi's Kitchen: Recipes and Stories of Grandmothers From the Eight African Countries that Touch the Indian Ocean*, by Hawa Hasan with Julia Turshen

4 servings

- 4 large carrots
- 1/4 cup granulated sugar
- 4 cups water
- 3 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice, plus more if needed
- Ice, for serving

1. Place carrots, sugar and water in the jar of a blender. Blend until smooth.
2. Pour mixture through a fine-mesh sieve set over a pitcher, pressing down to extract all the liquid from the solids
3. Whisk in the lemon juice.
4. Taste and adjust seasonings.
5. Fill four tall glasses with ice and divide the drink among them. Serve immediately.