

Carrots - Night Vision and More

By Dr Karin Elgar, Nutritional Therapist

New carrots are just coming into season and taste really sweet.

Carrots are well known to help with night vision. This is because they are one of the richest sources of the carotenoid beta-carotene which is converted into vitamin A which is essential for night vision. Vitamin A is also important for healthy skin, a strong immune system and an effective reproductive system.

The high antioxidant content of carrots helps protect us from cancer, lung and breast cancer in particular, heart disease, and has a general anti-ageing effect.

Carrots are delicious both cooked and raw. The beta-carotene is actually better absorbed from cooked carrots and from meals containing some fat, as it is fat-soluble. Try adding grated carrots to salads, carrot and other vegetable sticks with houmous or guacamole. Freshly made carrot juice is great on its own or mixed with other vegetable or fruit juices.



Recipes

Carrot, apple and raisin salad

Carrots and apples complement each other very well. This salad has a lovely sweet taste and kids will love it.

Serves 2-3

2 medium carrots

1 large apple

1 heaped tbsp raisins

1 tbsp lemon juice

1 tbsp single cream or soya cream

1 heaped tbsp sunflower seeds

Coarsely grate carrots and apples. Mix with the raisins, lemon juice and cream. Sprinkle with sunflower seeds and serve immediately.

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Carrot, sweet potato and tofu soup

A wonderfully warming and nutritious soup. The carrots and sweet potatoes are a rich source of carotenes which are important for the immune system and healthy skin, and the tofu is an excellent source of vegetarian protein. Really quick to make and the soup can also easily be frozen.

1 tbsp coconut oil
1 medium or 2 small onions, finely chopped
2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
¼ tsp each ground ginger, cumin, turmeric and ground coriander
Pinch of cayenne
4-5 large carrots, scrubbed and cut into 1-2 cm pieces
1 large or 2 small sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into 1-2 cm pieces
1 litre vegetable or chicken stock
350 g smooth silken tofu

Gently fry the onions and garlic in the coconut oil until they are soft. Add the spices and fry for another minute. Add carrots, sweet potatoes and stock. Bring to the boil and then simmer for 15 minutes or until the vegetables are soft. Add the tofu and blend until smooth.

Swiss Carrot Nut Cake

Quite different from the traditional English carrot cake, but at least as good. And it's easy and quick to prepare, too.

5 eggs
1tsp lemon juice
5tbsp hot water
180g sugar
250g carrots, finely grated
250g hazelnuts, ground
50g wholemeal wheat or spelt flour
Pinch of clove powder

Cover base of a 24-26cm springform with baking paper and preheat oven to 170°C.

Separate egg whites and egg yolks. Whisk egg whites with the lemon juice and the water until stiff. Gradually add sugar, egg yolks and clove powder. Carefully mix in carrots, nuts, and flour.

Pour into the springform and bake for 50-55 min. You may need to cover the cake with tin foil or baking paper after 20 min to prevent the top from burning.