

Introducing Carly the Carrot

We're pulling out a classic this week– why not introduce your taste buds to Carly the carrot.



Welcome to the Carrot Kingdom – I'm Carly and I'm here to show you around. We're one of the most popular foods on the planet. Have you heard the reviews Bugs Bunny has given us?

We are extremely versatile and you can add us to just about every savoury dish as well as a few sweet ones (carrot cake anyone?). We were probably one of your very first solid foods as a baby and as you've grown we have most likely made frequent appearances on your dinner plate and in your lunchbox!

Availability

We're generally available all year around but were best value from July to February.

Did you know?

- We were one of the first vegetables ever grown by man and can be traced back 5,000 years.
- While the most common colour of carrot is orange - purple, red, white and yellow also exist! The ancient Greeks and Romans were particular fans of these rarer colourful forms of carrot.
- In the past our leaves were used to decorate the crowns of royal kings and queens and as carrots became more common more and more people added carrots leaves to their hats as a decoration!

Why are carrots so good to eat?

We're a very rich source of beta carotene which is converted to vitamin A in our body. Vitamin A helps improve vision including night vision – how cool! It also helps our bones, skin and teeth. We're delicious because we contain natural sugars which give us some sweetness, but we're also a really good source of dietary fibre which is good for your digestive health. Carrots are also a source of several other vitamins including vitamin C, potassium, folate and calcium.

How are carrots grown?

For us to grow, we need deep, sandy soil, plenty of water and a temperate or cool climate. We just love the Irish weather!

We grow below ground, above ground we have leaves which grow from our tops. We start off pale white/yellow and gradually as we grow we change to a deep orange colour. We're harvested by a machine which gently pulls us out of the ground by our leaves. The machine then cuts the top section of our leaves off and we're loaded into large bins ready to be washed, graded, packed and sent to the shops. We're generally not sold with our tops on because we lose water through our leaves and this can cause us to shrivel up!

Fun ways to prepare and eat carrots

It's very easy to prepare us – just wash, remove the top and tail and then you can enjoy us raw, skin and all! Carrot sticks are a great snack for school, or added to salads.

Carrots can also be cooked and eaten in various different ways. We can be mashed, boiled, pureed, grated, steamed, stewed, baked or even juiced!

We can be served as a vegetable, mixed into casseroles or added to stir-fries, salads or soups. The natural sweetness of carrots from the natural sugars also makes them a perfect addition to cakes and scones!

Recipes:

Carrot Mash with a chilli twist!

Ingredients:

- 6 medium carrots, halved and cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 tablespoon of unsalted butter
- 2 teaspoons of honey
- 1/2 teaspoon of chilli powder
- Salt and pepper

Method:

1. Steam carrots until very tender (approx. 25 minutes).
2. Transfer to a medium bowl and mash with a fork or potato masher
3. Stir in butter, honey and chili powder and season with salt and pepper as needed.

Top tips!

Enjoy as a tasty alternative to mashed potato or why not bulk out your mashed potato by adding some of this tasty carrot mixture in!

To really mix things up, Penny and Paul recommend piping the carrot mixture onto a baking tray into 5cm swirls, top with some low protein vegan cheese and grill until browned – yum!!!

Best bit -

We're naturally low in protein and can make up a delicious part of your diet – so what are you waiting for give me a try.

How many times did you try it? _____.

Did you earn your star? ★

