



Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

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VEGETABLE FEATURE: CARROTS

by Andrea Yoder

While we often use this space to feature a new item in the box, this week we're going to give this space to the humble carrot. We consider carrots to be a staple vegetable, which is why we strive to include them in as many boxes as we can starting in early summer and going through the end of the season. However, since they are such a common vegetable, I think sometimes they get overlooked and if you are like me, I forget to use them, and they start piling up in the refrigerator. So, this week's feature article is more about reminding you of all the different ways carrots can be used!

Before we talk about using carrots, I want to mention that there are many different types and varieties which may be best suited for growing at different times of the season. Early season varieties of carrots we grow are characterized by being more tender and juicier than our storage carrots. They also take fewer days to mature and are often harvested with the tops intact. Storage carrots, as the name suggests, are able to be stored for months if you keep them in a plastic bag in the refrigerator. You'll notice they are more dense (some may say hard), which lends to their ability to be stored longer.

So, what can you do with carrots? Carrots are versatile in their uses and may be eaten raw, roasted, boiled, baked, and even fried! They can be added to soups, stews, braised meats, curries, root mashes, pancakes, bread, cookies, and a whole host of other uses. Heck, where I come from Carrot Jello Salad is a mainstay at all the church potlucks! You can make a very simple, quick, and easy salad with just a few ingredients or add shredded carrots to lettuce salads, slaws, etc. Soup is another great way to use carrots---either as the main ingredient or as part of a mélange of vegetables in say, chicken soup. Carrots are also delicious in baked goods such as carrot cake, carrot cookies, apple-carrot muffins, and carrot pancakes.

What's In The Box?

TALON YELLOW ONIONS: We chose this variety of onion because of its storage potential, but also because the seed catalog says it has "Excellent flavor for cooking." See what you think!

ORANGE CARROTS: This week's carrots are smaller, which makes them perfect for roasting whole and they need minimal cutting to turn them into bite-sized pieces for salads, soups, etc. Check out this week's featured recipe for **Indian-Style Butter Carrots!**

GOLD OR RED PRAIRIE POTATOES: Both of this week's potato varieties are waxy potatoes which means they are more moist and hold together well in soups and when boiled. They are not the best option for making mashed potatoes as they will get sticky. You can get away with making "smashed" potatoes as long as you don't work them too much.

SWEET CORN: It looks like this is our final week of sweet corn. If you haven't had your fill of buttered sweet corn on the cob, this is the last chance!

SWEET PEPPERS: This week we're packing a mix of red and/or yellow bell peppers along with orange Italian Frying peppers. These peppers have a thick wall which makes them a good candidate for stuffing! Of course, they are also good sautéed or grilled for fajitas or steak and peppers, or just slice them and eat them with your favorite dip!

MINI SWEET PEPPERS: There is one pound of these sweet peppers in your box this week! They are packaged in a custom zipper bag with green artwork. These snacking peppers are good stuffed with cream cheese, hummus, or other fillings. They are delicious raw or cooked, and if you feel like you have too many peppers this week, they are super easy to preserve. Just pop them into a freezer bag and freeze them whole!

JALAPEÑO PEPPER: There is one jalapeño pepper in your box this week. Use it to make a batch of Tomatillo Salsa Verde!

ITALIAN GARLIC: This variety of garlic typically has smaller cloves, but more of them on a head or bulb of garlic. The flavor is balanced, yet pungent. Store at room temperature until you're ready to use it.

BABY ARUGULA: Fall is a great time to enjoy this spicy green. The flavor is still pungent, but the cool nights help to make it more balanced. Use this as the base for a salad tossed with a simple balsamic vinaigrette, sliced pears or apples and toasted walnuts.

RED BOSTON HEAD LETTUCE: It's time to start eating green salads again! Boston lettuce is also referred to as "Butter Lettuce," perhaps because its leaves are tender and smooth. You can also use the leaves to make lettuce wraps!

TOMATILLOS: The outer husks of the tomatillo start to brown and sometimes dry down as the season progresses. This is normal and typically the fruit inside the protective covering is unaffected. Remove the husk prior to use and discard. Wash the tomatillos before use to remove the slightly sticky coating on the inner surface.

GREEN TOP RED BEETS: We are nearing the end of green top season. Take advantage of this "2-in-1" vegetable and make sure you eat the greens and the beets!

CAULIFLOWER: Use this week's cauliflower to make a beautiful stir-fry along with orange carrots, sweet peppers and onions.

BROCCOLI: Our first fall broccoli crop is coming in, with 3 more to follow. Use the thick, dense stems to make broccoli slaw.

Additionally, carrots pair well with a variety of herbs and spices as well as fruits such as apples and citrus. We've even featured recipes in previous years for including carrots in oatmeal for breakfast! Of course, carrots are also a great item to keep on hand when you just need a crunchy, quick snack to hold you over until dinner is ready! I often will wash and trim some carrots and have them ready to go in the refrigerator for those times when I want a quick, healthy snack!

We are moving into storage carrot season, so it is ok if you don't eat all your carrots each week as they will store for several weeks. Keep them in a plastic bag in the refrigerator to keep them crispy. If your carrots do get a little dehydrated, soak them in ice water for at least 30 minutes to crisp them up again or just use them in a soup or stew where they are going to get soft anyway! Do carrots need to be peeled? Well, that's up to you. The peel is edible, and I seldom peel them. In fact, most of the mineral content lies close to the surface and removing the skins strips them of their healthful goodness. Just give them a rinse and light scrub to remove any dirt.

In closing, carrots are packed with important nutrients, specifically beta carotene which is an important antioxidant and vitamin for our bodies. It's important for vision, immunity and a whole host of other health benefits which make them a great vegetable to eat regularly!

Gajar Makhani—Indian-Style Butter Carrots

Yield: 4-8 servings

1 ¼ oz butter	1 bunch cilantro, washed well	1 Tbsp brown sugar
2 Tbsp vegetable oil	3 tsp garam masala	1 lb 9 oz tomato passata (tomato puree)
1 cup raw cashews	1 tsp ground turmeric	1 cup coconut cream, plus extra to serve
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped	1 tsp ground cardamom	Steamed basmati rice, to serve
1 Tbsp finely grated fresh ginger	1 tsp mild chili powder	Naan or roti bread, to serve
1 Tbsp brown mustard seeds	1 ½ cups Greek-style yogurt	
4 curry leaf branches, leaves picked (about 35-40 leaves)— SEE NOTE BELOW	1 ½ pounds carrots, cut into 1 ¼-inch pieces on the diagonal (peeling optional)	

1. Heat butter and oil in a wide saucepan over medium high heat. Add the cashews and toss for 3 minutes, or until toasted and golden.
2. Add the garlic, ginger, mustard seeds and curry leaves and cook, stirring, for 2 minutes, or until aromatic. Set aside half the cashew mixture for serving.
3. Separate the cilantro leaves and stems. Finely chop both and keep them separate. Add the cilantro stems and spices to the pan and cook, stirring constantly, for 1 minute, or until fragrant.
4. Stir in the yogurt until combined, then add the carrot and stir to coat. Stir in the sugar, tomatoes, coconut cream and 1 cup water and bring to a simmer.
5. Partially cover the pan with a lid. Simmer over low heat for 30--45 minutes, or until the thickest piece of carrot you can find is fork-tender, and the gravy has thickened and reduced slightly.
6. Serve drizzled with extra coconut cream and sprinkled with the reserved cashew mixture and cilantro leaves, with rice and naan or roti bread.

Note from Chef Andrea: Fresh curry leaves may not be readily available, but that's not a reason to forego making this recipe! At the very least, forego the curry leaves or any substitute and this dish will still have a lot of flavor. That being said, some food co-ops or grocery stores may have dried curry leaves available in the bulk spice/herb section. I have purchased them at the Wedge Co-Op in Minneapolis before. If you can't find fresh leaves, substitute half the amount called for in the recipe with dried curry leaves. Curry leaves impart a citrusy flavor, so if you can't find fresh or dried curry leaves you can also just use some fresh lemon or lime zest to add a little brightness to the dish. If using fresh zest, I recommend adding it at the end of cooking for the best flavor.

Recipe borrowed from Alice Zaslavsky's book, *In Praise of Veg: The Ultimate cookbook for Vegetable Lovers*.