



## Child Nutrition Corner- Food Inspires

Childhood exposure to good food inspires healthy eating later in life.

Our May/June promotion is titled “24 Carrot Eyesight”! There is a rainbow of colors on our salad bars at school, carrots being one of them.

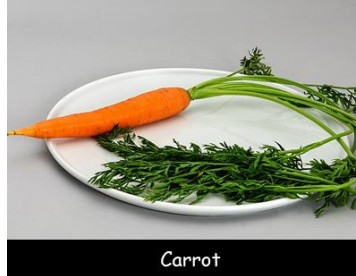
**Check out our fun carrot facts for kids.** Learn interesting information about the carrot, its use throughout history and different ways carrots are prepared for eating. Were carrots always orange? What country produces the most carrots? Find out the answers to these questions and much more with our fun carrot facts for kids!

- The carrot is a root vegetable. They grow best in cool weather.
- The carrot is usually orange in color although purple, red, white, and yellow varieties also exist.
- The domesticated carrot that we know today originated from the wild carrot called *Daucus Carota* which was native to Europe and south western Asia.
- The actual plant of a carrot (greens above ground) can grow up to 1 m (3.2 ft) tall and flowers around June to August (northern hemisphere summer) with a bright white flower.
- Cultivated carrots are usually made up of about 88% water, 7% sugar, 1% protein, 1% fibre, 1% ash, and 0.2% fat.
- Carrots are cooked and eaten in various ways. The vegetable is often pulped, mashed, boiled, puréed, grated, fried, steamed, stewed, baked, juiced or eaten raw. Carrots are typically used in stir-fries and salads but also in soups and added to baby foods or pet foods. They can be dehydrated or deep-fried to make chips, flakes, and powder.



- The natural sugars and sweetness of carrots allow them to be used in carrot cakes of western countries; in India they are used as desserts, while countries such as Portugal use carrots in jam.
- Carrot juice is widely consumed, especially as a health drink, with or without other fruits and vegetables.
- In fact, even the greens are edible as a leaf vegetable although this is rare.
- Ancient Greeks and Romans ate carrots but not the orange varieties we know today; they ate the less cultivated wild varieties of various other colors.
- In the 17th century western carrots first appeared in the Netherlands. Dutch carrot growers invented the orange carrot in honor of the House of Orange, the Dutch Royal Family.

- The orange color results from abundant carotenes in these cultivars, mainly the beta-carotene which is a strongly colored red-orange pigment found in some plants and fruits.
- The human body turns beta-carotene into vitamin A and carrots are one of the best sources for beta-carotene. Vitamin A is important for the health of our vision (including our night vision) as well as our bones, teeth and skin.
- The world's largest carrot producer is China, which in 2011 accounted for over 45% of the global output. China was a long way ahead of Russia and the United\_States who are the second and third highest producers respectively.
- The carrot is in the top 10 of most economically important global vegetable crops.



- Cut the greens off when you harvest carrots. If you don't, the tops will continue to grow, leaching water and nutrients out of the carrots.
- It is true that eating massive amounts of carrots can sometimes cause a person's skin to turn yellowish orange. This is most noticeable on the palms or soles of feet and is called carotenemia. But don't worry, it requires a high amount of carrot consumption and is completely fixable just by reducing carrot intake.
- Bugs Bunny knew what he was talking about! Carrots are food for your health. Packed with beta-carotene, pigment that gives carrots their bright orange color, carrots help maintain healthy eye, skin, teeth and muscles.
- A medium sized carrot or a handful of baby carrots count as one vegetable serving. Carrots are among the most popular vegetables in America. Most Americans eat almost 11 pounds of carrots a year.

You can always check out our [menus](#) for our featured foods!

**Have a GREAT summer and visit your local Farmer's Market for fun fresh vegetables.**

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