

# Carrot

## History

Carrots were first used for medicine in Asia over 3,000 years ago. These carrots were very different from the carrots we see now – they were purple and yellow! It was not until 900 B.C. when carrots were first grown for food in Afghanistan. Purple and yellow carrots did not make their way to Western Europe until the 1300s.

Orange carrots did not come on to the scene until much later. It is said that the orange carrot was developed in Holland as a tribute to William of Orange during the Dutch fight for independence. However, its popularity was likely due to the fact that the new orange carrot was less bitter than the purple and red varieties.

The pilgrims brought orange carrot seeds with them when they settled in the United States. They shared the seeds with American Indians who, along with west-bound settlers, planted carrots across the country. Today orange carrots are still the most popular variety of carrots in the United States.



## Veggie Science

Carrots are rich in many vitamins and minerals. They are best known for being an excellent source of beta-carotene. Our body can turn beta-carotene into vitamin A when needed. Vitamin A is important for bone and skin health, fighting infection, healing, and vision.

## Fun Facts

- To achieve a perfect orange color, carrots should be grown between 60-75°F.
- Carrots are a type of root vegetable- meaning the edible portion of the plant is grown underground.
- Carrots are related to celery, dill, fennel, parsley, and parsnip.
- The flower called Queen Anne’s Lace is actually a wild carrot.
- European ladies would wear lacy carrot flowers in their hair in the 15th century.
- After the US, China is the biggest producer of carrots.
- California grows the most carrots in the US.
- Wisconsin carrots are harvested in the late summer/early fall and can be stored through the winter.



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