

clover food lab

Nutrient-dense, perfectly sweet, versatile orange monsters: Carrots.



It may seem like Winter in Massachusetts is devoid of local produce, but Carrots don't want to hear you saying that!!

Carrots can be so delicious. This time of year we buy organic carrots from Rosendo Santizo at Winter Moon Roots Farm - if you're ever near Somerville you can buy them on Saturdays at the [Somerville Winter Market](#). Even if you can't get WMR carrots, we do recommend buying organic carrots at the grocery store; they are one of those veggies where organic makes a difference - they're much sweeter (and easier to make delicious) than the conventional ones.

Carrots grow well in colder months, and even get sweeter with a couple of frosts because their stored starches turn to sugar to keep the water in their cells from freezing. So cozy. Then, before the ground freezes for good, farmers can harvest them and keep them in a root cellar for months! Crisp and sweet. All. Winter. Long!

Whether you like carrots, or just *want* to like carrots, we're here to share our love for them. It's Michelle, reporting live with **6 ways to carrot!**

Roasted Carrots – This one is a no brainer. Roasted carrots are easy to make, consistently delicious, and versatile to use. Take the tops off, then chop your carrots into thick rings (an inch or two long) and coat them with olive oil or a mild cooking oil. Then season however you'd like. Carrots are very forgiving since their flavor is balanced and mild. You can go spicy/sweet with honey, salt, and Aleppo pepper, savory earthy with cumin, salt, and chili powder, or you can keep it simple with salt and pepper. Roast at 400 degrees for about 20 minutes, or until you like the texture (some people like their carrots a bit more mushy than others.) Lucia likes to blend feta, habanero hot sauce, and lime to top her carrots for a pared-down version of our Carrot Sandwich.

Carrot Cake – Historians say that carrot-based sweets got popular during World War II when sugar was rationed in many countries. But they do so much more than add a little sweetness, they add texture and moisture without weighing down the dessert. In a traditional American carrot cake, carrots are grated and mixed into a batter with cinnamon, nutmeg, and ginger. Nuts are an optional addition. Then the baked cake is covered with a cream cheese frosting. In a similar technique, we fold grated carrots into our Carrot Blueberry Muffins. For a sweet treat, you can't go wrong with [this carrot cake recipe](#) from Smitten Kitchen.

There's also a Brazilian carrot cake that is ~completely~ different. This is the one I grew up eating. The carrots are blended instead of grated so the whole cake is orange, and the texture is uniform. It's slightly less sweet and doesn't use the warming spices, and it's topped with a chocolate glaze or a brigadeiro glaze (think thicker, richer chocolate glaze). If you want to try it, this recipe for [bolo de cenoura](#) from Olivia's Cuisine is definitely worth a shot.

Pickled Carrots – Such an easy way to preserve carrots from your CSA or leftover after a recipe. Mix 2/3 cup white vinegar, 2/3 cup water, 1/2 tsp of kosher salt, and 1 tbs sugar in a jar. Slice or grate carrots into thin rings, sticks, or shreds, put the lid on, and refrigerate — wait a few hours or a few days and you'll have toppings for sandwiches, salads, and burgers for weeks!

Carrot in a Burger – Carrots work in a similar way in a veggie burger as they do in cake. They add moisture and texture so the veggie burger stays chewy and reminiscent of an actual burger. We use them at Clover in our Carrot Black Bean Burger. Look out for a recipe for that soon - or check out Ayr's 2-part Covid series on [veggie burgers](#).

Carrot Lemonade – We've been making this bright orange lemonade since our food truck days. Everyone loves it, even self-proclaimed veggie haters.

Carrot Lemonade

You'll need:

- + 1 lemon
- + 2 organic carrots
- + 8 cups of water
- + 1/4 cup sugar
- + Pinch of salt (optional)

1. If the carrots are not organic, peel them. Chop them into 1/2 inch pieces - don't worry about being too exact. Measure 1 cup of chopped carrots.
2. Pour sugar, 1 cup of the water, and the 1 cup of carrots into a blender. Reserve the rest of the water. Turn on the blender. Start on a low setting, then gradually increase it.
3. Blend on high for 3 minutes, or until the sugar is dissolved into the water and the carrots are completely broken down.
4. Pour this mixture into a pitcher, along with the remaining 7 cups of water. If you have a fine mesh strainer, you can place it over the pitcher and pour the mixture through the strainer.
5. Cut lemon in half & remove the seeds. Squeeze all the juice into the pitcher. Stir. Taste. If it needs more sugar, add some and stir. Add a tiny pinch of salt to bring out the flavors. Refrigerate and serve over ice.

Carrot Lox - We've been making this carrot lox recipe in both the restaurants and our [Snowed In Box](#) and it is so incredible. Seaweed adds that ocean flavor and liquid smoke stands in for the smoking process that lox goes through. Serve with cream cheese on a bagel, maybe with some capers, dill, tomatoes, and red onions. Who knew you could have carrots for breakfast!?

Carrot Lox

- 1/4 lbs liquid smoke
- 1 lbs soy sauce
- 3 lbs rice wine vinegar
- 3/4 tsp salt
- 1 1/2 tsp neutral oil (safflower, canola, etc)
- 1 pound large carrots
- 2 inch strip of dried kombu seaweed (it's okay if it's a rough measurement)

1. First make your marinade. In a medium bowl, combine liquid smoke, soy sauce, rice wine vinegar and salt. Slowly stream in the oil, whisking to emulsify using a fork or whisk.
2. Cut the tops off the carrots and peel them using a vegetable peeler. In most Clover recipes we actually keep the skin on since our organic carrots have lots of nutrients there, but for this recipe it's best to peel it away.
3. Now you'll use your peeler in a different way. Make long "peels" of carrot by peeling the entire length of carrot, from the top end to the bottom end. If it feels a bit unwieldy towards the end, flip it to make peeling easier.
4. Cut peels in half so you end up with slices that are 3-4 inches in length.
5. Bring 1 cup of water to boil in a stainless steel pot fitted with a steamer basket. Place carrot strips and kombu in steamer basket, put lid on, and steam for 4-5 minutes or until carrots are soft but not falling apart, and kombu is softened.
6. Chop softened kombu into 5-6 strips. Working quickly, add carrots and kombu to the bowl of marinade. Toss warm carrots and kombu with the marinade to coat. Cover with plastic wrap, refrigerate, and taste after a few hours. You can discard the kombu before serving.

Carrots are also great in a wide variety of soups, but we'll cover that next week!

