

# Hogtown HomeGrown

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**Inside this issue:**

Carrot Cake	1
Farmers' Market Update	2
It's Time for Carrots	2
Steamed Carrots Four Ways	2
Ginger Carrots	3
Carrot Pineapple Raisin Salad	3
Veggie Cream Cheese Spread	3
Carrot Dogs	3
Fiesta Egg Salad	4

## Carrot Cake Celebrations

When our boys were very young, we tried to be extremely conscientious about what they ate—no sugar, no meat, whole wheat everything. Birthdays were always whole wheat sugarless carrot cake and homemade honey vanilla ice cream. The Carrot Cake recipe, adapted from The Quick and Easy Vegetarian Cookbook, became a staple, not only at our home, but it was often requested for other people's birthdays as well.

The day our middle son turned two and a half, I jokingly said "Happy Half Birthday!"—he ran to get the cake pan, we made a Carrot Cake and a new celebration was born. Half birthdays are 6 months from your regular birthday and you get a cake with one candle and one present. Even adults get to celebrate half birthdays!

Our oldest turned 19 just a couple of weeks after he left for college, so we sent a birthday party in a box, with balloons, presents, party blowers, plates, cups, napkins, candles and, yes, a Carrot Cake! My rite of passage came two years later when that same son's girl-friend (now his wife) called me for the recipe so that she could make him a birthday cake—a Carrot Cake.

## Carrot Cake

### INGREDIENTS

2 cups whole wheat flour  
2 teaspoons baking soda  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1 teaspoon cinnamon  
1/2 teaspoon ground ginger OR cloves  
1 cup oil  
1 cup honey  
4 eggs  
3 cups grated carrot  
1/2 cup crushed pineapple, drained  
1 teaspoon vanilla  
1 cups nuts, chopped (we use walnuts)  
1 cup dried fruit (optional)

### Optional Glaze

2 cups powdered sugar  
2 lemons, zested and juiced

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease and flour bundt pan or 2 cake pans. Mix dry ingredients. Add oil and honey, beat well. Add eggs one at a time; beat until smooth between each egg. Stir in carrots, pineapple, vanilla and nuts. At this point you can stir in the optional cup of dried fruit. Pour into prepared pan. Bake 50-60 minutes for bundt or 30-35 minutes for cake pans.

Use a toothpick to check it—if it's clean, it's done! Cool in pan for 10-15 minutes, turn onto wire rack or platter. Cool completely before slicing.

Want glaze? Whisk together glaze ingredients. Pour onto warm cake for invisible glaze or cool cake for opaque glaze.

Feeling decadent? Cream cheese frosting!

# It's Local, It's Fresh, It's Carrots

## Tricks and Tips

Carrots can round out a menu that might be short on veggies—use ice and water to crisp raw baby carrots or cut carrot sticks. The kids will still be munching long after the table is cleared. If dip is needed to induce your pickiest eaters, let them mix their favorite dressing into some plain yogurt.

Nothing says springtime at the Farmers' Market more than a beautiful bunch of fresh carrots with feathery greens still attached. From the walnut-sized Orbit variety to the long, thin Orlando Gold, carrots are more than just the Easter Bunny's favorite food. Good raw or cooked, carrots are a wonderful way to introduce children to a love of fresh veggies.

If you need to sneak veggies into your family's diet, carrots are the way to go. We grate them into tossed salads, tuna salad, soups, and even casseroles. A great trick to reduce the acidity of marinara is to throw a whole, peeled carrot into the tomato sauce while it simmers. It eliminates any need for sugar as it evens out the raw tomato taste.

Carrots can be part of every meal of the day, from breakfast muffins and breads to lunch salads and soups to snacks (dip raw carrots into hummus or peanut butter) to dinner side dishes. You can even use the greens when they are fresh, just chop them into soups or stews at the last minute. There is even a semi-dry wine, similar to a Chardonnay, made completely from carrots—it's called 40 Karats and is available from Cross Creek Groves.

## What's fresh right now at the Farmers' Market?

Carrots	Onions
Beets	—with greens, red, white
Turnips	Leeks
Kohlrabi	—small bunches, garlic
Rutabaga	Cucumbers
Cabbage	Peppers
—Red, Green, Chinese	—banana, poblano
Broccoli	Strawberries
Cauliflower	—ripe berries, baskets
Brussel Sprouts	Herbs
Kale	—parsley, cilantro, chervil, dill, plant seedlings
—Tuscan, White Russian	Citrus
Swiss Chard	—lemons, oranges, grapefruit, trees
Pak Choi	Honey
Greens	—Tupelo, Basswood,
—Mustard, Collards	Gallberry
Fennel	Pecans
Spinach	—shelled and in shell
Arugula	Flowers
Radicchio	—cut snapdragons, petunia pots and baskets, amaryllis
Endive	Native Plants
Sorrel	—Columbine, Bridal Wreath, Native Azalea
Lettuce	
—baskets, hydroponic	
Tomatoes	
—cherry, orange, yellow, plum, plants	

## Steamed Carrots Four Ways

To serve four to six people, steam 1 pound of baby carrots or chopped carrots until just tender, so that a knife easily pierces the carrot. Put carrots in saucepan and mix in any of the following, heat through and serve.

- 1) 2 tablespoons seedless raspberry jelly\*  
1 tablespoon raspberry vinegar  
OR lemon juice
- 2) 2 tablespoons orange marmalade\*  
2 tablespoons orange juice
- 3) 2 teaspoons sesame oil  
2 green onions, sliced  
1 tablespoon toasted sesame seeds
- 4) 2 tablespoons honey  
1 teaspoon cinnamon

\* We use Polaner's All Fruit—fruit juice sweetened jellies and jams.

The different greens caught my eye, especially the kales. What's the difference between Tuscan and White Russian Kales? Tuscan, a solid leaf, is a heartier traditional kale, while White Russian is leafy, sweet and nutty—a lighter taste I recommend for those trying kale for the first time.

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# Ginger Carrots

## INGREDIENTS

1 pound baby carrots  
1 tangerine, juiced (you can use an orange)  
1 lime, zested and juiced  
1 lemon, zested and juiced  
2 tablespoons fresh ginger, grated  
1 teaspoon ground ginger  
2 tablespoons honey  
1 dash salt

Steam carrots until you can just pierce them with a knife, but not so knife goes all the way through. Mix remaining ingredients in a gallon freezer bag. Add carrots, seal bag, mix well and refrigerate. Serve chilled.

Can be made up to a week in advance.

The amount of carrots may be doubled without increasing the marinade ingredients.

## **Tricks and Tips**

Ginger Carrots are a great addition to a big holiday dinner. They are sweet, cold, crunchy and can be made in advance. Try taking them to your next potluck!

# Carrot Pineapple Raisin Salad

## INGREDIENTS

1/2 pound carrots, shredded or grated  
1 large can crushed pineapple, juice-packed  
1/2 cup raisins

Mix all ingredients. Refrigerate until well-chilled. Serve with a slotted spoon, but you will want to drink the juice—it's yummy!  
Try using golden or jumbo raisins for variety.

# Veggie Cream Cheese Spread

## INGREDIENTS

1 pound cream cheese (light works well)  
1 carrot grated  
1 rib celery, chopped very finely  
1 green onion, chopped very finely  
2 tablespoons toasted sunflower seeds  
2 tablespoons fresh parsley OR dill, chopped  
1 lemon, zested and juiced

Whip softened cream cheese with a mixer or food processor. Add all ingredients and mix well. Push into serving bowl, smooth the top and cover tightly. Refrigerate overnight. Serve with bagels or veggies.  
Want a sweet spread? Try mixing 1/4 cup of fruit-sweetened jam with an 8 ounce package of cream cheese. We love strawberry!

The teachers at Stephen C. Foster Elementary enjoyed both Veggie and Strawberry Spreads with Bageland bagels for 14 years of PTA sponsored Back to School and Teacher Appreciation Breakfasts.

# Carrot Dogs (inspired by Kesl's Coney Island)

## INGREDIENTS

1 large beautiful carrot per person  
Buns and condiments  
Optional Toppings: Cheese, chili, sauerkraut

Steam cleaned carrots until a knife goes through the thickest part of carrot—there should be slight resistance—about 20 minutes from cold water to done carrots. Refrigerate. To serve, grill or pan fry until warmed through. Serve on toasted buns with condiments and optional toppings.

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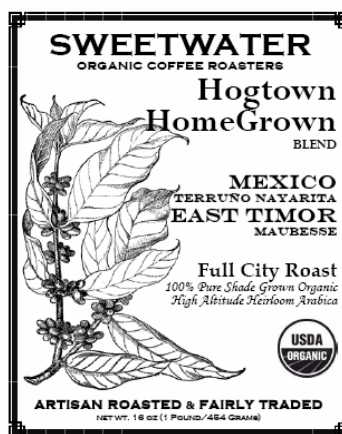
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## Fiesta Egg Salad

### INGREDIENTS

12 boiled eggs, peeled  
1 carrot, grated  
1/2 red pepper and 1/2 yellow pepper, diced  
2 ribs celery, diced  
3 green onions, chopped OR 1/4 cup red onion, diced  
1/4 cup flat leaf parsley, chopped OR 1/4 cup fresh dill, chopped  
1/4 cup sweet pickles, chopped OR 1/4 cup sweet relish  
1/2 cup mayonnaise  
2 tablespoons mustard

Use a potato masher, pastry blender or fork to break up eggs. Mix in remaining ingredients. Serve immediately or cover tightly and serve well-chilled. Refrigerate leftovers immediately.

### Serving Suggestions

Breads—rye, pumpernickel, whole wheat, onion rolls, pita bread, matzoh, sub rolls  
Veggies to put on sandwiches—romaine lettuce, alfalfa sprouts, tomato, sliced cucumber, green, yellow and red pepper strips, olives, radishes  
Side dishes—soup, fruit salad, chips

We started this tradition to use up our dyed eggs—the veggies in the salad mirror the colors of our eggs and the egg whites that get dyed accidentally just add to the fiesta!

### Tricks and Tips

There are certain days that I don't like to cook—Easter is one of them! I get the veggies ready the day before. On Easter all I have to do is peel the eggs and mix the salad. All the veggies almost balance our family's Easter diet of dark chocolate bunnies, jelly beans and malted milk eggs!