



Gingerbread Pear Carrot Cake Puffs on a Stick + Icy Lemon Icing + Spiced Pear Smoothies

By Erin Fletter

Prep Time 40 / Cook Time 15 / Serves 4 - 6

Shopping List

- FRESH
- 5 pears
- 1 carrot
- 1/2 tsp fresh ginger (or 3/4 tsp dried ground ginger)
- 1 lemon
- 1 banana
- DAIRY AND EGGS
- 4 eggs ****(see allergy subs below)****
- 2 T unsalted butter ****(see allergy subs below)****
- 4 C milk ****(see allergy subs below)****
- PANTRY
- 2 1/2 C all-purpose flour ****(see allergy subs below)****
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1 1/4 tsp salt
- 5 tsp pumpkin pie spice
- 1/2 cup firmly packed dark brown sugar

- 1/2 C powdered sugar
- 1 T granulated sugar
- 1 tsp pure vanilla extract **** (see allergy subs below)****
- HAVE ON HAND
- 3 C ice
- popsicle sticks, enough for the class (if making cake puffs on a stick)

Fun-Da-Mentals Kitchen Skills

measure: to calculate the specific amount of an ingredient required using a measuring tool (like measuring cups or spoons).

knife skills: Bear Claw (growl), Pinch, Plank, and Bridge (look out for trolls) and Rock and Saw.

chop: to cut something into small, rough pieces using a blade.

mix: to thoroughly combine two or more ingredients until uniform in texture.

wet vs dry: to mix wet and dry ingredients separately before combining them: dry ingredients are flours, leavening agents, salt, and spices; wet ingredients are those that dissolve or can be dissolved (sugar, eggs, butter, oils, honey, vanilla, milk, and juices).

whisk: to beat or stir ingredients vigorously with a fork or whisk to mix, blend, or incorporate air.

stir: to mix together two or more ingredients with a spoon or spatula, usually in a circle pattern, or figure eight, or in whatever direction you like!

drizzle: to trickle a thin stream of a liquid ingredient, like icing or sauce, over food.

juice: to extract or squeeze out the juice of a fruit or vegetable, like a lemon, orange, or carrot, often cutting open or peeling the fruit or veggie first to access its flesh.

knife skills: Bear Claw (growl), Pinch, Plank, and Bridge (look out for trolls) and Rock and Saw.

blend: to stir together two or more ingredients until just combined; blending is a gentler process than mixing.

chop: to cut something into small, rough pieces using a blade.

combine: to merge two or more ingredients into one mixture, like a batter of flour, eggs, and milk.

Equipment

- Oven
- Mini-muffin pan

- Paper cupcake liners for mini-muffin pan
- Cutting board + kid-safe knife
- Grater
- Large mixing bowl
- Medium mixing bowl
- Measuring spoons
- Dry measuring cups
- Whisk
- Popsicle sticks (if making cake puffs on a stick)
- Small mixing bowl
- Citrus juicer (optional)
- Blender (or pitcher + immersion blender)

Ingredients

Gingerbread Pear Carrot Cake Puffs on a Stick

- 2 pears
- 1 carrot
- 1/4 tsp fresh ginger or 1/2 tsp dried ground ginger
- 2 1/2 C all-purpose flour **** (for GLUTEN ALLERGY sub gluten-free/nut-free flour)****
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp salt
- 3 tsp pumpkin pie spice
- 4 eggs **** (for EGG ALLERGY sub 2 very ripe bananas)****
- 1/2 C firmly packed dark brown sugar
- 2 T unsalted butter, very soft **** (for DAIRY ALLERGY sub vegetable oil or applesauce)****
- 1 C milk **** (for DAIRY ALLERGY sub dairy-free/nut-free milk)****
- popsicle sticks, enough for the class (if making cake puffs on a stick)

Icy Lemon Icing

- 1 lemon (for 2 tsp lemon juice)
- 1/2 C powdered sugar
- 1 pinch salt

Spiced Pear Smoothies

- 3 pears
- 3 C milk **** (for DAIRY ALLERGY sub dairy-free/nut-free milk)****
- 1 T granulated sugar
- 1 banana
- 1 tsp pure vanilla extract **** (for GLUTEN ALLERGY use certified gluten-free pure vanilla extract, not imitation vanilla flavor—check label)****
- 1 squeeze fresh lemon juice
- 2 tsp pumpkin pie spice
- 1 pinch fresh or dried ground ginger
- 3 C ice

Food Allergen Substitutions

Gingerbread Pear Carrot Cake Puffs on a Stick

Gluten/Wheat: Substitute gluten-free/nut-free flour.

Eggs: For 4 eggs, substitute 2 very ripe bananas.

Dairy: For butter, substitute vegetable oil or applesauce. Substitute dairy-free/nut-free milk.

Icy Lemon Icing

Spiced Pear Smoothies

Dairy: Substitute dairy-free/nut-free milk.

Gluten/Wheat: Use certified gluten-free pure vanilla extract, not imitation vanilla flavor.

Instructions

Gingerbread Pear Carrot Cake Puffs on a Stick

preheat + chop + grate

Preheat your oven to 350 F. Line your mini muffin pan with paper liners. With your children, wash and chop **2 pears** into little tiny bits. Grate **1 carrot** and **1/4 teaspoon fresh ginger** (or **1/2 teaspoon ground ginger**) and set the chopped pear, the grated ginger, and the grated carrot to the side.

measure + mix

In a large mixing bowl, have kids measure and mix together **2 1/2 cups flour**, **2 teaspoons baking powder**, **1 teaspoon baking soda**, **1 teaspoon salt**, and **3 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice**. This is the dry mix.

crack + pour + whisk

Have kids crack **4 eggs** into a medium mixing bowl and then pour in **1/2 cup firmly packed dark brown sugar**, **2 tablespoons unsalted soft butter**, **1 cup milk**, and the **grated ginger**. Whisk well. This is the wet mix.

combine + spoon + bake

Add the wet mixture to the dry mixture and whisk until just blended. Add in the **chopped pears and grated carrot**. There will be some small lumps, and that is okay! Spoon batter into the pre-lined muffin pan and bake for 12 to 15 minutes.

cool + drizzle or dip

Serve the cake puffs after they cool, put them on a stick if you wish, and drizzle with or dip in Icy Lemon Icing (see recipe) or another icing.

Icy Lemon Icing

juice + combine + whisk

As the cakes bake and cool, it's Icy Icing time! Have kids cut **1 lemon** in half and squeeze the juice. Combine **1/2 cup powdered sugar**, **2 teaspoons lemon juice**, and **1 pinch of salt** in a small mixing bowl. Whisk everything together until smooth.

set + drizzle

Allow the icing to sit to stiffen up a bit (about 5 minutes). Drizzle the lemon icing on top of or dip cooled Gingerbread Pear Carrot Cake Puffs on a Stick (see recipe) or another cupcake into it!

Spiced Pear Smoothies

chop + add

Have your kids wash and chop **3 pears** and add them to your blender (or pitcher to use with an immersion blender).

combine + blend

Combine **3 cups milk**, **1 tablespoon sugar**, **1 peeled banana**, **1 teaspoon vanilla extract**, **1 squeeze of lemon juice**, **2 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice**, **1 pinch of grated fresh ginger or dried ground ginger**, and **3 cups ice** in your blender with the chopped pears. Blend until smooth. Pour and enjoy!

Featured Ingredient: Carrots!

Hi! I'm Carrot!

"I'm at the root of this recipe! Get it? Root? Carrots are root vegetables! We grow up in dark and cozy soil. Our leaves get plenty of sunshine, though. If you grow us, it's so satisfying to pull us out of our underground home and know you'll be tasting our crunchy sweetness very soon. But you may want to wash us first! You can eat carrots raw or cook them first. Either way, you'll enjoy our flavor, texture, and color in salads, savory dishes, and desserts, like carrot cake!"

History

Before carrots were orange, they were purple, red, white, and yellow. In the 16th century (after the Middle Ages), Dutch carrot growers invented the orange carrot in honor of the House of Orange, the Dutch Royal Family (for Kings and Queens). They did this by crossbreeding pale yellow carrots with red carrots. Carrots soon caught on in England as both a food and a fashion accessory. For example, it's said that ladies in the 1600s would decorate their hats with carrot tops instead of feathers!

The carrots we eat today were domesticated from a wild carrot native to Europe and southwestern Asia. No one knows exactly how old carrots are, but history traces them back about 5,000 years. They were mistaken for parsnips before the carrot was identified as a distinct vegetable. Carrots and parsnips are related but from different families. Parsnips are white and look a lot like carrots. They're also root vegetables!

When carrots were first grown many hundreds of years ago, farmers prized them for their aromatic leaves and seeds—not just the roots!

According to some sources, carrots are the second most popular vegetable in the world, behind just one other. Can you guess what's number one? Potatoes!

The longest carrot ever recorded was over 20 feet long! (The measurement included the taproot's long, skinny end.) The heaviest carrot recorded weighed over 22 pounds!

You may think rabbits love carrots naturally, and this is largely because of the popularity of the wise-cracking and charming cartoon rabbit character named Bugs Bunny. We see Bugs Bunny munching on a carrot in most scenes. In reality, if a rabbit ate a whole carrot, it would be like you or me eating 20 carrots in one sitting! Way too much! Here's another fun fact: The voice of Bugs Bunny, Mel Blanc, reportedly did not like carrots at all.

Anatomy & Etymology

Carrots belong to the Umbelliferae family, named for their resemblance to an umbrella when their leafy green stems are attached. This family includes celery, parsnip, fennel, dill, and coriander.

Carrots are root vegetables, meaning they grow underneath the ground. Their feathery leaves grow above the ground. Can you think of other root vegetables? A few of them are beets, onions, turnips, potatoes, radishes, parsnips, fennel, garlic, and jicama.

You can eat every part of the carrot. Typically we eat the root part of the plant, but the stems and leaves are edible, too! A carrot's root can grow anywhere from 2 to 20 inches long before it's picked!

Carrots like to grow in cooler climates, not tropical, hot places. For this reason, they are usually grown in the autumn, winter, and spring months.

Baby carrots sold in grocery stores started as long carrots that were sliced and tumbled into smaller pieces to make them "baby-sized."

Carrot seeds are tiny. Find a teaspoon. How many carrot seeds do you think will fit inside? About 2,000!

A carrot plant will live for two years, meaning new crops need to be planted from seed every two years.

There are two main classes of carrots: Western and Eastern. The Western class includes four types, classified by their root shape: Chantenay, Danvers, Imperator, and Nantes. Several cultivars (varieties created by selective breeding) exist under each type. Many varieties have different colors than the typical orange. How many colors have you seen? The next time you're in the grocery store, look for these diverse carrots.

The English word "carrot" comes from the Greek word "karoton."

How to Pick, Buy, & Eat

One large carrot or a handful of baby carrots counts as one vegetable serving. Aim for three servings of veggies a day for kids and five servings for adults.

Carrots can be eaten raw, roasted, juiced, boiled, mashed, or steamed. However, they are most nutrient-dense when cooked and eaten with fat like butter or oil.

When you eat a carrot, how does it taste? Modern carrots have been bred to be sweet, which is why we often use them in baked goods like carrot cake! On the other hand, ancient carrots were bitter, not sweet. Look for firm, brightly colored carrots with smooth, firm skin. Carrots that are limp or black near the top are not fresh.

Thicker carrots may be older and tougher to eat, whereas thinner carrots are typically younger, fresher, and sweeter.

Store carrots in the crisper drawer of your refrigerator, where they will keep for a few weeks!

One of the tastiest, easiest ways to cook carrots is to toss them with melted butter, salt, honey, and garlic, then roast them at 425 F for 20 minutes.

You can grate raw carrots and add them to salads or chop them to add to soups or stews. If you boil or steam carrots, you then puree them to add to breads, cookies, cakes, or even tomato sauce to sweeten it.

Carrots add natural sweetness to whatever recipe they're in (and a pretty orange color, too!).

Nutrition

Eyes! The color of a fruit or vegetable tells us what nutrient it contains (nature is amazing!). Orange vegetables and fruits have a particular nutrient called beta carotene. Beta carotene was named for the carrot itself! This nutrient converts to vitamin A inside the body, which is good for our eyes! Studies have shown that only three percent of beta carotene is released from the raw vegetable when we digest it. But this percentage can be improved when we juice or puree raw carrots or cook them with fat like butter or oil. Carrots have the most beta carotene of any vegetable!

Teeth! The crunchiness of carrots helps clean the plaque off your teeth and gums, just like your toothbrush! Of course, this doesn't mean eating a carrot at the end of the day can substitute for brushing your teeth! Carrots also have minerals that protect the teeth.

Purple carrots include anthocyanin, an antioxidant, just like purple eggplants, blueberries, and other colorful fruits.

As with all vegetables, eating carrots helps protect us from getting sick!