



Carrot Soft Pretzel Bites

By Erin Fletter

Prep Time 20 / **Cook Time** 10 / **Serves** 4 - 6

Fun-Da-Mentals Kitchen Skills

egg wash: to brush dough before baking with beaten eggs mixed with milk or water to give the crust additional crispness and sheen.

grate: to reduce food, like a carrot, to very small shreds or pieces of the same size by rubbing it on a tool with an outside surface that has holes with cutting edges (a grater).

knead: to work dough by pushing, pulling, and folding it by hand or with a stand mixer.

Equipment

- Oven
- Baking sheet
- Parchment paper
- Large mixing bowl
- Liquid measuring cup
- Measuring spoons
- Dry measuring cups
- Wooden spoon
- Grater
- Small bowl
- Pastry brush

Ingredients

Carroty Soft Pretzel Bites

- 1 package or 1 T active dry yeast
- 1 1/2 C lukewarm water
- 3 tsp honey
- 1 tsp salt
- 4 C all-purpose flour + more for sticky dough **** (for GLUTEN ALLERGY sub 4 C gluten-free/nut-free all-purpose flour)****
- 1 small carrot
- 1 egg, beaten **** (Omit for EGG ALLERGY)****
- kosher salt for sprinkling on top

Food Allergen Substitutions

Carroty Soft Pretzel Bites

Gluten/Wheat: For 4 C all-purpose flour, substitute 4 C gluten-free/nut-free all-purpose flour.

Egg: Omit egg wash. If desired, lightly brush a little oil or melted butter on the pretzel dough before baking.

Instructions

Carroty Soft Pretzel Bites

dissolve + combine

Dissolve **1 package or 1 tablespoon active dry yeast** in **1 1/2 cups of lukewarm water** in a large mixing bowl for 3 minutes. Then, have kids add in **3 teaspoons honey**, **1 teaspoon salt**, and **4 cups of flour**.

mix + rise

Mix the dough together and set aside to rise for a bit—the longer it sits, the better!

grate + separate

Have kids grate **1 carrot**. (If making **Crazy Carrot Cheese Dip**, grate a second carrot and make that dip, or the **Dairy-Free Mustard Dipping Sauce**, while waiting for the dough to rise.)

preheat + knead

Preheat your oven to 425 F and line a baking sheet with parchment paper. When the dough is ready, add half of the grated carrot to the dough and take turns with your kids kneading the dough by hand for 5 to 10 minutes. Add flour as needed to reduce stickiness. Divide the dough into 12 sections and have your kids roll it out into long skinny snakes, ropes, or worms. As your children work with the dough, it will become stickier.

crack + brush

Have kids crack **1 egg** and beat it in a small bowl. Once they've rolled out the dough into long shapes, invite your kids to brush the dough with the beaten egg using a pastry brush to make the pretzels shiny when they bake!

sprinkle

Finally, have kids sprinkle the top of the egg-washed dough with just a little **kosher salt**.

shape + bake + dip

Have kids form their snakes, ropes, or worms into a fun shape on the lined baking sheet. The shape doesn't matter—the pretzels will taste delicious no matter how they look! Next, slide the tray into the oven and bake for 8 to 10 minutes until golden brown. Then, dip the pretzels into the **Crazy Carrot Cheese Dip** 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!