

Carrot Ginger Soup



As the seasons are changing, root vegetables are at their peak. How do we enjoy the grounding and warming properties of root vegetables, while still enjoying the tail end of shorts season?

CARROTS!

We know carrots are famous for their beta-carotene and fiber content, but they also have the ability to increase the health of your skin, boost the immune system, improve digestion, increase cardiovascular health, detox the body, and improve oral health in a variety of ways. They also provide a well-rounded influx of vitamins and minerals.

Ingredient	Amount	Serves 4
Butter, or a few splashes of olive oil (or half of each)	3	tblsp
Sea salt	1/8	tsp
Carrots, chopped or grated	2 1/2	cup
Medium onion, chopped	1	----
Stalk of celery, peeled and chopped (peeling gets rid of the "strings")	1	----
Ginger, chopped and grated (what would a carrot ginger soup be without it)	1	tsp
Chicken broth or stock; or use vegetable stock for vegetarian version	5	cup
Zest of half a lime		----
Juice of 1 lime		----

Preparations

1. Heat butter or oil in soup pot on medium low.
2. Add onions, carrots, celery and salt. Sauté until onions and carrot are soft.
3. Add ginger. Cook for a minute or two more. (If ginger is chopped instead of grated, add it earlier).
4. Add broth, cook for 5 to ten minutes at a low boil.
5. Use blender, food processor or hand-held immersion blender to puree the soup.
6. Add lime zest and juice. Serve hot or cold

Notes

In my kitchen, ginger is a staple in almost every meal. It contains gingerols, the oily resin from the root that acts as a highly potent antioxidant and anti-inflammatory agent. Ginger is also an effective digestive aid, helping people suffering from nausea, morning sickness, bloating and constipation. Raw ginger is often overlooked, perhaps one of the reasons it is left alone is that it has the appearance of being difficult to work with. After all, it really is a very strangely shaped root, and no two are even remotely close to being the same. This makes it somewhat difficult to peel.

Also, it has a woody hardness to it that makes it a little difficult to chop up finely.

Lastly, it does not keep all that well. Once you cut a piece off, it will start to wilt and lose its flavor fairly quickly, rendering the large, unused portion useless.

Fortunately, I have a single solution to all three of those problems. Once you buy your fresh ginger, cut it into single pieces (cut each "branch" off), stick them in a sandwich bag, and toss it in the freezer.

When you are ready to use some ginger, pull out one piece, grab a teaspoon, and scrape the skin off with the edge of the spoon. This is much easier than using a knife or a peeler. When the skin is scraped off, use a box grater to get the exact amount of ginger that you want for your recipe.

By freezing the ginger, you prevent spoiling, make it easier to peel and grate, and end up with finer ginger than you would get by chopping.

Tips and Techniques

This carrot ginger soup recipe is so refreshing that adding too much to it might actually detract from it. So anything you add should either compliment this refreshing aspect, or else contrast to it.

Any herbs you add should have a bright rather than a heavy, savory flavor. Cilantro is easily the best, with parsley a close second. I have thought of trying basil, but I am not sure how that would work out.

To contrast, you want to look for another flavor dimension, rather than looking for the opposite of refreshing (which is warming, heavy, savory comfort food). One such dimension would be sweet; another would be spicy.

For sweet accent to this carrot ginger soup recipe, you could try small slices of candied ginger, which would be especially good if they were frozen. Finely chopped red chilies make for a spicy edge, but I would not overdo it.

Lastly, you can experiment with the sour component by substituting other citrus for the lime. Lemon would be a good option, but I think orange would be too sweet. Grapefruit, on the other hand, has a nice balance between sour and sweet, and would probably work very well by itself or paired with another citrus.