

CARROTS

RECIPES COURTESY OF JEREMY UMANSKY | Larder Delicatessen & Bakery

The carrot is an ingredient that Jews have been using in their kitchens for nearly 1,000 years. Starting with Jewish cuisines in Persia and the greater Middle East, on to Central and Eastern Europe, and finally America. Did you know that the first published carrot cake recipe in the US was in a Jewish cookbook?

When most people work with carrots they do two things that are wasteful. First they buy carrots without their greens attached. Carrots that have their greens removed are essentially in hibernation. The greens are the part that produce food for the whole plant, which includes the root or carrot. With the greens removed the carrot uses its stored energy to sustain itself which translates to less nutrients being available to you when you eat it. Carrots stored this way can also be weeks, even months old in some cases. Eating the freshest food possible is something we should all strive to do. The greens themselves are in their own right nutritious and delicious. They have a flavor akin to parsley that is albeit more intense with a slight chlorophyll bitterness. When sourcing carrots do so with ones whose greens are still intact. Some of the uses for carrot greens are as follows:

- *as an herb*
- *braised as collards or kale would be. Add lots of garlic and crushed nuts for a real treat*
- *substitute them for the main herb in any salsa, pesto, or chimichurri*
- *added to stocks and sauces*
- *as an addition to salads both leafy and hearty*

The second wasteful thing cooks do to carrots is peel them. Ask yourself, “why do I need to peel this carrot?” The answer is you don’t. What does peeling carrots (or potatoes for that matter but that’s a story for another time) do that a good wash and scrub won’t do? That said don’t peel your carrots, it isn’t necessary. Should you find yourself slow to adapt then here’s a few things that you can easily do with your carrot scraps:

- *add them to white wine and ferment it into a carrot vinegar*
- *chop them up and ferment them into a carrot relish that rivals a cucumber based one*
- *ferment them, dehydrate them, and grind them into a tangy, salty, and slightly sweet carrot seasoning*
- *dehydrate them and add them to stocks and braises for flavor*

Being able to tackle eliminating food waste and enjoying foods at their peak of nutritional density are not only what many of our ancestors did as second nature but also a way for you to make your life better and the earth a less wasteful place. Being able to use every ounce of a given food is going to save you money and give you lots of opportunity to have fun experimenting with your family in the kitchen.

Below you’ll find my recipe for fermented kosher dill carrot pickles. I’ve also included a recipe for fermented pumpkin and one that will allow you to turn your leftover Jewish rye bread into a tasty sauce akin to soy sauce.

A QUICK NOTE ABOUT THESE RECIPES

The most accurate way to work with any recipe, fermented or not, is to use mass and not volume. This means that you must have a scale in your kitchen. Specifically, using the Metric System is preferred. I have converted these recipes to Standard Imperial due to most Americans not being comfortable with the Metric System. Please feel free to use the Metric measurements on your scale for ease when calculating percentages and to obtain much greater accuracy in these recipes.

KOSHER DILL CARROTS

1 pound carrots

1 head garlic, peeled

1 bunch dill

1 tablespoon pickling spice

3 leaves, oak (grape or cherry may be substituted)

Water, as needed

Salt, non-iodized fine grain, as needed

1-2 quart size Mason Jar

Weigh the Mason Jar and record the weight. Cut the carrots into thick coins or sticks. Layer the carrots into the Mason Jar with the garlic, dill, and oak leaves. Pour water into the jar, being sure to fully cover the carrots et all, leaving about 1 inch of headspace. You may need to split the contents between two jars should everything not fit into one jar. Add the pickling spice. Weigh the now full jar, subtract the weight of the jar, and calculate 3% of the weight of all the ingredients. This is how much salt that you need to add to the jar. For example: If, not including the weight of the jar, the ingredients weigh 1.25 pounds, or 20 ounces, then you will multiply 20×0.03 to get 0.6 or approximately 1/3 ounce of salt. Add the salt to the jar, put the lid on, and then shake it for a couple of minutes to dissolve the salt. After the salt has dissolved gently loosen the jar to allow CO₂ to escape as the pickles ferment. If the lid is too tight then the jar will pressurize and carbonate. Should this happen then when you open your pickles in 7-10 days it will be akin to opening a can of soda that was violently shaken. Let the jar sit on your countertop for a minimum of 7-10 days to fully ferment. Once fermented they can be refrigerated to stabilize or left to continue fermenting for a stronger flavor. Fermented foods are shelf stable and don't require refrigeration.

LITVAK PICKLED PUMPKIN

- 1 pound** pumpkin, cubed
 - 1 teaspoon** juniper berries
 - 1 teaspoon** black peppercorns
 - 1 tablespoon** mustard seed
 - 1 sprig** spruce or pine needles
 - 3 leaves**, oak (grape or cherry may be substituted)
- Water, as needed
- Salt, non-iodized fine grain, as needed
- 1-2 quart size** mason jar

Weigh the Mason Jar and record the weight. In a skillet over medium-low heat toast the spices and spruce or pine until fragrant, about 5 minutes. Be sure to shake the skillet occasionally to prevent the spices from burning. After they are toasted transfer them to a plate to cool. Place the pumpkin, spruce or pine, oak leaves, and spices into the mason jar. Pour water into the jar, being sure to fully cover the carrots et all, leaving about 1 inch of headspace. You may need to split the contents between two jars should everything not fit into one jar. Weigh the now full jar, subtract the weight of the jar, and calculate 3% of the weight of all the ingredients. This is how much salt that you need to add to the jar. For example: If, not including the weight of the jar, the ingredients weigh 1.25 pounds, or 20 ounces, then you will multiply 20×0.03 to get 0.6 or approximately 1/3 ounce of salt. Add the salt to the jar, put the lid on, and then shake it for a couple of minutes to dissolve the salt. After the salt has dissolved gently loosen the jar to allow CO₂ to escape as the pickles ferment. If the lid is too tight then the jar will pressurize and carbonate. Should this happen then when you open your pickles in 7-10 days it will be akin to opening a can of soda that was violently shaken. Let the jar sit on your countertop for a minimum of 7-10 days to fully ferment. Once fermented they can be refrigerated to stabilize or left to continue fermenting for a stronger flavor. Fermented foods are shelf stable and don't require refrigeration. Enjoy with ice cold vodka, schnapps, or as a garnish for gefilte fish.

NOT BUBBIES RYE BREAD SEASONING SAUCE

2 pounds rye bread

½ pound barley koji (easily sourced online)

4 pounds water

Salt, as needed

1, 1-gallon plastic or glass container

Cheesecloth or a clean rag

Black peppercorns, *optional*

Juniper, *optional*

Caraway, *optional*

Weigh the container and record the weight. Preheat your oven to 300°F. Cube the bread and toast it in the oven until fully hard and golden brown. Add the bread, barley koji, water, and spices if using to the container. Weigh the now full jar, subtract the weight of the jar, and calculate 10% of the weight of all the ingredients. This is how much salt that you need to add to the jar. For example: If, not including the weight of the jar, the ingredients weigh 1 pound, or 16 ounces, then you will multiply 16×0.03 to get 0.48 ounces of salt. Add the calculated weight of salt to the jar and stir to dissolve it. Cover the container with the cheesecloth and store in a warm and sunny location for a minimum of 90 days and up to 1 year. Once a day remove the cloth and stir the sauce. At the end of the fermentation period strain the sauce to remove the solids. Bring the sauce to a boil and then bottle. Use as you would soy sauce.