



# CARROTS AND PARSNIPS

Cafeteria Connection

## Tell Me about Carrots and Parsnips

Carrots and parsnips are root vegetables in the Apiaceae family. They are versatile vegetables with many delicious uses. Washington is the fourth largest producer of carrots that are sold fresh and the largest producer of carrots grown for processing, like canned or frozen carrots.

While carrots and parsnips have many culinary similarities, they also have some differences. Parsnips have significantly more starchy carbohydrates than carrots. They are similar in sweetness to carrots, but with less crunch and more chew.

## Crediting Information

- Parsnips and carrots are root vegetables that credit toward the vegetable meal pattern component as volume served. For example, 1/2 cup carrots or parsnips credit as 1/2 cup vegetable.
  - In School Meals, parsnips contribute to the “starchy” vegetable sub-group; carrots contribute to the “red/orange” vegetable sub-group.
- Vegetables must be fresh, frozen, canned, or full-strength vegetable juice, referred to as 100% juice, to credit as a vegetable component. Dried vegetables, including beans, peas, and lentils, must be reconstituted to credit toward reimbursable meals. Please confirm crediting requirements for dried vegetables with your specialist.



## Nutrition Facts

Parsnips are packed with fiber. They are also a great source of other important nutrients like manganese, potassium, vitamin C, vitamin K, and vitamin B9.

Carrots are well known for containing high amounts of beta carotene, which the body uses to make vitamin A. Beta carotene is important for eyesight, skin, and cell growth and may also help reduce chronic diseases like cancer and heart disease. Beta carotene was first discovered in carrots, which is how it got its name— carot-ene.



## Selection and Storage

### Carrots

- Select carrots that are firm and bright. Larger carrots generally have a tougher texture but are great for soups.
- Store carrots in the refrigerator in a perforated plastic bag for 1–3 weeks.
- Carrots lose moisture through their leafy green tops, so remove the tops before storing.

### Parsnips

- Choose small to medium parsnips, about five to 10 inches in length, as larger parsnips can become woody.
- Select parsnips that are firm and have an even yellow-cream color.
- Remove leafy green tops, leaving around one inch of the stem.
- To prevent moisture buildup, do not store parsnips in airtight containers.

## Culinary Tips

- Slice carrots into 1/4- to 1/2-inch coins and place into steamer or pan of boiling water. Steam or boil for 5–8 minutes or until tender.
- Add chopped carrots or parsnips to stews, soups, or pot roasts.
- Add raw, grated carrots to salads, sandwiches, spaghetti sauce, or baked goods for added flavor and nutrients.
- Swap carrots for parsnips in any recipe—or vice versa.
- Root vegetables are especially tasty when roasted together; add orange zest or cinnamon for a flavor boost.

## Recipes

- [Spring Rolls USDA Recipe for Schools](#)
- [Baked Carrot Fries with Yogurt-Sunflower Seed Butter Dip USDA Recipe for Child Care Centers](#)
- [Minestrone Soup \(Vegetable\) USDA Recipe for Adults in CACFP](#)

## Sourcing

- [Find Parsnips](#)
- [Find Carrots](#)



Carrots growing, credit: WSDA



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