

Preparation Steps

One of the great things about steamed carrots is that there's not a whole lot of preparation work involved. It's a great side dish because it hardly takes any time, and you can focus on the rest of the meal, or cleaning up. Here's what you need to do.

Wash

No matter what vegetable you're cooking, it's a good idea to **wash** it, and carrots are no exception. Depending on how they're grown and packaged, they might still have pesticides or dirt on them, neither of which you want to eat.

To clean carrots, just scrub them gently under lukewarm water, being sure to get all the dirt out.

Peel (Optional)

If you like, **you can also peel the carrots**. It's usually better not to, though – the carrot's surface has a lot of nutrients and flavor, and if you peel it, it might just not be as tasty. But if you really want to peel the carrots, just be sure to use a vegetable peeler. It'll peel the smallest layer possible. And be sure to peel only a single layer off the carrots.

Cut

One of the great thing about steaming carrots is that **you can cut them any way you want**. You can steam whole baby carrots, or cut larger carrots into smaller chunks or slices. It really doesn't matter!

- **Boiled carrots lose more nutrients the more surface area is exposed**, so it's important not to cut them too much before boiling. But steamed carrots don't lose nutrients and flavor that way, so you can cut them as small as you like.
- **Roasted carrots caramelize more the more surface area is exposed**, so they're tastier when cut up. But you don't need to worry about that with steamed carrots!

The only thing it really affects is how long it takes to cook – smaller carrot chunks will cook faster. So the best way to do it is to cut your carrots down to the size you want to serve them, and then steam them.

How To Steam Carrots

Once your carrots are washed and cut up, you're ready for the next step – steaming the carrots. If you have a steamer, you can just use that. I'll go over the instructions for steaming over a pot of water. It's basically the same thing in a different appliance!

Here what you do.

1. **Bring a pot of water to a boil.** You only need about an inch or two of water, enough to create steam.
2. **Place the carrots in a steaming basket**, and place the basket over the water.
 - The carrots shouldn't be immersed in the water. You want the steam to cook them, not the water.
3. **Steam the carrots until they're done.** You can cover them, but leave a little vent for some steam to escape, to avoid it building up too much. It'll take anywhere from 5 to 30 minutes, depending on the size of your carrot pieces.
 - Check the water level every so often. Add more if it gets too low.
 - You can test the carrots for doneness by sticking a fork in them. It should slide in easily enough. Or just taste a piece.
4. If you like, **sauté some garlic in a bit of butter and oil**, maybe with a few herbs and spices or some honey or sugar, and toss the carrots in the mixture. It'll give a bit of extra flavor, for something a little different.