

Ancient Roman-Style Carrots

A simple and delicious side dish that might have been served in Ancient Rome.

Course Side Dish
Cuisine Italian

Prep Time 5 minutes
Cook Time 40 minutes
Total Time 45 minutes

Servings 4

Ingredients

- 1/2 pound carrots 225 grams
- 8 small mint leaves
- 1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil 14 mL
- 1/2 tsp cumin seed 2.5 mL
- Salt to taste
- 1 cup water 240 mL
- 1 tbsp white, Champagne or white wine vinegar 14 mL
- Ground black pepper
- Chopped mint leaves for garnish

Instructions

1. Peel or scrape the carrots. Cut into pieces 2 to 3 inches long, then cut the pieces lengthwise in quarters, sixths or eighths, depending on the size of the carrot. The goal is to have each piece be roughly the same size (so that they end up cooked the same).
2. Tear or chop the mint into pieces.
3. Heat a skillet over medium heat. Add the oil, cumin seeds and herbs. Cook for a short time until the fragrance of the spice and herbs are noticeable.
4. Add the carrots and toss well to coat with oil, mint and cumin.
5. Add the water, vinegar, and salt.
6. Bring to a boil, lower the heat, and simmer until the carrots are tender (20-40 minutes). Ideally, the liquid will evaporate and form a glaze on the carrots. If all of the liquid evaporates before the carrots are tender, add more water.
7. Season with freshly ground black pepper and fresh mint leaves.
8. Serve hot, at room temperature, or cold.

Recipe Notes

Adapted from *The Savory Way*, by Deborah Madison. Her recipe is probably based on one in *De Re Coquinaria (On the Subject of Cooking)*, (a.k.a. "Apicius"), the most complete manuscript about food from the Imperial Roman era.

Ancient Romans didn't use the black pepper that we use today (*Piper nigrum*), but instead most commonly used "long pepper" (*Piper longum*), which can be found at specialty spice shops. An article at [Leite's Culinarium](#) has more details on ancient Roman ingredients.