

Recipes

## Roast Carrot Pâté: Vegan and Versatile

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Photography by Marie Viljoen

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A bright carrot pâté, creamy but vegan, will be welcome on any holiday table and inspire recipe-requests at potluck celebrations—and it's perfectly portable for winter picnics. It's also shape-shifting in a magical way, because it is the basis of a comforting soup, as well as a substantial filling for hand pies and galettes. That's why I always double the recipe. Bonus: It freezes well and can be made ahead.

Here is the adaptable recipe you didn't know you needed, ready for your next gathering.

Photography by Marie Viljoen.



Above: Carrot pâté served with olive oil, walnuts, and sun-dried figs (Fig & Walnut Pairing, \$9 from Ziba Foods).

This carrot pâté is a spread. A schmear. And a dip. Oxford defines pâté as “a rich, savory paste made from finely minced or mashed ingredients, typically seasoned meat or fish.” Or root vegetables? To me, weaned on my mother’s French-inflected decadent chicken liver version, pâté is a mouthful that is entirely satisfying, lacking nothing. Fat is important. So is bread, or a cracker, at the very least. This carrot iteration evolved in my kitchen to serve to vegan attendees of the botanical walks I lead, and to use esoteric forage-pantry items, like linden flower vinegar and ramp leaf salt. But it also welcomes more conventional ingredients.

It has proved very adaptable: to season, to pantry limitations and inspirations, and to cosmopolitan appetites. And the basic recipe—oil, carrots, onions, acid, salt, and something sweet—is designed for variation and improvisation.



Above: Schmear the pâté on your support of choice. Here, it is cornbread.





Above: Roasting the vegetables with bayberry leaves.



Above: Roasting strawberries alongside the carrots and onions.



Above: Carrot pâté with linden flower vinegar.

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If there is a trick to successful improvisation, it is choosing elements that belong together in a palate-pleasing way.

For the foundational funk: To amplify the onions, in spring I may add the leaves of wild onions like [field garlic](#), ramps, or three-cornered leeks. Garden-grown and market-bought fresh chives, and later chive flowers, work just as well.

For the salt: Ramp leaf salt, preserved lemon, or shoyu

For the sweetness: I may add a spoonful of [pine cone jam](#), or [yuzu syrup](#). Once, I used red currant jam. Maple syrup is winter-perfect. Chestnut honey sublime. Strawberries roasted with the carrots are surprisingly effective.

For the acid: Wild-fermented vinegars, according to season: apple, elderflower, linden, wisteria. But white balsamic translates admirably. Any sour citrus juice, like lemon, yuzu, or calamondin, is effective.

For the herbs: Tender bayberry in spring, mugwort in summer. But fresh bay leaf, thyme, marjoram, or rosemary are very good, too.

For the spices: Juniper, spicebush, and sumac for foraged and local flavor. But cumin and coriander are delicious.

For the heat: Aleppo pepper, urfa biber, Korean chile flakes, regular chile flakes; it's endless.





Above: Sourdough toast fingers offer crunch for the carrot creaminess.

The carrot pâté can be served with toast fingers, crusty bread, or as part of a gluten-free, low carb crudité platter, with crisp vegetables for dipping and dragging. Heap it in a bowl, or spread it across a plate, dressed up with extra virgin olive oil, nuts, and dried fruit.



Above: Spread onto a slice of aronia bread.

# Roast Carrot Pâté

Makes 2 packed cups

The carrots are roasted skin-on for more flavor, along with onions and a splash of water and vinegar, then food-processed with olive oil and a spoonful of sweetness. This version includes accessible, store-bought spices, but feel free to improvise. Don't skimp on the oil; it carries the flavor.

- 3 Tablespoons avocado oil
- 1 lb carrots, washed, but not peeled, cut into ½ -inch rounds
- 1 large onion, red or yellow, peeled, quartered
- 1 Tablespoon ground coriander (seed)
- 4 cardamom pods, seeds only
- ¼ teaspoon fine sea salt
- ¼ cup water
- 3 Tablespoons white balsamic vinegar
- 3 Tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon yuja-cheong (yuzu syrup) or lemon or orange marmalade
- ¼ Tablespoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 teaspoon Aleppo pepper
- 1 Tbsp fresh lemon juice

Preheat the oven to 375°F.

In a large bowl toss together the carrots, onions, oil, coriander, cardamom seeds, and salt until well coated. Transfer everything to a parchment-lined sheet pan. Add the water. Roast for 30 minutes, stirring once, then add the vinegar to the pan, shaking the vegetables to distribute it evenly. Continue to roast until the carrots are fork-tender (about another 15 minutes) and lightly caramelized at the edges. Remove from the oven.

While still warm, whizz the carrot mixture with any remaining pan-juices in a food processor with the olive oil, the yuja-cheong or marmalade, black pepper, Aleppo pepper, and the lemon juice. Scrape down the sides a couple of times, and process until the texture is relatively smooth. Taste for seasoning. You may want more salt or sweetness. It can be served at once or chilled (up to three days) until needed. To freeze in batches, break down into 1-cup servings in small containers or zippable bags.



Above: Whisk the pâté into hot broth and coconut milk for a reviving, instant soup.

The pâté-into-soup magic was born one day from a sudden hunger for a spicy soup, and a small bowl of leftover pâté lurking in the fridge beside a jar of good broth (feel free to use instant bouillon). A quick pantry inventory yielded coconut milk. It created a vividly satisfying bowlful on a bleak day. In summer the soup can be served chilled, with a generous pour of buttermilk and a flurry of fresh chives.

For the soup, it's a simple formula. For every ½ cup carrot pâté, you need 2 cups of broth, ¼ cup coconut milk, and a squeeze lemon. Whisk together in a pot and heat gently until steaming.





Above: Carrot pâté topped with chevre, en route to becoming hand pies.

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For vegetarian galettes and hand pies, chill the carrot pâté before swaddling it in your pastry of choice (try our [cranberry hand pie](#) butter pastry).



Above: Little carrot hand pies.