

Carrot Bacon

Prep: 5 mins

Cook: 20 mins

Marinate: 30 mins

Total: 55 mins

Servings: 4 to 6 servings

If you ask vegetarians and vegans what food they miss most, bacon is probably at the top of their list. There's something about the savory smell, crispy texture, and salty, smoky flavor that makes it irresistible. And while there are vegetarian bacon products on the market made from tempeh and soy, you can get surprisingly close to the real thing using carrots. Yes, carrots.

Sliced thin (we love the Y-peeler for this), then marinated in a mixture of tahini, soy sauce, paprika, and maple syrup, the carrots are baked until crisp. The strips not only achieve a similar flavor and texture to bacon—minus the chewy fat—they even look bacon-y. We include liquid smoke in the recipe to make the carrot bacon smell and taste more authentic, but you can always leave it out.

Carrot bacon can also be cooked in the air fryer, but you'll need to work in several batches to keep the strips in a single layer. Halve this recipe for vegan bacon for 2 or double it (spreading over 2 baking sheets) for a crowd. Serve your carrot bacon with classic vegan breakfast and brunch dishes, on a vegan burger or sandwich, or simply enjoy it as a flavorful snack.

Ingredients

- 2 carrot carrots
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons canola oil
- 1 1/2 tablespoons tahini
- 1 tablespoon maple syrup
- 3/4 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon liquid smoke, optional

Steps to Make It

1. Gather the ingredients.
2. Preheat the oven to 300 F and line a large baking sheet with parchment paper. Run a y-peeler over the carrots from top to bottom with a good amount of pressure to make long, thin strips. Continue until you have peeled both carrots as much as possible.
3. In a medium bowl, combine the soy sauce, oil, tahini, maple syrup, paprika, pepper, and liquid smoke, if using. Whisk together until well mixed.
4. Add the carrot strips to the marinade, then toss to coat. Let sit for 30 minutes at room temperature.
5. Remove the carrot strips from the marinade and place on the prepared baking sheet in a single layer, leaving a little space between each. Brush the tops with some of the excess marinade left in the bowl.
6. Bake the carrot bacon for about 20 to 25 minutes or until browned, but not burned. Keep a close eye on the strips in the last 5 minutes.
7. Let cool for a few minutes to crisp up before serving. If the "bacon" isn't as crispy as you'd like, you can return it to the oven for a few more minutes. Enjoy!

How to Store

- Store leftover carrot bacon in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 3 days.
- To reheat, place the strips back in a 300 F oven for a few minutes, being careful not to let them burn.

Recipe Variations

- To make carrot bacon in the air fryer, preheat to 350 F. Add marinated carrot strips to the basket in a single layer, cooking in batches. Cook for about 10 minutes, flipping once, or until crisp. Watch closely so they don't burn.
- If you are gluten-free, try using tamari or liquid aminos instead of soy sauce.
- Use low-sodium soy sauce for less salty carrot bacon.
- If you aren't using liquid smoke but want a smokier flavor, use more smoked paprika or used smoked pepper in place of the pepper.

How to Use Carrot Bacon

Beyond simply enjoying it as a crunchy snack, here are some ideas for serving carrot bacon:

- Serve with vegan pancakes or waffles for a nice savory side dish
- Serve with a tofu scramble or, if you're not vegan, with an omelet or frittata
- Use it to top a veggie burger or patty melt
- Make a BLT using vegan mayo
- Crumble it on to salads or soups
- Add to breakfast burritos or tacos