

Moroccan carrot salad



'Kemia' – various salads, often made with cooked vegetables – are served at the start of a Moroccan meal, a bit like tapas in Spain or meze in Turkey. They are always beautifully presented, to stimulate the appetite, and subtly spiced with classic Moroccan flavours such as mint, parsley, pepper, cumin, cinnamon and citrus. The beauty for the cook is that you can prepare them all in advance and serve them at room temperature.

In Morocco I noticed that cooks almost always scraped the cores out of the carrots once they were boiled. It's true that the core may be tougher and less tasty, but normally I don't bother. You might think the icing sugar is weird, but this is commonly used in Moroccan salads and the touch of sweetness works really well. But you can of course leave it out if you wish.

Serves: 4-6 as one of a selection of salads to start a meal

Time: 30 mins

600g (about 6 medium) carrots, peeled

3 tbsps olive oil

3 tbsps lemon juice

zest of half a large orange

1 tsp cumin (freshly toasted and ground if possible)

½ tsp paprika

½ tsp icing (powdered) sugar

⅛ - ¼ tsp crushed/pounded garlic

3 tbsps chopped parsley

salt and pepper to taste

1. Boil carrots whole in salted water until *just* tender, around 20 minutes. Meanwhile whisk all other ingredients together in a bowl.
2. While still warm, cut carrots into attractive shapes of your choice and mix with prepared vinaigrette. Cubes, disks and batons all work fine. Personally I like to 'roll-cut' the carrots: First halve any particularly fat ones lengthways. Then cut each into segments with your knife at an angle to the direction of the carrot, rolling the carrot round 90° between each cut, all the while keeping the carrot pointing in the same direction and your knife poised at the same angle. Make sense?
3. Check seasoning and add more salt and pepper as desired. Leave to sit for an hour so the flavours blend, or chill and bring back to room temperature later.