

# Carrot cupcakes for Easter

By **SANDRA SHIELDS**  
Epoch Times Staff

Festive cupcakes are ideal to serve at an Easter garden party or to take to a school function. This selection of fun recipe ideas is quick and easy to make. Everything can be prepared ahead of time, and children love to help with the decorating.

Makes 24 cupcakes

1 package carrot cake mix  
1 can cream cheese frosting  
Cocoa powder  
Chocolate cookie crumbs for dirt  
Extra long fancy coconut for stems  
Green and orange paste food colouring

Prepare cupcakes as directed on package.

Tint coconut with green food colouring and let dry on paper towelling.

Take 125 ml (1/2 cup) frosting and tint with a few drops of orange colouring for carrots. Cover and set aside. With the rest of the frosting, ice cupcakes and dip in chocolate cookie crumbs

to coat the top. Transfer the orange frosting to a pastry bag with a large round tip and pipe a carrot shape in the centre of each cupcake. Add green tinted coconut for the stems. Voila!

## Variations:

### Candy egg nest:

Mix 175 ml (3/4 cup) of long fancy coconut with 50 ml (1/4 cup) melted milk chocolate. Using a teaspoon, form little round bird's nests on wax paper and leave to dry. Just before completely dry, add small round jelly candies in the centre. Once completely dry, place a nest on top of each frosted cupcake.

**Chocolate bunnies:** Mix 125 ml (1/2 cup) fine coconut with a few

drops of green food colouring. Set aside to dry. Dip the frosted cupcake in the green coconut (grass) and place a chocolate Lindt bunny on top.

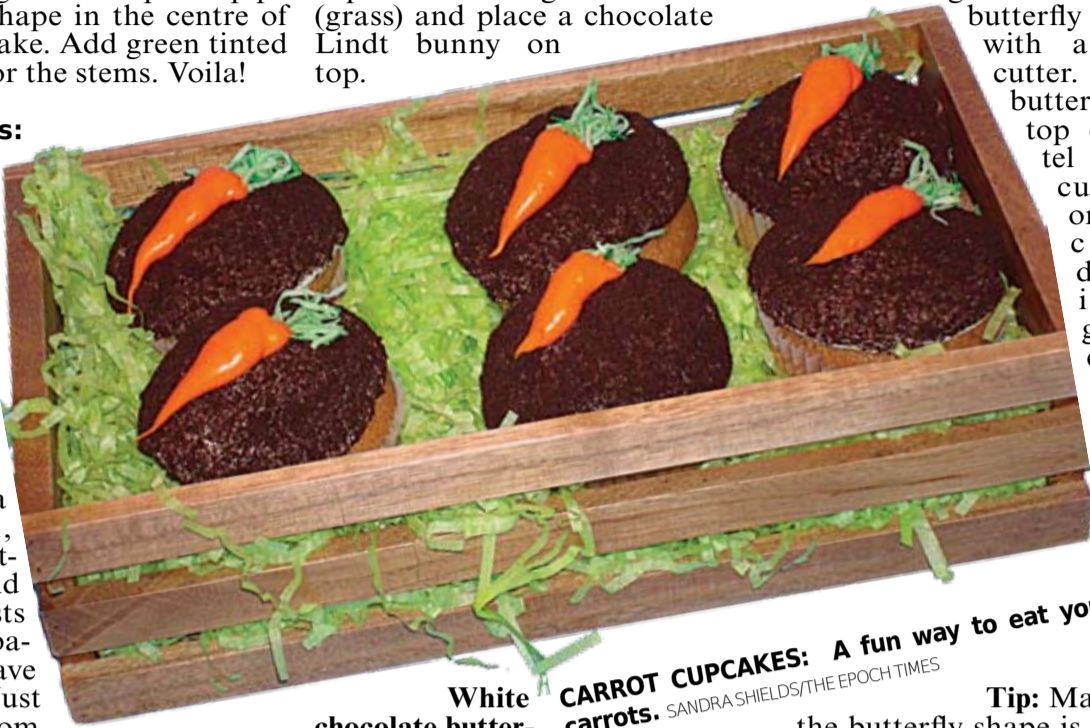
terns. Just before the chocolate completely sets, sprinkle on edible

butterfly shapes with a small cutter. Place

butterflies on top of pastel frosted

cupcakes or cupcakes dipped in green

coloured fine coconut.



**White CARROT CUPCAKES: A fun way to eat your carrots.** SANDRA SHIELDS/THE EPOCH TIMES

**White chocolate butter-  
flies:** Melt 250 ml (1 cup) of white chocolate melts, pour onto wax paper tray and smooth out the top. Using toothpicks, swirl assorted food colourings in the chocolate to make pat-

terns. Just before the chocolate completely sets, sprinkle on edible butterfly shapes with a small cutter. Place butterflies on top of pastel frosted cupcakes or cupcakes dipped in green coloured fine coconut.

## Tip: Make sure

the butterfly shape is not too intricate as the chocolate may break when being removed from the cutter. To prevent breaking, place on a smooth surface and push evenly on the chocolate to remove it from the cutter.

## Easter baskets for teens

By **PATRICIA CHADWICK**

Do you think your teenagers are too old to receive Easter baskets on Easter Sunday? Well mine aren't! In case you, too, have those young-at-heart teens, here are some Easter basket ideas that teens will love.



## Clothes

Let's face it, when it comes to clothes, your teen will never have enough! What a perfect time to give your teenager some spring clothing. There are still sales going on before the new summer line is being promoted, so you can find some great deals on spring clothes. I was just at Old Navy and they had t-shirts, shorts, and spring pants & dresses at one-third off the regular price! K-Mart, Wal-Mart, and many others, including mall stores, are not only having clearance sales, but sales on spring items.

## Books

This time of year, many new books are hitting the market. Why not encourage reading in your teen by giving them the latest hot-selling title.

## Toiletries

Fill that Easter basket with much needed soaps, shampoos, hair gels and other hair products, deodorants, and acne creams. You might even want to throw in some suntan lotion or sunscreen to help them look forward to the summer!

## School supplies

About this time of year, school supplies have either run out, been lost, or are worn out. Fill that Easter basket with new pens, pencils, folders, notebooks, and notebook paper.

For those who want to be a little more extravagant, try adding these gifts.

## Candy

What teen doesn't like candy? It's something you just never seem to out-

**TEENAGE EASTER BASKETS: Your teenagers will love clothes, books, toiletries, school supplies and candy in their baskets.** MAUREEN ZEBIAN/THE EPOCH TIMES

grow. I'm not a big fan of chocolate, but I feel special occasions deserve good chocolate! The week before Easter you will find great sales on candy everywhere. Also, if you like to make your own, you will find candy-making supplies at specialty stores and most local grocery stores. For those who don't like chocolate or are allergic, try making carob candy—check out your local health food store for supplies and details.

## Entertainment

This is a great time to give the gift of entertainment to your teenager. Why not buy a book of movie passes to distribute in various Easter baskets. You can usually purchase the tickets cheaper this way and your teen will love a free movie. If the price of a movie ticket in your area is a little high, why not buy a gift card at the local video shop. Teens also love their music; so another great gift is a C.D. of their favourite artist.

Let's face it, every kid likes to get an Easter basket, and teenagers are no exception. Why not fill that basket with practical items that are not only needed, but are sure to please!

*Patti Chadwick the creator of Parents & Teens, an online magazine helping parents connect with their teens. Visit Patti's site at [www.parentsandteens.com](http://www.parentsandteens.com).*

# Picky eating—a learned response

By **TYSAN LERNER**  
Epoch Times Staff

My children love to eat most vegetables, from salads to kale to rutabaga. When I mention this to other mothers, they often ask me how I managed to get my kids to like "healthy" foods.

Well, for one thing, I always made it a priority to educate my girls on good food and nutrition. I tell them about the consequences of poor eating choices and get them excited about vegetables. I talk about the vegetable, and point out why it looks good, or if it is wilted or overcooked, how it doesn't look very appetizing. I teach them to describe the taste, whether it is sweet, sour, bitter, salty, or spicy. I have them consciously experience the textures, which is why they began enjoying salad. They love the crunch of lettuce and cucumbers.

I also get them involved in food preparation or teach them a cooking class as I am preparing dinner.

When my older daughter was about four years old she watched the documentary Super Size Me, and from that day forward she'd rather go hungry than eat from a fast food restaurant, particularly McDonalds. Her sister copies the same sentiment. If we are on a road trip this does not always work to our benefit, but at least I know that they're aware of what constitutes a healthy diet.

I have been working on having my daughters continually expand their tastes, because although they love many vegetables, introducing new foods is not always the easiest thing to do. This became particularly apparent when my mother-in-law came to visit. She made us a delicious and healthy dinner, but it was hard to get the girls to eat it because it was an unfamiliar dish. They mostly just sat twirling their food around their plates, until the younger one rudely proclaimed that she had wanted me to make dinner.

While thinking about how to go about expanding their tastes I read in the IDEA Fitness Jour-

nal that nutritionists maintain that picky eating in children is not based on innate character flaws but rather on the example set by the parents.

This lesson often starts as early as in the uterus. Everything a mother eats while pregnant and breast-feeding to everything she feeds her child as an infant and toddler will shape and train that child's tastes and eating habits.

One of the pointers I read in IDEA that really hit home was the suggestion to "stick with the program." Many parents give up after a few attempts to get a child to try a new food, but actually, it often takes up to 10 tries before a child will acclimate their taste buds to new foods.

So I decided to explore cooking meals that were different from my normal choices and incorporate new dishes in with the old. My daughters will have to regularly try a new dish with dinner that I know they will enjoy. They may not like the new dish at first, but they will soon grow to like it. This will resolve their reluctance to try new foods. It will also help us all eat the same meal together rather than preparing separate meals for the adults and children.

If you are a parent who simply wants to get your children to eat broccoli—without having to puree it and hide it in brownies as some chefs suggest—try serving it at least 10 evenings in a row in a different way. Try preparing the broccoli with lemon or sea salt and garlic, or serving it steamed, roasted, fried, or with cheese. Not only will they learn that there



**MEALTIMES: Nutritionists maintain that picky eating in children is not based on innate character flaws but rather on the example set by the parents.** PHOTOS.COM

are many possibilities with one little vegetable, your children will begin to acclimate themselves to the taste, eventually growing to like it.

With a bit of ingenuity and persistence, parents may no longer have to play victim to their children's picky eating habits!

## Versatile lemon verbena

By **MYRNA MACK and REBECCA HUNNISETT**  
Epoch Times Staff

Lemon verbena has the most intense lemon-like smell of all the lemon-scented herbs. You just need to gently rub the leaves to release their fragrant, captivating aroma.

The plant is native to Chile and Argentina, and was introduced to Europe in the 1790s. It is sometimes called "herb Louisa" (the biological name is *Aloysia triphylla*). Some say it was named after Maria Luisa, wife of Carlos IV of Spain, although others attribute the name to Marie Louise, empress of France.

The leaves have a very strong taste and potent fragrance, so use them with discretion. It is a great addition to fish and poultry dishes, vegetable marinades, salad dressings, jams, puddings, and beverages. Chop the fresh leaves very finely since they are quite tough. Crumble dried leaves finely and add to the batter of carrot cake or banana bread.

The dried leaves retain their lemon scent for a long time, which makes them ideal for pot-pourri and herb sachets. You can dry the leaves yourself in the oven by placing on baking trays lined with parchment paper and leaving in the oven for 2-3 hours at the lowest setting.

The dried leaves also make an excellent tea, particularly if blended with mint.

Lemon verbena has several therapeutic properties. It has a mild sedative effect and is said to be good for relieving flatulence. A lemon verbena herbal tea can help with digestion and relaxation. It can also help reduce fevers.

The herb is easy to grow and loves full sun. In a warm climate it can grow too as high as 4 metres (13 feet). It also makes a good pot plant, although make sure you shelter it in winter or move it inside since it cannot tolerate prolonged frost or cold. The plant may drop its leaves if moved inside, but it should grow them again if the soil is kept fairly dry.



## savoury chef

Vancouver's Premier Full Service Caterer

Featuring *Elegant Asian Inspired Cuisine*

Caterer to *Shen Yun Divine Performing Arts*

Savoury Chef Foods  
ph: (604) 357-7118  
fax: (604) 357-7166  
[www.savourychef.com](http://www.savourychef.com)

Photo Credit: James Moes Photography - [www.jamesmoes.com](http://www.jamesmoes.com)