

Salisbury Central Kitchen Chronicles

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Stinky Sprout Seeks Kitchen Connection

I'm a brassy brassica, sometimes spicey, a little bit earthy, pleasantly nutty, often deep green, with piquant pepperiness and a hint of sweet. I don't smell if you treat me right, and am looking for someone who understands my true essence. If you love hot pans and bacon grease too, I'm yours.

'Tis the Season: The Case for Brussels Sprouts

Oh the humble Brussels sprout! So unloved, by children and adults alike, this is one woefully misunderstood veggie. Although majestic on their stalks, Brussels sprouts inspire memories of stinky and insipid mush. They seem to be last on everyone's list, at least here in the U.S. But if treated kindly, these guys are super-delicious. The problem is overcooking. Over-boiling, that is. Doing this releases the sulfur in *glucosinolate sinigrin*, an organic compound found in the sprouts (which also provides great health benefits!). If shredded and stir-fried, roasted, or parboiled *briefly* and sautéed, sprouts are divine. You can even deep fry them and serve with a side of *aioli*. And it's worth noting that bacon is a Brussels sprouts' best friend. They also get on nicely with dried fruit, pine nuts, poppy seeds, honey and sriracha, butternut squash....and...and...and...

Question: Why was the Brussels sprout sent to jail? (Answer on back.)

"Pot-Stuck" Brussels Sprouts by Marian Bull at Food52 adapted from Mollie Katzen Serves 4

1lb Brussels sprouts, halved or quartered
3 to 6 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
½ cup finely diced onion
A few squeezes of lemon juice
Salt, to taste.

1. Bring a pot of heavily salted water to a boil. Blanch your Brussels sprouts for 30 seconds, drain, and dry thoroughly.
2. Heat oil in large skillet over medium to medium-high heat. Add sprouts, cut side down, careful not to crowd them. If need be, cook them in two batches.
3. Let sprouts cook until the bottoms are getting charred, then flip them, sprinkle with salt, and let the tops crisp.
4. Move sprouts to the side of the pan, add a touch more oil, and toss in the onion. Lower the heat a bit and sauté onion until soft. Mix onion and sprouts together, give a squeeze of lemon juice, and adjust the seasoning. Repeat with second batch if necessary. Devour. Especially good over soft polenta.

What in the Heck is a Brassica?

Veggies categorized as brassicas belong to the scientific family Brassicaceae. These characters are also called cruciferous veggies, which sounds more gruesome than it should. Beyond Brussels sprouts, other brassicas include: various cabbages, mustard seeds, collard greens, broccoli, cauliflower, kohlrabi, wasabi, horseradish, kale, bok choy, broccoli rabe, turnips, rutabaga, arugula, watercress, and radishes! Whew.

OMAM!

A wise friend in the community coined the phrase Open Mind And Heart, as a reminder for how best to approach one's life. But how to approach one's plate? OMAM: Open Mind and Mouth! New foods (like new people) deserve a try. More than one! The rewards are delicious. You'll see.

To A Brussels Sprout by Stuart McLean

O, Brussels sprout sae green
and round,
Ye sit upon ma plate,
So innocently mystifying,
The cause o' much debate.

Some say ye taste like camel
droppings,
While others think you great,
I'm sure your sitting there a
wonderin',
Whit's goin' tae be your fate.

So let me tell you o' so quick,
As nervously you wait,
That I find you e'er so
loathsome,
So you definitely won't be ate.

Sprouts ala Fatty 'Cue

from Chef Zac Pelaccio
via The New York Times

2 Thai bird chilies, stems removed*
2 garlic cloves
2 small shallots
4 ounces double-smoked bacon, cut
crosswise into thin strips
1 tablespoon coriander seeds,
crushed
1 pound brussels sprouts, trimmed
and halved
Kosher salt
1/4 cup chicken broth
1 tablespoon maple syrup.

1. Combine one of the chilies with the garlic and shallots in a food processor and purée.

2. Fry bacon in a large sauté pan over medium heat until most of the fat is rendered, about 5 minutes. Add coriander seeds and stir until fragrant. Transfer bacon to paper towels using a slotted spoon.

3. Add brussels sprouts to the pan, cut sides down, and cook over medium heat until golden brown on the undersides, about 5 minutes. Season with salt and transfer to paper towels.

4. Add garlic-shallot paste and cook over low heat until fragrant, about one minute. Return brussels sprouts to pan and cook, stirring, 1 to 2 minutes. Add chicken broth and bring to a simmer. Cover, reduce heat to low, and simmer until sprouts are mostly tender, about 5 minutes. Uncover and reduce broth to the consistency of a glaze. Thinly slice the remaining chili. Remove pan from heat and stir in the syrup, bacon and sliced chilies. Sprinkle with salt.

*If spiciness is a concern, simply omit the chilies from both the garlic-shallot paste and from the finished dish.

Eat **BOLD**.
Eat **BRAVE**.
Put on your
Adventure
Food Pants!

Mission Nutrition

What's so great about Brussels sprouts? For starters, they are high in Vitamins K, C, and A, folic acid, iron, fiber, and phytonutrients that protect against cancer by helping to balance your body's detox system while providing antioxidant and anti-inflammatory support. Brussels sprouts also work to keep your heart and gut healthy. You may be surprised, but ideally, we'd all eat 2-3 servings of cruciferous vegetables weekly!

Culture Corner

Brussels sprouts may have been cultivated in Italy during Ancient Roman times, and perhaps were grown in Belgium as early as the 13th century! Since they were farmed in large quantities in Belgium, they became known as sprouts from Brussels, that country's capital. These brassica buds came to the U.S. in the 1800s when the French brought them to New Orleans. Thomas Jefferson grew them at Monticello. These days, the Dutch grow the largest crop--maybe we should call them Amsterdam sprouts?

Answer: Because it was a repeat offender! Awww, poor sprout!

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