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Give thanks for Brussels sprouts!

By Susie Iventosch



Photo Susie Iventosch

Here is a great veggie dish to serve alongside your Thanksgiving turkey this year. I used to really, really dislike Brussels sprouts. I don't think my mom ever made us eat them, but if she had, I'm pretty sure they would have been stuffed in my pockets before getting anywhere close to my fork. The idea of boiled, soggy heads of baby cabbage just seemed gross. In fact a few years ago, when my friend said she was going to make Brussels sprouts for one of our weekend getaway dinners, I said, "That's fine, but I will never eat them." Only, I did end up tasting them and absolutely loved them! She roasted them with a little bit of olive oil and salt and they were crunchy, perfectly browned and amazing. A few months later, another friend served them sautéed in olive oil and then added to a salad of butter lettuce with heart of palm, pancetta, blue cheese and vinaigrette dressing. They were delightful done both ways. Nowadays, whenever I venture to New York City

to visit my daughter, I always stop by the City Kitchen to pick up an order of roasted Brussels sprouts, served with red grapes, fig jam, sherry vinegar, walnuts and mint yogurt. This sounds like a very odd combination, but it's incredible!

Now that I'm a huge fan of Brussels sprouts, I don't want you to miss out on these crunchy little cruciferae. Here is a fun way to serve them as a side dish or even as a great vegetarian dish, if you omit the sausage. I love toasted walnuts with them, but pecans or pistachios would also be great.

Cheesy, nutty Brussels sprouts
(Serves 4-6 as a side dish)

INGREDIENTS

1 1/2 pounds Brussels sprouts, cleaned and halved (can quarter large sprouts)
2 large shallots, chopped
3-4 tablespoons olive oil
2 large chicken apple sausages (precooked), cut into small pieces
1/2 cup grated sharp white cheddar (can use Pecorino Romano or Parmesan, if you prefer)
3/4 cup walnut halves, toasted
Salt and pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

Clean Brussels sprouts and cut in half, or quarter if really large. Place in a cast iron skillet and pour about 1/2 cup water in the bottom of the pan. Cover and heat over medium-high heat for about 3 minutes, to slightly blanch the sprouts. Do not over cook. They should still be al denté. The water will mostly be evaporated. Immediately transfer sprouts from skillet to a bowl and toss with 1-2 tablespoons olive oil. Season with salt and pepper. Set aside.

Meanwhile, using the same skillet, heat 2 tablespoons olive oil and sauté shallots just until translucent. Remove shallots from skillet. Increase heat to high and when pan is very hot, add Brussels sprouts, shallots and chicken apple sausage all back to the skillet. Cook for approximately 4 to 5 minutes, turning often with a spatula, until sprouts and shallots are nicely browned. The key is to have the pan really hot before sizzling the sprouts, so they'll brown nicely but not get over-cooked. Remove from heat and add cheese and walnuts. Toss to mix. Serve hot.



Susie can be reached at suziventosch@gmail.com. This recipe can be found on our website: www.lamorindaweekly.com. If you would like to share your favorite recipe with Susie please contact her by email or call our office at (925) 377-0977.

Reach the reporter at: suziven@gmail.com

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