



I am the President of the Brussels Sprouts Fan Club! Actually, I just made that up. But I could be, because I love Brussels sprouts! I eat them raw, pickled, roasted, steamed, shaved, and this -- my favorite way -- cooked in bacon fat. Give Brussels sprouts a fair hearing. They are delicious and are in my list of Top 5 Favorite Vegetables!

Brussels Sprouts Fan Club!

I'm a big fan of Brussels sprouts. There's no good explanation for this, because when I was a kid, my mom did the typical "boil the heck out of the Brussels sprouts" thing, which left them soft and mushy, and to most normal people very undesirable, yet I still like Brussels sprouts. With all due respect to Mom, who introduced me to Brussels sprouts, a veg that I love to this day, here is my recipe.

Ingredients

Brussels sprouts – must be fresh – anywhere from 15 to 30, depending on size

Bacon fat (plus butter, or canola oil)

Bacon – 2 to 4 strips, depending on your love of bacon, small dice, or a slug of pancetta diced

1 shallot, minced

1 small clove of garlic, minced

Crushed red pepper

First, rinse your Brussels sprouts. Trim off the woody end, and put them into a pot of well salted boiling water. Leave them there for about 90 seconds, swishing them around. They should turn a nice bright green. After 90 seconds, remove the sprouts and put them into an ice bath – a bowl filled with ice water. This stops the cooking process.

When the sprouts are cool, remove them from the water, and cut them in half, long ways. When you've finished this step, you can put the sprouts in the fridge until you are ready to cook, or they are good to go, now.

Next, saute the diced bacon in a pan – same sauté pan that you'll use for the sprouts – over medium heat for 5-7 minutes, until the bacon starts to get crispy. You'll add the bacon back to the pan in the end, so don't let it get super crispy in this first cooking. It should be edible, but not super crispy.

When the bacon has a crisp on it, take it out of the pan. Set aside. Assess the fat in the pan. You want an even layer of bacon fat on the bottom of the pan. You should be able to swirl it around a little bit. If you don't have

enough bacon fat to cover the bottom of the pan, add a tablespoon of butter (or canola). You're still on medium heat at this point.

Add your chopped shallot to the hot bacon grease, and sauté for a minute or so. Then add your garlic and crushed red pepper. Stir that all together, and let it cook for another minute.

Now it's time for our hero. Put the Brussels sprouts into the pan, cut side down, leaf side up. The cut side should be sitting in a nice little layer of bacon fat (and maybe some butter). Don't touch them! Let them sit, cut side down for 3-4 minutes. Then peek. If the bottoms are nice and golden brown, spoon the sprouts on to their leafy sides and let them enjoy the bacon fat bath. Don't rush this process! Every stove and pan are different, so look for golden brown, even if it takes longer than I've said it should.

Don't worry if some outer leaves come off in the cooking process. They likely will get nice and crispy, and they will be delicious little Brussels sprouts chips.

Let "side two" of the sprouts sauté for two minutes, so that the whole veg is hot, and then you are ready to serve. If you really want to gild the sprout, shave some parmesan cheese on top.

First published by Judy on October 14, 2012