

Brussels sprouts deserve better reputation

Carole Kotkin
Miami Herald

Brussels sprouts have long been the black sheep of the Brassicaceae family of vegetables closely related to kale, cauliflower, and mustard greens.

Their reputation for being bitter, soggy, and foul-smelling stemmed from the way they were prepared in the past — boiled and overcooked. Thanks to creative chefs, this nutritious and delicious vegetable is now getting the attention it deserves.

Chefs are cooking Brussels sprouts using every method imaginable — sautéing, braising, grilling, and roasting.

Raw Brussels sprouts make a delicious salad. Simply shred or

thinly slice the sprouts using a food processor slicing disc, mandoline or sharp knife, and combine with chopped kale, sliced apples, dried cranberries, sliced almonds, grated Parmesan cheese, and toss with your favorite tart dressing.

My favorite way to prepare them is to roast until crisp, caramelized and golden brown on the outside, and sweet and tender on the inside. I love to eat them straight off the baking pan like candy.

These would be lovely with grilled steak, chicken or pork; or if serving on their own drizzled with blue cheese or balsamic vinegar and lemon juice, or for an Asian twist, Teriyaki sauce.

Start with bright green sprouts without any brown spots or yellow

leaves. Buy them on the stalk if possible (they look like tiny cabbages circling a 20-inch stalk) because they will be tender and sweet. On the stalk or boxed they will keep for about a week in the refrigerator vegetable drawer.

To make roasted Brussels sprouts, remove the outer leaves and discard any woody stems at the bottom of the sprouts. Cut larger sprouts in half, leaving smaller ones whole. Toss with olive oil and seasoning, place them cut side down in a single layer on a parchment-lined baking sheet, and roast at 400° for about 25-30 minutes. They are done when the bottoms are caramelized and can be pierced easily with a fork. They are delicious tossed into pasta, served

over risotto, added to a grain bowl or salad.

ROASTED BRUSSELS SPROUTS WITH SOUR CREAM AND KUMQUAT AND CHILLI RELISH

1 pound Brussels sprouts, ends trimmed, halved
Olive oil for coating sprouts
10 sweet kumquats
1 long red chilli
1 tablespoon flat-leaf (Italian) parsley leaves, finely chopped
1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
Salt to taste
1/4 cup sour cream, thinned with some milk or water, to drizzle

Preheat oven to 400°F

Toss the Brussels sprouts in enough olive oil to coat them, then sprinkle with salt and pepper. Spread them out on a baking tray lined with baking paper and roast for 25–30 minutes, or until well browned and crispy.

To make your relish, thinly slice the kumquats, removing any seeds as you go. Give them a rough chop. Thinly slice the chilli (removing the seeds if you don't like things too spicy) and combine with the kumquat. Mix that all together with the chopped parsley and the extra-virgin olive oil with a good pinch of salt.

Spread the Brussels sprouts on a platter and drizzle with the sour cream. Sprinkle the relish over the top and serve warm or at room temperature. Yield: Serves 4.

BRUNCH

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CINNAMON MUESLI PANCAKES WITH CRANBERRY, FIG AND GINGER JAM

Prep: 20 minutes
Cook: 20 minutes
Makes: 16 four-inch pancakes

Any good-quality thick, not-too-sweet jam can stand in for the homemade version. I like lingonberry when it's available. Gluten-free 1-to-1 baking flour (such as Bob's Red Mill) can be substituted for the flours. Use more oats if you wish to replace the nuts.

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 3/4 cup whole wheat flour
- 1/2 cup old-fashioned oats
- 1/4 cup quinoa flakes or bran flakes (or crushed bran flake cereal)
- 1/4 cup sliced almonds or pecan pieces, chopped
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 3 tablespoons roasted or raw sunflower seeds
- 3 or 4 tablespoons dried currants or chopped golden raisins or dried cranberries
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon each: baking soda, salt, ground cinnamon
- 3 large eggs
- 1 1/2 cups milk (whole, low-fat or skim all are fine here)
- 3 tablespoons each: vegetable oil, melted butter



Abel Uribe/Chicago Tribune—TNS

Pancakes with homemade jam prepared and styled by Shannon Kinsella.

Vegetable oil for high heat cooking, such as sunflower, safflower or expeller-pressed canola oil
Plain or vanilla yogurt
Cranberry, fig and ginger jam, see recipe, warmed
Cranberry or maple syrup

1. Mix flours, oats, quinoa flakes, almonds, brown sugar, sunflower seeds, currants, baking powder, baking soda, salt and cinnamon in a medium bowl. (Or store in a covered container up to several weeks.)
2. To make pancake batter, whisk eggs together in a large bowl. Whisk in milk, 3 tablespoons oil and melted butter. Whisk the flour mixture into the egg mixture just until

everything is moistened. Do not overmix. Let stand about 5 minutes.

3. To cook pancakes, heat 1 or 2 large nonstick skillets or a griddle over medium heat until a drop of water sizzles on contact. Lightly brush the surface with a little oil. Use a 1/4 cup measure or ladle to dollop batter in several places over hot surface, allowing 2 or 3 inches between pancakes for spread. Reduce heat to medium-low; cook until bubbles form on the surface and the bottom is golden brown, about 3 minutes. Flip and brown the other side, about 1 minute more.

4. Serve pancakes hot off the griddle topped with yogurt, warm cranberry jam and a drizzle of syrup.

Note: Pancakes can be transferred to a wire rack set over a baking sheet in a 200-degree oven to stay warm while you cook all the batter.

Nutrition information per serving: 164.4 calories, 79 g fat, 2.4 g saturated fat, 41.8 mg cholesterol, 19.6 g carbohydrates, 6 g sugar, 4.7 g protein, 206.3 mg sodium, 1.7 g fiber

CRANBERRY, FIG AND GINGER JAM

Prep: 15 minutes
Cook: 10 minutes
Makes: about 2 1/2 cups

- 1 bag (12 ounces) fresh or frozen cranberries
- 1 small tart apple or Bartlett pear, peeled, cored, cut into 1/2-inch pieces
- 7 or 8 dried Turkish figs, chopped, about 3/4 cup (4 ounces)
- 1/2 cup sugar
- Grated zest and juice of half orange
- 1 to 2 tablespoons finely chopped crystallized ginger

1. Put cranberries, apple, figs, sugar, and orange zest and juice into a medium saucepan. Add 1/2 cup water. Heat to a simmer over medium heat. Cook, covered, to completely dissolve the sugar, 3 minutes. Uncover and simmer on low, stirring often, until most of

the cranberries pop, about 10 minutes.

2. Stir in ginger. Cool. Refrigerate covered up to 4 days. Serve warm.

Nutrition information per serving: 24.2 calories, 0 g fat, 0 g saturated fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 6.3 g carbohydrates, 5 g sugar, 0.2 g protein, 0.5 mg sodium, 0.7 g fiber

BACON AND POTATO SKILLET WITH POACHED EGGS AND LEMON THYME MAYONNAISE

Prep: 25 minutes
Cook: 30 minutes
Makes: 4 servings

To save time, skip step 1 and substitute 4 or 5 cups thawed, shredded frozen potatoes or hash browns. You can opt to pan fry the eggs if poached eggs are not your thing.

- 4 to 5 medium yellow potatoes, about 1 1/2 pounds, scrubbed
- Salt
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 2 or 3 thick slabs bacon, finely chopped (3 ounces)
- 1 small onion, finely chopped (4 ounces)
- 1/2 Golden delicious or 1 small tart apple, peeled, cored, finely chopped
- 3 green onions, thinly sliced
- 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme leaves or 1 teaspoon minced fresh thyme leaves
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 4 large eggs
- 1 tablespoon white distilled vinegar
- Lemon thyme mayonnaise: 1/2 cup mayonnaise
- 2 teaspoons fresh lemon juice
- 1/4 teaspoon dried thyme leaves or 1/2 teaspoon minced fresh thyme leaves
- Several dashes red pepper hot sauce, plus more for serving
- Vegetable oil for high heat cooking, such as sunflower, safflower or expeller-pressed canola oil
- Sliced green onions, parsley sprigs

1. Put whole potatoes and 1/2 teaspoon salt into a large saucepan. Add water to cover them by 1 inch. Heat to a boil and cook, partly covered, until potatoes are not quite fork-tender in the center, about 10 minutes. Drain. Let potatoes cool until you can handle them. Set a four-sided grater into a large bowl. Use the largest holes to shred the potatoes (including the skins) into the bowl.
2. Meanwhile, melt butter in a large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add bacon, onion and apple. Cook until onion is golden and tender, about 10 minutes.
3. Stir shredded potatoes, green onions, thyme, 1 teaspoon salt and 1/2 teaspoon pepper into the skillet containing the onion mixture. Cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until potatoes are beautifully bronzed, about 10 minutes. Set aside to stay warm. (Or, divide mixture among four small skillets or ovenproof bowls and pop into a 200-degree oven to stay warm.)
4. Poach eggs as follows: Fill a large saucepan half full with water. Add vinegar and 1/2 teaspoon salt; heat to a boil. Reduce heat so water is barely at a simmer. Crack 1 egg into a small cup. Use a spoon to swirl the water in the saucepan; slip the egg into the swirling water. Repeat to add remaining eggs to water. Let eggs simmer until whites are nearly set but yolks are still runny, about 3 minutes. Transfer the eggs with a slotted spoon to a bowl of warm water.
5. For sauce, mix mayonnaise, lemon juice, thyme and hot sauce to taste in a small bowl.
6. If necessary, reheat the potato hash until it's very hot. Top with poached eggs and dollops of the sauce. Garnish with more hot sauce, green onions and parsley.

Nutrition information per serving: 563.6 calories, 36.6 g fat, 9.3 g saturated fat, 226.8 mg cholesterol, 42.1 g carbohydrates, 6.6 g sugar, 17.2 g protein, 1,010.1 mg sodium, 4.2 g fiber

FAVORITE

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- Look for unsalted chicken broth in the grocery aisle.

Countdown

- Start vegetables and add broth and orzo.
- While this simmers, cut the chicken into small pieces.
- Finish soup.

Shopping List

To buy: 10 ounces cooked rotisserie or chicken breast, 1 bag frozen onion, 1 bunch celery, 1 bunch parsnips, 1 bag washed, ready-to-eat baby spinach, 1 bunch fresh basil, 1 small piece Parmesan cheese, 1 carton unsalted chicken broth and one box orzo.

Staples: olive oil, salt and black peppercorns.

CHICKEN ORZO SOUP

Recipe by Linda Gassenheimer

- 2 teaspoon olive oil
- 2 cups frozen chopped onion
- 1/2 cup sliced celery

- 1 cup peeled thinly sliced parsnips
- 4 cups unsalted chicken broth
- 3/4 cup orzo
- 10 ounces cooked boneless chicken breast (skin removed)
- 2 cups fresh washed, ready-to-eat baby spinach
- 1 cup fresh basil leaves, torn into small pieces
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese

Heat oil in a large saucepan over medium-high heat. Add onion, celery and parsnips. Saute 3 minutes. Add broth and orzo and simmer 8 minutes or until orzo is cooked al dente. Meanwhile cut the chicken into small pieces. When the orzo is cooked, add chicken and spinach. Stir until spinach is wilted and chicken is warmed, about 1 minute. Remove from heat and add the basil and salt and pepper to taste. Ladle into soup bowls and sprinkle cheese on top.

Yield 2 servings.

Per serving: 634 calories (19 percent from fat), 13.1 g fat (3.4 g saturated, 4.3 g monounsaturated), 135 cholesterol, 61.7 g protein, 67.9 g carbohydrates, 8.4 g fiber, 470 mg sodium.

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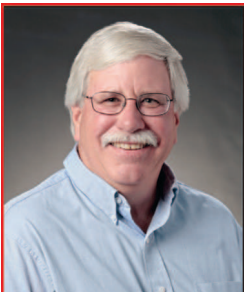
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