

WHEN YOU HEAR THE JANUARY TRY DAY FRIDAY IS BRUSSELS SPROUTS...

WHAT IS YOUR REACTION?

Are you excited, or are you thinking "ugh, I DO NOT like Brussels sprouts!"?

A few years ago, a survey found that Brussels sprouts were the most hated vegetable in America!



WHY DO SO MANY PEOPLE DESPISE THIS CABBAGE-LIKE VEGGIE?

For some, it may be caused by unpleasant memories of those soggy little cabbages our mothers tried to get us to eat when we were five years old. Or maybe it is a memory of overcooked Brussels sprouts that smelled like rotten eggs.

Whatever the reason may be, we are here to help blow those perceptions out of the water!

WHAT ARE BRUSSELS SPROUTS?



You may hear someone say they are baby cabbages, but they are not. They are related to the cabbage family; however, one difference is, with cabbage, you eat the heads that grow out of the ground whereas Brussels sprouts are actually buds that grow on a stalk.

Brussels sprouts were cultivated in Belgium as early as the 16th century and most of the production in the U.S. currently takes place in California. There are dozens of varieties of Brussels sprouts that range in size from pea-sized to golf ball size.

WHY SHOULD WE BE EATING THEM, ON A REGULAR BASIS?

Because they are extremely nutritious and powerful cancer fighters! One cup of Brussels sprouts is only 60 calories and they are loaded with high levels of Vitamin A & C, folic acid, and fiber. One cup of Brussels sprouts has almost 100 mg of Vitamin C, even more than a medium orange, which has about 70 mg. In China, Brussels sprouts are used as medicine to improve digestive health. One cup contains 4 grams of fiber, which helps remove unwanted acids from our digestive tract and also helps lower cholesterol.

Because they are part of the cruciferous vegetable family, they have powerful cancer-fighting compounds. Brussels sprouts contain glucosinolates, which your body uses to make isothiocyanates, and then these compounds work to activate cancer-fighting enzymes in your body. Brussels sprouts have been linked to the prevention of a number of cancers, including colon cancer, ovarian cancer and others. Of course, all cruciferous vegetables are known for their cancer-fighting powers, but Brussels sprouts have been found to contain even greater amounts of glucosinolates than cabbage, kale, cauliflower and broccoli!

HOW DO YOU PICK AND STORE THEM?

Brussels sprouts are considered in-season from Autumn to early Spring. They can survive the first frost, and will continue growing until the first hard freeze hits. You want to purchase Brussels sprouts that are free of wilted or yellow leaves, and it is perfectly fine to purchase them still on the stalk (they will actually last longer if still on the stalk). Before eating, trim the stems and remove any yellow or discolored leaves. Once cut, store them in your refrigerator. Brussels sprouts are best eaten within one week of buying them.

HOW DO YOU COOK AND EAT THEM?

Some of us may THINK we don't like Brussels sprouts because of an unpleasant experience where they smelled like rotten eggs. This happens when they are overcooked (often, when they are boiled). This is due to the breakdown of a compound in Brussels sprouts that contains sulfur. But, ironically, it is this same compound that contains the cancer-fighting characteristics!

The great news is it is super-easy to prepare Brussels sprouts in ways that are delicious and allow you get the amazing health benefits (without any rotten egg odors). Roasting, sautéing and grilling them are fantastic options. Believe it or not, you can also eat them raw - they are absolutely delicious shredded salads!

HERE IS A FLAVOR-POPPING DELICIOUS IDEA TO TRY...WE KNOW YOU WILL BE GLAD YOU DID!

Brussels Sprouts Hash

This recipe may completely change your perception of Brussels sprouts! The Brussels sprouts in this meal are shredded so they look more like coleslaw and the combination of the bacon, egg, and spices are amazing! Just give it a try!

Ingredients:

- 8 strips bacon (chopped, or 8 slices of canadian bacon)
- 3 cups brussels sprouts (thinly sliced)
- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans (or other nut of your choice)
- 4 eggs (or 1-2 eggs per person)
- 1/4 tsp sea salt
- 1/4 tsp black pepper
- Optional Seasonings (pick one or more than one!)
 - 1 Tbsp dijon mustard
 - 1 Tbsp red wine vinegar
 - 1/2 tsp crushed red pepper flakes (or up to 1 Tbsp of hot sauce)



Directions:

- 1 In a large skillet over medium high heat, add 1 Tbsp of olive oil and add the chopped bacon. Cook until starting to crisp, about 4 minutes.
- 2 Add the sliced Brussels sprouts to the pan and cook for about 3 minutes.
- 3 Add the nuts and any or all of the optional seasonings along with the salt and pepper and heat through.
- 4 Turn the heat to low and let the Brussels sprout hash stay warm while you cook your eggs.
- 5 In a small pan, heat 1 Tbsp of olive oil (or less if you don't want that much oil to cook your eggs) and crack your egg or eggs into the pan. (You may have to do this in stages and cook one or two eggs at a time). Cook until your egg is cooked the way you like it.
- 6 Spoon some of the Brussels sprout mixture onto a plate and top with the cooked egg. Sprinkle with more salt and pepper if desired. Enjoy!

(This great-tasting recipe, plus many more, can be found at www.eatrealamerica.com.)

Take note! Brussels sprouts are high in the blood clotting Vitamin K, so consuming substantial amounts of Brussels sprouts can affect those on anti-blood clotting medications. To be on the safe side, talk to your doctor -- you could even discuss ways to adjust medication if you are able to commit to including certain amounts of these types of vegetables, that are high in Vitamin K, in your daily diet.