

Cider-Braised Brussels Sprouts with Bacon

Serves 6-8

Bacon and hard cider help balance the cruciferous flavor of Brussels sprouts. It's important to have a pan large enough to cook the sprouts in a single layer. You can blanch the sprouts up to one day ahead: Wrap in a clean kitchen towel or paper towels and place in a plastic bag.

- 1½ pounds Brussels sprouts, stem ends trimmed, halved through the core
- 4 to 6 strips bacon, cut into ½-inch strips (optional)
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 3 tablespoons butter
- ½ cup minced shallots
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 cup hard cider or beer
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt + salt to taste
- Freshly ground black pepper
- Pinch nutmeg

Instructions: Bring a large pot of well-salted water to a rolling boil. Prepare an ice bath. Blanch the sprouts until crisp-tender but no longer crunchy, 5-7 minutes. Drain and immediately plunge into the ice water. When cool, drain well.

Meanwhile, heat a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the bacon, if using, and brown until crisp. Remove the bacon with a slotted spoon, drain on paper towels. Discard the bacon fat or

save for another use.

Add the olive oil to the pan. When it's hot, add 2 tablespoons of the butter. When the butter is frothy, add the sprouts and saute for about 5 minutes, shaking the pan gently from time to time rather than stirring. Stir in the shallots and garlic and cook for 2-3 minutes, until all of the vegetables are lightly browned, stirring often.

Add the cider, 1 teaspoon kosher salt and lots of black pepper. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to a lively simmer and cover. Cook until the sprouts are cooked through at the core, 3-5 minutes.

Uncover, increase heat to high and cook until the liquid is almost completely evaporated, about 2 minutes. If the sprouts are done to your liking before that, it's OK to have a little extra liquid.

Season lightly with nutmeg, and salt and pepper if needed. Toss with the bacon, if using, and the extra tablespoon of butter. Transfer to a warmed bowl.

Per serving: 160 calories, 5 g protein, 10 g carbohydrate, 11 g fat (5 g saturated),

20 mg cholesterol, 483 mg sodium, 2 g fiber.



The optional bacon adds a savory kick to Brussels sprouts.