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EATING & DRINKING



GREEN REVOLUTION From left: fried Brussels sprouts with savory onion caramel, garlic confit, lime, mint and Aleppo pepper; shaved Brussels sprout salad with Marcona almonds, egg, pecorino and citrus vinaigrette; fried Brussels sprout pickles with cucumber yogurt.

James Ransom for The Wall Street Journal. Food Styling by Jamie Kimm, Prop Styling by DSM

Brussels Sprouts Break Out

This versatile veggie is so much more
than a backdrop for bacon

BY PERVAIZ SHALLWANI



IT'S NO LONGER enough to showcase Brussels sprouts on a winter menu simply by roasting them with bacon. Chefs have really been putting these petite cabbages through their paces over the past few years, featuring them in innovative preparations that are a far cry from the side dishes of Thanksgivings past. And I suspect that long after we've finally cried uncle in the face of one kale salad too many, Brussels sprouts will still seem fresh.

"There are so many ways to cook them," said Kim Alter, executive chef at Plum in Oakland, Calif. "They have a texture and taste that is not overwhelming. They react well with other flavors, like brown butter and bacon. You get the best of both worlds—the leafy kale-like [tenderness] but, at the same time, the firmness of a sprout." For one dish, Ms. Alter fries halved Brussels sprouts, tosses them in garlic confit, lime juice and a savory onion caramel, and garnishes them with mint and Aleppo pepper. And, recently, she showcased the vegetable in a number of different ways on the same plate: finely sliced and braised, fermented and charred on a grill, finely sliced again and served raw in a salad, and also fried to a crisp.

Michael Chiarello, chef-owner of Bottega in Yountville, Calif., tosses shaved sprouts with a flurry of sieved hard-boiled egg, Marcona almonds and a citrus vinaigrette for an elegant salad. Bryce Shuman, executive chef at Betony in New York, settled on sprouts when searching for a vegetable for his winter iteration of the deep-fried pickle, a bar-food favorite in his native North Carolina. In Mr. Shuman's somewhat refined version, the sprouts are pickled and cloaked in an aerated tempura batter before frying. "Brussels sprouts just lend themselves well [to pickling] because there are so many layers," he said. "When you have this salty, fatty goodness of something deep fried, you want something really tart to cut through that."

Other chefs, such as Saul Bolton of the Vanderbilt in Brooklyn, N.Y., fry Brussels sprouts just as they are, the delicate leaves blistering and caramelizing after a brief pass through the hot oil. The result is as addictively crisp and unctuous as a potato chip—a far cry from the old notion that you should eat your Brussels sprouts because they're good for you. "It's less about making them healthy," Mr. Bolton said, "and more about making them awesome."

Fried Brussels Sprouts with Savory Onion Caramel, Garlic Confit, Lime, Mint and Aleppo Pepper

TOTAL TIME: 90 minutes SERVES: 4

For the garlic confit:

20 cloves garlic, peeled
2 cups olive oil

For the savory onion caramel:

1 medium onion, roughly chopped
2 cups water
1 cup sugar
¾ cup rice wine vinegar
½ cup fish sauce
½ cup soy sauce

For the Brussels sprouts:

Canola oil for frying
4 cups Brussels sprouts, trimmed and halved
½ cup savory onion caramel (see step 2)
1 teaspoon garlic confit (see step 1)

1 tablespoon lime juice, plus more to taste
8 mint leaves, torn
½ teaspoon ground Aleppo pepper, plus more to taste

1. Make garlic confit: In a small saucepan, combine garlic and oil so garlic is completely covered. Cook on low heat until garlic is soft, 1 hour. Drain garlic in a colander and discard oil. Use a blender or food processor to purée garlic to a paste. Set aside. (Garlic confit will keep in the refrigerator up to two weeks.)
2. Meanwhile, make savory onion caramel: Add onion and water to a blender or food processor and purée. Strain purée through a fine-mesh sieve, reserve liquid and discard solids. In a large saucepan over medium-high heat, bring ½ cup onion juice and sugar to a boil. Cook,

stirring occasionally, until sugar dissolves and caramel is medium-brown in color, about 15 minutes. Whisk in vinegar and reduce heat to low. Add fish and soy sauces. Remove caramel from heat and let cool completely.

3. Make Brussels sprouts: Add oil to a medium pot to a depth of 3 inches and set over medium-high heat. Bring oil to 350 degrees, using a deep fat or candy thermometer to monitor temperature. Add Brussels sprouts and fry until crisp and brown, 3 minutes. Remove sprouts from oil and drain on a paper-towel-lined plate.
4. In a medium bowl, combine caramel with garlic confit and lime juice. Stir in fried sprouts. Garnish with mint leaves and Aleppo pepper, adding more spice as desired.

—Adapted from Kim Alter at Plum in Oakland, Calif.

Shaved Brussels Sprout Salad With Marcona Almonds, Egg, Pecorino and Citrus Vinaigrette

ACTIVE TIME: 30 minutes TOTAL TIME: 60 minutes SERVES: 6

2 large eggs
Juice of 2 lemons
Juice of 1 small orange
1 shallot, finely chopped
1½ cups olive oil
1 teaspoon sea salt
½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
6 cups Brussels sprouts
¾ cup Marcona almonds, finely chopped
½ cup grated pecorino cheese

1. Make hard-boiled eggs: Fill a medium-size pot with cold water, add eggs and set over medium-high heat. Bring water to a boil, then reduce heat and gently simmer 10 minutes. Remove eggs from water and run under cold water until cool.
2. Meanwhile make vinaigrette: In a small bowl, whisk together lemon and orange juices and shallot. Gradually whisk in olive oil in a slow, thin stream to

- form an emulsion. Season with salt and pepper. Whisk again, cover and refrigerate at least 30 minutes or up to 3 days.
3. Sieve eggs: Separate hard-boiled egg whites and yolks. Over a small bowl, push egg whites through a fine-mesh sieve, a colander or the large holes of a box grater. Over another bowl, sieve yolks in the same way. Set aside.
 4. Holding the stem of each

Brussels sprout, use a mandoline to thinly shave. (Alternately, use a sharp knife to slice as thinly as possible.) In a large bowl, toss together Brussels sprouts, sieved egg whites and yolks, and almonds. Pour ¾ cup vinaigrette over salad and toss again. Top with pecorino and a drizzle of vinaigrette.

—Adapted from Michael Chiarello at Bottega in Yountville, Calif.

Fried Brussels Sprout Pickles With Cucumber Yogurt

ACTIVE TIME: 45 minutes TOTAL TIME: 90 minutes SERVES: 4

For the Brussels sprouts:

4 cups Brussels sprouts, quartered
3 cups white wine vinegar
2 cups water
2 teaspoons whole coriander
2 teaspoons fennel seeds
1 teaspoon chili flakes
¼ cup sugar
½ cup salt, plus 1 teaspoon
3 cups all-purpose flour
¾ cup corn starch
2 tablespoons baking powder
1½ cups club soda
Canola oil for frying

For the cucumber yogurt:

1 English cucumber, halved and seeded
1½ teaspoons salt
1 cup full-fat Greek yogurt

1 teaspoon lemon juice
½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Blanch Brussels sprouts briefly in boiling water, then drain and transfer immediately to a large bowl of salted ice water. Once Brussels sprouts are chilled, drain and spread out on a clean dish towel to dry.
2. In a medium-size pot over medium-high heat, bring vinegar, water, coriander, fennel, chili flakes, sugar and ½ cup salt to a simmer. Turn off heat, add Brussels sprouts, cover and steep for 1 hour. Remove sprouts and set aside. Discard pickling liquid.
3. Meanwhile, make cucumber yogurt sauce: Grate cucumber over a medium bowl. Season with ½ teaspoon salt, wrap in paper towels and squeeze to remove excess moisture. Com-

bine cucumber with yogurt, remaining salt, lemon juice and pepper.

4. In a bowl, combine flour, corn starch, baking powder and remaining salt, then place half of mixture in another bowl. Mix club soda into one of the bowls to form a batter. Add oil to a medium pot to a depth of 3 inches and set over medium-high heat. Bring oil to 375 degrees, using a deep fat or candy thermometer to monitor temperature. Working in batches, dredge sprouts through dry flour mixture, then through wet batter. Place dredged sprouts in pot and fry until brown and crisp, about 5 minutes. Use a slotted spoon to remove fried sprouts from pot and set aside on a paper-towel-lined plate to drain. Repeat process with remaining sprouts. Serve fried sprouts with cucumber yogurt.

—Adapted from Bryce Shuman at Betony in New York City