Ingredient of the Month

Presented by ACFEF Chef & Child Foundation and Clemson University
**Being** a notable member of the cabbage family, Brussels sprouts resemble miniature cabbage heads and range from one to one-and-a-half inches in diameter. They are similar to cabbage in taste, but milder in flavor and denser in texture. According to legend, Brussels sprouts were first cultivated in Europe. Whether or not this took place in the city of Brussels remains unknown; however, the first official record of them did appear in Belgium in the late 16th century. In the 19th century, they made their way to England and gained lasting acclaim with the British, the world’s top consumers of Brussels sprouts to this day.

While they are available in many grocery stores year-round, peak season is usually from September to February. Peak season is winter since frost tends to sweeten sprouts. A general rule of thumb is: the smaller the sprout, the sweeter the taste. Also, try to avoid wilted, dull-colored heads, and choose sprouts of similar size so that they will cook evenly. Sprouts can be steamed, baked, boiled, sautéed and braised for a delicious, nutritious dish.

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**Healthy ingredient contribution**

**Fiber:** Brussels sprouts contain fiber, which aids in digestion and helps lower cholesterol.

**Folate:** Brussels sprouts also supply folate, which is necessary for normal tissue growth and may protect against cancer, heart disease and birth defects.

**Phytonutrients:** Like other cruciferous vegetables, Brussels sprouts are packed with phytonutrients, which are natural plant compounds that may help protect against cancer.

**Potassium:** As a good source of potassium, Brussels sprouts may help lower blood pressure and maybe even cholesterol.

**Iron:** By providing iron, Brussels sprouts help maintain the body’s red blood cell count.

**Vitamins A and C:** One half cup of these sprouts provide more than 80 percent of the recommended daily amount of vitamin C, which helps combat such ailments as heart disease, cancer and cataracts.

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**Varieties and uses**

Brussels sprouts can be cooked using a variety of methods, such as steaming, boiling, sautéing, roasting and even microwaving. They can also be sliced thinly and added to coleslaw or salads. Prior to cooking, remember to rinse them with cold water and trim the stem ends without cutting the base of leaves or the Brussels sprouts will come apart during cooking. Also, cutting a shallow “x” in the base of the sprouts will help accelerate the cooking process. To test for doneness, pierce the stem end with a fork or knife—it should penetrate easily. Some of the flavor pairings most often used with Brussels sprouts are bacon and pancetta, cream, cheese, apples, lemon, chestnuts, pine nuts, almonds and thyme.
Storage
Store unwashed sprouts in an airtight plastic bag or container in the refrigerator for up to three days; longer than that and they may start developing a strong, unpleasant flavor. They also freeze well.

Serving size
½ cup of cooked Brussels sprouts = 30 calories, 2 grams of fiber, 2 grams of protein, 0.4 gram of fat and no cholesterol

Method:
Preheat oven to 400°F. In large bowl, add carrots, Brussels sprouts, asparagus, garlic, potatoes and onions. Toss well with olive oil, rosemary, salt and pepper. Spread vegetables evenly on a large baking sheet. Bake for 40-45 minutes, stirring halfway through until vegetables are tender. The outer leaves of the Brussels sprouts will turn a darkish brown color when roasted.

Ingredients:
- 2 cups baby carrots
- 1½ cups Brussels sprouts, trimmed
- 1 lb. asparagus spears, trimmed
- 8 garlic cloves, peeled
- 6 small red potatoes, quartered
- 1 medium yellow onion, cut into 8 wedges
- 2 T. extra virgin olive oil
- 2 T. chopped fresh rosemary
- 1 t. salt
- ½ t. ground black pepper

Nutrition Information
- Calories: 150
- Fat: 5g
- Sat. Fat: 0.5g
- Carbs: 23g
- Fiber: 5g
- Protein: 5g
- Vitamin A: 130%
- Calcium: 6%
- Iron: 15%

This recipe was tested by Clemson University’s Culinary Nutrition Undergraduate Student Research Group.