

# Brussels Sprouts with Balsamic Brown Butter •

## Ingredients

Brussels sprouts .....	1½ lbs.	Unsalted butter .....	6 Tbsp.
High-heat oil .....	2 Tbsp.	Fresh rosemary sprigs .....	2-3
Kosher salt .....	¾ tsp.	Balsamic glaze .....	3 Tbsp.
Black pepper .....	½ tsp.	Flaky finishing salt .....	to taste

## Directions

Preheat air fryer to  $400^{\circ}\text{F}$ — Trim and halve brussels sprouts — Have balsamic glaze ready for finishing

1. In a large bowl, toss halved brussels sprouts with high-heat oil, kosher salt, and black pepper until evenly coated.
2. Arrange brussels sprouts in a single layer in the air fryer basket, cut side down when possible. Work in batches if necessary to avoid overcrowding.
3. Air fry at  $400^{\circ}\text{F}$  for 12-14 minutes, shaking the basket halfway through, until outer leaves are charred and crispy and cut surfaces are deeply caramelized with dark brown to black edges.
4. While brussels sprouts are cooking, melt butter in a small saucepan (preferably light-colored to monitor browning) over medium heat.
5. Continue cooking, swirling occasionally, for 3-5 minutes after the butter foams. Watch carefully as milk solids turn golden brown and develop a nutty aroma. Remove from heat immediately when the solids reach a deep amber color.
6. Add rosemary sprigs to the brown butter off heat. Let steep for 2-3 minutes while the sprouts finish cooking.
7. Remove rosemary sprigs and whisk in balsamic glaze until loosely emulsified. The mixture will remain somewhat separated—this is expected.
8. Transfer hot brussels sprouts directly from air fryer to a large serving bowl.
9. Immediately drizzle balsamic brown butter over the sprouts and toss gently to coat evenly. The residual heat will help distribute the sauce.
10. Taste and adjust seasoning. Finish with flaky salt to taste. Serve immediately while sprouts are still crispy and the butter is warm.

## Equipment Required

- Air fryer (basket style preferred)
- Large mixing bowl
- Small saucepan (light-colored interior for monitoring butter)
- Whisk
- Large serving bowl
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Sharp knife and cutting board

## Mise en Place

- Trim and halve all **brussels sprouts** before starting
- Measure **balsamic glaze** and have ready
- Have **butter** at room temperature for easier melting
- Strip **rosemary** sprigs if using leaves from a larger bunch
- Start brown **butter** when **sprouts** have *5-6 minutes* remaining for optimal temperature synchronization

## Ingredient Tips

- Use high-heat oil with smoke point above *400°F*: avocado oil (*520°F*) or refined coconut oil (*450°F*) are ideal
- Avoid extra virgin olive oil as it will smoke
- Choose **balsamic glaze** with minimal ingredients—ideally just grape must and wine vinegar
- Avoid products with added thickeners or caramel coloring
- European-style **butter** provides richer flavor due to higher butterfat content
- Smaller **sprouts** (*1-1½ inch*) can be halved; larger ones should be quartered for even cooking

## Preparation Tips

- Loose outer leaves will char more aggressively—this is desirable for texture and bitter complexity
- Don't be afraid of significantly blackened edges—this char is where the flavor complexity develops

- The charred leaves provide bitter, smoky notes that balance the sweet-tart **balsamic** and rich **butter**
- The transition from perfect brown **butter** to burnt happens in seconds—remove from heat when you smell nuttiness and see amber color
- Residual heat will continue cooking the **butter** briefly after removal from heat
- The **balsamic** and **butter** mixture will remain somewhat separated—don't over-whisk trying to force an emulsion
- Toss **sprouts** gently to avoid knocking off the crispy charred leaves

## Make Ahead & Storage

- Brussels sprouts can be trimmed and halved up to *24 hours* in advance
- Store prepared **sprouts** in an airtight container in the refrigerator
- The brown **butter** sauce must be made fresh and served immediately
- This dish does not reheat well—the crispy texture is lost
- Best enjoyed immediately after preparation

## Serving Suggestions

- Serve as a side dish for roasted meats, particularly pork or beef
- Pairs well with rich, fatty main courses that benefit from acidic contrast
- The char's bitterness, **balsamic's** acidity, and brown **butter's** richness create a three-point flavor system
- The char provides textural contrast—crispy, almost chip-like leaves against tender interiors
- Consider garnishing with additional fresh **rosemary** leaves if desired
- For larger batches, cook **sprouts** in multiple air fryer batches and keep finished **sprouts** warm in a *200°F* oven while preparing subsequent batches