

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°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°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