

CHARRED BRUSSELS SPROUTS WITH CILANTRO, RED CHILIES AND SOY- GINGER AIOLI



BY SARAH BLACKBURN
PHOTO BY MICHAEL PIAZZA

SERVES MANY AS AN APPETIZER; SERVES 6—8 AS A SIDE DISH

When I make this dish as a side for a weeknight supper, we skip the aioli in favor of a light fish-sauce vinaigrette— à la Momofuku—to drizzle over the sprouts, hot from the skillet. But once in a while, I do them as party hors d’oeuvres, pierced with toothpicks or bamboo cocktail skewers and passed on a tray with a bowl of aioli for dunking. I’ve brought them to many a wintertime soirée and the whole plate gets demolished before the sprouts even get cold. Try them at your next gathering, or serve them as an at-table appetizer for Sunday football. You’ll be amazed how much people love eating sprouts!

1 cup mayonnaise, preferably homemade (see Summer ’16 for a recipe)
3 tablespoons soy sauce
1 tablespoon fish sauce
1 clove garlic, grated on a microplane
1-inch chunk fresh ginger, grated on a microplane
Juice of ½ lime
1 teaspoon toasted sesame oil
1 teaspoon rice vinegar, or more to taste
½ teaspoon homemade hot chili sauce (see Summer ’16 for a recipe) or locally made Kitchen Garden Sriracha, or more to taste
Pinch sugar
3 tablespoons neutral oil, like grape-seed or safflower
2 pounds Brussels sprouts, trimmed and halved lengthwise
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
1 small red chili, slivered (optional)
1 cup cilantro leaves, coarsely chopped
Toasted sesame seeds, for serving (optional)

In a medium bowl, combine the first 10 ingredients to make the aioli. Taste for seasoning and add more of any component if needed.

Heat the oil until almost smoking in a large cast-iron skillet. Carefully add the sprouts, cut side down, and cook undisturbed until deeply browned and charred in places, about 4–6 minutes. Season with salt and pepper to taste, toss to combine, add the chilies (if using) and the cilantro, then remove from the heat. Transfer to a platter and serve with the aioli for dunking, sprinkled with sesame seeds.

(Note: For serving as a side dish, combine the sauce ingredients without the mayonnaise, add 2 tablespoons water and toss over the hot sprouts as they come out of the pan. Sprinkle with sesame seeds and serve hot.)