

BRUSSELS SPROUTS



INTRODUCTION

A member of the Brassica family, Brussels sprouts look like cute little cabbages. Brussels sprouts are named after the city of Brussels in Belgium from where they are thought to originate.

The two main Brussels sprouts growing areas in New Zealand are Ohakune in the Central North Island, and Oamaru in North Otago in the South Island. Ohakune Brussels sprouts tend to be smaller with compact heads, whilst Oamaru Brussels sprouts are slightly larger with looser leaves. Brussels sprouts need cold hard growing conditions and their flavour is said to be sweeter after a frost.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

It's best to choose Brussels sprouts that are roughly the same size. Avoid yellow, soft or wilting leaves.

HOW TO KEEP

Store at 0°C and 90–100% relative humidity. Brussels sprouts are ethylene sensitive and should be stored separately from ethylene producing vegetables and fruits wherever possible.

Consumer storage: Refrigerate in a plastic bag or crisper.

NUTRITIONAL VALUE

Brussels sprouts are a very good source of vitamin C, B group vitamins and fibre. They also contain some potassium. Like all members of the Brassica family, Brussels Sprouts contain compounds which are thought to inhibit the development of some cancers.

HOW TO PREPARE

Remove any loose leaves. Before steaming or boiling cut a cross into the stem end of each sprout to ensure they cook right through.

WAYS TO EAT THIS VEGETABLE

Brussels sprouts are normally served as a side vegetable, either boiled, microwaved or steamed. You can halve them and add to a stir-fry. They can also be used raw in salads either sliced very finely or separated into individual leaves.

WHEN YOU CAN GET IT

They're mainly available March until July with a limited supply in January, February, August and September.

TIPS FOR RETAILING

Display on refrigerated shelving as cool temperatures retard yellowing. Buy small quantities regularly to guarantee freshness. Trim ends. Offer pre-packed bags.