

Brussels Sprouts and Cucumber Kimchi

BY JAMES PARK | @JAMESYWORLD

Thanksgiving is a special time for me. It's when I get to go home, a place I never imagined I'd have in America when I first moved here by myself as an international student at 13. Thankfully, I met a wonderful American family in Huntsville, Alabama, who unofficially adopted me and became my family. To be honest, it's not a place I'd choose to visit on my own, but it's where my memories live and where my family is, and that's what "home" means to me.

Because Thanksgiving is usually the only time I visit Alabama, my American family and I always make sure to create an unforgettable feast that fills both our souls and our bellies. Being Southern, they keep things classic. A perfectly brined roast turkey that my American mom preps in a big cooler, classic casseroles like oyster (a New Orleans favorite!) and sweet potato, and her famous cornbread and gravy. Everything is so rich and comforting that we always crave something spicy and fresh to balance it all.

Ever since I became part of the family, I've been introducing them to Korean flavors. Before I joined the picture, they probably didn't even know what kimchi was. Now, they have gochujang, kimchi, and even different kinds of Korean instant noodles stocked in their pantry, which makes me so happy. While traditional kimchi is always welcome on our Thanksgiving table, I often make this kimchi-like salad with Brussels sprouts and cucumber. It brings the essence of kimchi with the familiarity of ingredients they already love.

In a way, this dish represents us. A little spicy, untraditional, but fantastic. And I can't wait to make it again this year as I make my yearly return to my American home.

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SERVES: 3-4

INGREDIENTS

3 garlic cloves, finely grated
3 tbsp coarsely ground gochugaru (Korean red pepper flakes)
2 tbsp fish sauce
1 tbsp granulated sugar
1 tbsp soy sauce
1 tbsp toasted sesame oil
1 tsp maple syrup
1 tsp rice vinegar
2 medium scallions, chopped
½ pound Brussels sprouts, thinly shaved (preferably with a mandoline)
3 Persian cucumbers, thinly sliced (preferably with a mandoline)
Toasted sesame seeds, for garnish

INSTRUCTIONS

01 Make the sauce

In a small bowl, combine the grated garlic, gochugaru, fish sauce, sugar, soy sauce, sesame oil, maple syrup, rice vinegar, and scallions. Mix until a thick paste forms.

02 Combine brussel sprouts, cucumber & sauce

In a large bowl, add the shaved Brussels sprouts and sliced cucumbers. Pour the sauce over the vegetables and toss, preferably with gloved hands, until evenly coated.

03 Garnish & enjoy

Garnish with toasted sesame seeds. This kimchi is best enjoyed immediately but can be stored in the refrigerator for up to 3 days.