



# THE WAY THE COOKIE CRUMBLES

A FOOD BLOG

## **Pasta with Brussels Sprouts and Pine Nuts** (adapted from Gourmet via epicurious)

4 servings

Please note the very important “reserve a cup of pasta cooking water” step! I sometimes forget, but I’ve found that putting a measuring cup in the colander will remind me to scoop up some water when it’s time to drain the pasta.

If you have bacon fat (or better yet, pancetta fat, which is what I used) available, I highly recommend it. Because there aren’t a lot of ingredients here, the more flavorful each one is, the better. If that sounds too rich for your blood, using olive oil certainly won’t spoil your dish. One tablespoon will be enough if you’re being stingy, but you’ll have better browning of the sprouts with two.

Pasta dishes like this don’t have a high heat capacity. To keep dinner warm until I’m finished eating, I like to warm the serving bowls in the oven while the pasta is cooking.

12 ounces pasta (rotini or another open short shape)  
salt and freshly ground black pepper  
3 ounces (¼ cup) pine nuts  
24 ounces Brussels sprouts, trimmed and quartered  
1-2 tablespoons butter, olive oil, or bacon fat  
4 cloves garlic, minced  
½ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes  
¼ cup water  
juice of 1 lemon  
2 ounces (1 cup) freshly grated parmesan

1. Bring a large pot of water to a boil over high heat. When it boils, add a tablespoon of salt and the pasta. Cook according to the package directions. Drain, reserving about a cup of the pasta cooking water.
2. Meanwhile, heat a 12-inch not-nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add the nuts; cook and stir until fragrant and lightly toasted, 1-2 minutes. Transfer to nuts to a small bowl; set aside.
3. Add the fat to the now-empty skillet and heat over medium heat. Add the Brussels sprouts and a big pinch of salt; cook without stirring for 2 minutes. Stir; repeat the cooking and stirring twice more, for a total of 6 minutes. Push the sprouts to the edge of the pan and add the garlic and pepper flakes to the cleared center; cook and stir constantly until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Stir into the sprouts.
4. Add the water to the pan; immediately cover and continue cooking for 2 minutes. Remove the lid, scrape up any browned bits on the bottom of the pan, and let any remaining liquid evaporate.
5. Add the drained pasta, Brussels sprouts mixture, lemon juice, and ½ cup of pasta cooking water to the pot the pasta was cooked in. Stirring continuously, sprinkle the parmesan over the pasta, adding more pasta cooking water if necessary to keep the mixture from drying out. Adjust the seasoning with salt and pepper if necessary; serve immediately, preferably in warmed bowls.