



CUISINE DE CRITTERS

BY LISA TREEN, MUTT-STER CHEF



Hop to it!



There are only two beings in our household who love Brussels sprouts—Alfred the rabbit and me. Alfred's our new addition to the house. He's a soft, furry, black bundle of bouncy goodness. He's a mini lop bunny and his characteristics are that he's small and has floppy ears that hang against his head.

Alfred was found in the middle of the road in a Mosman street, just sitting. A passer-by scooped Alfred up and took him to Mosman Vets in the belief that someone would realise he had escaped and claim him. Alfred wasn't micro-chipped and he wasn't de-sexed. As a young male rabbit, he probably got the wonder-lust to venture out of his home to find a lady friend. That urge to procreate can get all creatures into trouble sometimes.

The nice folk at Mosman Vets put up a picture of Alfred in their Facebook page in the hope that someone might

recognise him and eventually he would be reunited with his family. We also shared the story of Alfred in the hope that some of our bunny loving Facebook friends would recognise him, or know of someone who had lost their rabbit. A week went by and Alfred was not claimed, and so after much discussion and some research, Paul my boyfriend, decided that the bunny could come and live with us if the folk at Mosman Vets were okay with that. We also arranged to have Alfred de-sexed and vaccinated.

Before bringing Alfred home, we got a nice two-storey hutch and did a lot of research into a healthy diet for a rabbit. If you think lettuce and carrots are a healthy snack or food for a bunny, then you better read our article from Dr Alex Rosenwax on page XX.

Alfred's a really affectionate and placid rabbit. He's obviously been well cared for and has the softest,



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Some readers may remember door-to-door milk deliveries. Growing up in New Zealand, our letter-box had a slot for mail and then a larger area directly below that you popped your washed, glass milk bottles into with the correct change for a fresh delivery of milk. Every day the local milkman would come around and replace your empty bottles with full bottles of fresh milk. Aussie Farmers delivery service is based on this—their more modern approach is to leave your produce in one of their blue eskies and your credit card is debited on a weekly basis.

Each week we make a dairy/meat order and a separate vegetable/fruit order. I tend to change the order each week. It's been a good exercise in staring into the fridge and realising that you really need to find a great recipe to use those parsnips you ordered.

Alfred's benefitted from our weekly vegetable and fruit order. He gets to munch on the tops of the Dutch



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carrots and noshes down on crunchy bok choy. But he's a dreadful housekeeper. Bunnies tend to knock water and feed dishes over. So I'm constantly checking on his food and water supply. Alfred also gets fed a high quality pellet mix and Timothy Hay is always on hand for him to munch on. Hay is vital for a rabbit's digestive system and the better the quality the better for the health of your bunny.

I found a great little treat recipe for rabbits that uses frozen raspberries (a cheaper option at this time of year) and rabbit pellets. The oats to use are the old-fashioned kind and not the quick, microwave type. Remember these are just treats and should be given sparingly.

I've also included a Brussels sprouts recipe in the hope that this much maligned vegetable might make it to your dinner table. If I can't convert you to these little mini powerhouses of nutrient rich vegetables, then you can always feed them to your dog!



BUNNY PELLET RASPBERRY TREATS

Ingredients

- 1/3 cup frozen raspberries, thawed
- 1/2 Tbsp dried mint
- 1/3 cup good quality rabbit pellets
- 3 Tbsp oats

Method

- Preheat oven to 190° degrees
- With a fork mash raspberries together
- Mix raspberries with mint
- Grind pellets with a mortar & pestle and mix with oats
- Slowly add dry mixture to raspberry, mint mixture until well blended together
- Using a teaspoon, spoon out onto a cookie sheet covered in baking paper (it prevents sticking and doesn't add any grease).
- Flatten cookies with a fork to about ½ cm thick.
- Cook for 20 minutes or until brown on bottom. Let cool. (For a crunchier treat, turn off oven and leave in until stove cools.)
- Once cooled, place in sealed container or bag.
- Can be left out for about a week but to prevent spoiling, refrigerate or freeze treats.

Makes about 20 cookies.

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“He loves to throw that silly ball to me”



CRISPY BRUSSELS SPROUTS

Ingredients

- 4 rindless short-cut bacon pieces
- 12 Brussels sprouts, washed, trimmed, and halved lengthwise
- salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1/4 cup roughly chopped almonds
- 1 Granny Smith apple, peeled, cored, and sliced

Method









Preheat oven to 200° degrees

In a sheet pan, lay out bacon slices. Bake for 10 minutes, until lightly browned and the fat has rendered. Remove bacon with a slotted spoon, and transfer to a paper towel lined plate. Carefully toss Brussels sprouts in the hot pan, and season with salt and pepper. Return the pan to the oven, and roast, turning once, until golden brown, about 20 minutes.

Remove from the oven, add the almonds and apples and toss to combine. Season, to taste, with salt and pepper. Transfer to a serving platter, top with the bacon, and serve warm.

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