

Buying, Storing and Preparing Chestnuts

Buying Fresh Chestnuts: Choose chestnuts with a nice, brown shine and a firm feel. Avoid any chestnuts with blemishes, mottling or pinholes. Note, one pound of chestnuts yields approximately 2 to 2 ¼ cups peeled.

Storing Chestnuts: Unlike other nuts, fresh chestnuts are perishable. Place in a perforated plastic bag with a damp paper towel and store in the refrigerator for up to two weeks before cooking.

Cooked, peeled chestnuts can be stored in an airtight container in the freezer for up to one year.

Cooking Chestnuts:

It is important to cut the shell of the chestnut before cooking to prevent the nut from exploding. This can be accomplished by cutting an 'X' through the flat side of the nut (preferred), or puncturing the shell with the tip of a knife or ice pick.

Steamed Chestnuts:

Noted as the best method for easy removal of the chestnut meat for use in recipes. Cut the chestnuts in half and cook them in a vegetable steamer over boiling water for 8 to 10 minutes. Most kernels should fall out of the shells during cooking.

Roasted Chestnuts:

In the Oven: Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Place chestnuts, cut side up, in a single layer on a rimmed baking sheet. Bake uncovered for 15 to 20 minutes or until the shells (if cut in an 'X') begin to peel back slightly.

On the Grill: Place chestnuts directly on the grates of a preheated grill. Cook approximately 15 to 20 minutes, moving around frequently so they don't burn, or until the shells begin to peel back slightly.

On an Open Fire: Place chestnuts in a long-handled, covered utensil with a perforated bottom — such as a popcorn popper or chestnut roaster — shake gently over the fire until the shells open and the nuts become toasty and brown.

Boiled Chestnuts:

Place chestnuts in a shallow pan; add cold water just to cover them. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat and boil gently for 15 to 20 minutes. Drain and cool slightly. While still warm remove the shells using a sharp tine of a table fork.

- The longer the nuts cook, the mealier the kernels become and tend to crumble when removed from the shells.
- For especially dry chestnuts, soak them overnight in water before boiling in fresh water.

Peeling Chestnuts:

When properly cooked, chestnut meat will easily come away from the shell and dark skin. Chestnuts can be peeled raw, but are much easier to peel when cooked. Peel cooked chestnuts while still warm but cool enough to safely handle. Wrap roasted or boiled chestnuts in a towel to keep them warm while you are peeling them. Unpeeled nuts can be reheated briefly if they become difficult to peel.