

Cooking Chestnuts

Oven Roasted Chestnuts – Method 1 (Oven Roasting)

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees.
2. With a sharp knife, make a slit through both the smooth outer shell and the textured inner skin. This will allow the steam pressure to escape as the nut heats up.
3. Place the nuts in a shallow pan. Roast in the oven for approximately 15-25 minutes. You may wish to turn them over after 5-10 minutes for a more evenly roasted chestnut.
4. Remove from the oven and let cool slightly before peeling both shell and skin while they are still warm.

Oven Roasted Chestnuts – Method 2 (Oven Broiled)

1. Turn on the oven broiler. Score the nuts as mentioned in Method 1.
2. Place the scored nuts in a shallow pan on the top rack of the oven.
3. Broil the nuts until the outer shell blackens slightly. Again, you may wish to turn them over after a few minutes for a more evenly roasted chestnut. Broil for approximately 7-10 minutes more.
4. Take out of the oven and let cool slightly before peeling both the outer shell and the inner skin while warm.

Boiling

1. Place the nuts in a pot of boiling water. Boil for approximately 30 minutes.
2. With a slotted spoon, transfer several of the nuts to a work surface. Peel both the outer shell and the inner skin while they are still warm.

Other methods of Cooking Chestnuts

1. Roasting over an open fire in a wire basket.
2. In a special perforated chestnut roasting pan or large skillet, on the stove over medium heat for 15 minutes.
3. In the microwave.

Curing Chestnuts

Our chestnuts are harvested fresh and because of this, we recommend an important curing process be followed *prior to cooking*. Curing makes the nuts far easier to peel as it allows the nut to shrink away from the inner skin. It also ripens and sweetens the nut, as the starches in the nut are converted to sugar.

What we suggest:

1. Put the chestnuts in a bowl and leave at room temperature.

2. On a daily or semi-daily basis, pinch the nut between your thumb and forefinger. If there is no give, the nut needs more curing time. If there is a slight give between the outer shell and the nut inside, the nut has begun the curing process.
3. Once the chestnuts are properly cured (i.e., the outer shell and inner skin are easily removed from the nut, they are ready for cooking.

The curing process can take between 2-7 days. Do not over-cure the nut as it could dry out and become hard.

Storing Chestnuts

Chestnuts should be stored with great care and attention. Unlike most other nuts, they are highly perishable. They are comprised of about 40-50% water and thus, if not stored properly, can become prone to mold. Listed below are some tips for storing our product. The shelf life can be extended dramatically if stored properly.

1. We recommend storing them in airtight containers in the coolest part of the refrigerator.
2. Stored properly in the refrigerator, they can have a shelf life of approximately 4 weeks.
3. We store our product in a constant environment of 30 degrees.
4. They can also be stored in the freezer for year-round enjoyment.

Compliments of Debi Madden, the chestnut vendor at Portland Nursery's Apple Tasting