

CHESTNUTS

From the cobblestone streets of Avignon in Provence, France to the cement-lined streets of New York, fresh roasted chestnuts are a delicious seasonal treat during the cool Autumn weather. We have just started harvesting our spanish & chinese chestnuts - so it is time to make marrons glacés!

STORING CHESTNUTS

Our fresh picked chestnuts are best stored in a cool, dry place with good air circulation. If you plan to keep them for longer than one week, store your chestnuts in a refrigerator, in a plastic bag.

SHELLING CHESTNUTS – PAN/OVEN METHOD

Cut a one inch gash on flat side of nut (or use a chestnut knife; available at Williams-Sonoma) and put in a skillet, allowing 1/2 teaspoon of butter to each cup of chestnuts. Shake over heat until butter is melted. Put in oven and let stand for 5 minutes. Remove from oven and with a small knife take off shells. By this method shelling and blanching are accomplished at the same time, as the inside skins will adhere to the outer shells.

Marrons Chaude - Roasted Chestnuts

viridian farms chestnuts

kosher or coarse sea salt

Wash the chestnuts, make a slit in the side of each one; boil 10 minutes in water enough to cover them; then drain and bake in a dripping pan for 10 minutes in a hot oven. Serve hot with salt.

Marrons Glacés

2 1/4 pounds viridian farms chestnuts

18 ounces sugar

1 quart of water

a vanilla bean

salt

Peel the chestnuts and add them to a large pot of boiling, lightly salted water. Boil them for about 20 minutes, then remove the pot from the burner, and let the chestnuts steep five minutes more. Remove them one at a time with a slotted spoon, peeling off the thin skin that covers the nuts but being careful not to damage the nuts themselves (they'll be soft). One you have skinned them put them in a broad stainless steel skillet.

Take another pot and dissolve the sugar in the water over low heat. Add the vanilla bean if you are using it, and simmer the syrup, stirring it gently with a wooden spoon, until the syrup thickens somewhat (you want it to remain fairly fluid). Pour the syrup over the chestnuts and simmer them over a very low flame for a half hour, then turn off the flame and let them sit for ten minutes more.

Remove the chestnuts one at a time and arrange them on a serving plate and serve them with unsweetened whipped cream (if you like it). You can also sprinkle them with brandy, or serve them in cups, with a little of their syrup spooned over them.

More recipes on other side...

Cream of Chestnut Soup

3 tbsp. butter
1 stalk celery
1 medium carrot
1 medium onion
1/4 C parsley, chopped
1/4 tsp ground cloves
1 bay leaf (to be removed later)
6 C chicken broth
12 oz. cooked, peeled chestnuts (1 lb fresh in the shell)
1/4 C heavy cream
1/4 tsp pepper
Salt to taste

Cut the celery, carrot and onion into small pieces and process in a food processor. Melt the butter in a 3 qt. saucepan. Add the celery, carrot and onion. Sauté about 10 minutes. Add the chestnuts, broth, parsley, cloves and bay leaf to the veggies. Bring to a boil; then simmer for 30-45 minutes covered. Remove the bay leaf, and puree the soup in small quantities in a blender and put into another pan. Stir in the cream, salt and pepper and reheat over medium heat until warm.

Chestnut Biscotti

1 1/2 C sugar
1 cube butter, softened
3 large eggs
1 tsp vanilla
1/2 tsp salt
1 tsp baking powder
12 oz shelled chestnuts --
(1 lb fresh in the shell)
2 C flour, unbleached, all-purpose

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Process the chestnuts in a food processor until fine and set aside. Mix first 6 ingredients well. Add baking powder, chestnuts and flour. Mix well. Remove from bowl and form 2 balls. Flour a cutting board and shape into 2 loaves about 10" x 3" x 3/4" thick. Lift off onto a baking sheet. Bake 40 minutes. Remove and allow to cool 30 minutes more. Slice into 3/4" slices. Stand them on end on the baking sheet. (You may want to sprinkle them with a cinnamon/sugar combination.) Bake at 325 degrees F. for another 15 minutes. Turn the oven off and allow to cool in the oven.

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