

# Chestnuts

We wanted you to be able to enjoy some “*chestnuts roasting by an open fire*” ... or microwave.



## Fresh Chestnuts

Fresh chestnuts (at full moisture) will keep up to 6 months in a refrigerator. Because they are alive and breathing, they need to be in a ventilated bag or paper bag. Do not freeze fresh chestnuts, they will turn to mush. In a cooler with lots of ventilation they may slowly cure. For best flavor you need to cure chestnuts.

## Curing Chestnuts

Cure chestnuts by partially drying them in their shells. Place nuts in a shallow bowl or mesh bag at room temperature for 3 - 21 days; depending on nut size (Extra-large nuts take up to 21 days). During curing chestnuts lose half their moisture and turn sweet. A cured chestnut has converted starches to sugars and can be frozen for storage.

## Is it cured?

Test by squeezing. There should be air space between the shell and kernel. The kernel will have a soft spongy texture. If the nuts over cure, they will be very hard and dry. They can be stored at room temperature this way and rehydrated before use.

## Freeze or Chill

Once cured, the chestnuts are very perishable. They must be kept cold or frozen to stay fresh. They may be refrigerated for up to two weeks or frozen for up to 6 months.

They can be eaten raw. Just shell, peel off inner skin and eat. If you find a nut with black or brown spots on the meat, please discard it. A wholesome nut will be a light, golden color inside.

## How to Cook

### Boiling (simplest cooking method)

Place whole, unpeeled nuts in pot, cover with cold water. Bring water to a boil and simmer 20 minutes. Drain off water. Peel chestnuts while still warm and enjoy.

### ***Warning!***

When roasting or microwaving chestnuts quickly, it is important to pierce the shell of each nut with the point of a knife. Otherwise, steam will cause a pressure build up and the nuts will explode (very messy). A single slice along the “belly” (round side) of the nut works well. You can also make the cut along a flat side. Holding the nut down on a cutting board and dragging a serrated knife along the equator of the chestnut works well.

*Chestnut lore: pioneers cut all but two chestnuts when roasting. When the two chestnuts exploded, all the nuts were done.*

### Microwave (quickest cooking method)

Cut through chestnut shell to allow steam to escape.

Place nuts in a coffee cup or mug. Zap a cup of chestnuts for 30 seconds on high, shake the cup, then microwave another 30 seconds. Let sit for one minute and check the nuts. Chestnuts are done when the nutmeat becomes tender. You may notice the shell curling back from the cut. If the nuts are not done, microwave another 30 seconds. Peel chestnuts while still warm.

Tough chestnuts are a sign of over cooking.  
(OVER)



**Oven, Fast** (most common method) preheat oven to 400°


Cut through chestnut shell to allow steam to escape.

Place nuts on a cookie sheet.

Roast for 15 – 20 minutes at 400°

Chestnuts are done when the nutmeat becomes tender. You may notice the shell curling back from the cut.

Peel chestnuts while still warm.

 **Oven, Slow Roast** (Best method) preheat oven to 240°

No need to pre-cut. This method enhances the flavor of Chinese chestnuts best.

Place nuts on a cookie sheet.

Roast for 1 hour or more at 240°

Chestnuts are done when the nutmeat becomes tender.

**Open Fire** (fun method)

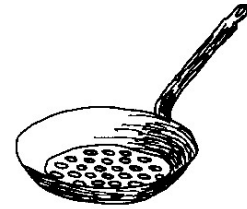
Cut through chestnut shell to allow steam to escape.

Place nuts in chestnut pan. (old fashion popcorn popper will work)

Roast over coals for 10 – 20 minutes.

Chestnuts are done when the nutmeat becomes tender. You may notice the shell curling back from the cut.

Peel chestnuts while still warm.



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## **Nutrition Information**

Chestnuts are similar to whole grain corn in nutrition, with a high quality protein.

Approximate composition of one cup of peeled fresh chestnuts:

Calories.....	285
Protein.....	6.3 g
Fat.....	1.7 g
Carbohydrates.....	74 g
Water.....	66 g
Fiber.....	2.6 g

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*Enjoy your chestnuts*

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