



TACF Fact Sheet

THE
AMERICAN
CHESTNUT
FOUNDATION®

Eating Chestnuts

Enjoying Chestnuts in a Variety of Forms

Where to Find Chestnuts for Eating

Chestnuts can be eaten in a variety of forms – fresh, dried, canned, jarred, pureed, even ground into flour. But finding them is often half the battle for one looking to enjoy them. Fresh chestnuts are generally only available in the fall. The large chestnuts one usually finds in larger supermarkets in September and October are imported European or European-Japanese hybrids from Italy. Beware of these chestnuts as they are often not stored properly and are often dead. To ensure you get good chestnuts, be sure they are firm to the touch. The fresh chestnuts found in the fall farmer’s markets are usually Chinese chestnuts.

Storing Fresh Chestnuts

Store fresh chestnuts in a grocery bag for up to two months. Sweeten fresh chestnuts by leaving them at room temperature for two days (starches will convert to sugar). For longer storage, put in freezer and use immediately after thawing (else they will become mushy).

Chestnut Species

The chestnuts that you may be used to eating from the farmers market or grocery store are typically Chinese or European species. While chestnuts cannot be identified by the size alone, when you put them together, it’s easy to see the differences (Figure 1).



(Figure 1). The above image shows the variation in chestnut sizes. From left to right: American, Chinese, European, and Japanese.

Wormy Nuts

The worms you may find in chestnuts are larvae of the chestnut weevil. Every fall, be certain to collect all burs, nuts, and leaf matter from under chestnut trees and burn them. Try to collect nuts within 1 or 2 days of falling from bur (if not before). As soon as possible after harvest, treat nuts by putting them in 120 F water for 20 minutes. This process kills the egg/small larvae but does not affect the ability of the seed to germinate.

Chestnut Nutrition

One of chestnuts most appealing qualities is its nutritional content. Low in fat and calories, particularly when compared to other popular nuts, the chestnut is much like brown rice in nutritional impact. The table below compares chestnut nutrition with that of other popular nuts.

Nut	Calories per 100 gram*	Fat per gram	Carbohydrates per gram	Protein per gram
Cashews	553	44	33	18
Peanuts	567	49	16	26
Pistachios	557	44	28	21
Walnuts	654	65	14	15
Hazelnuts	628	61	17	15
Chestnuts	213	2	46	2

*100 grams= 3.5 oz or 2/3 a cup. Info from National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference.

Enjoying Chestnuts in a Variety of Forms

Chestnut Recipes

Roasted Chestnuts

Oven: First cut through the shell of the nuts in an “X” pattern to prevent bursting. Then spread the nuts in a pan and bake at 375 degrees F (or roast them over charcoal) for 30 minutes, or until the nuts are tender.

Microwave: First, cut through the shell of the nuts in an “X” pattern to prevent bursting. Cook nuts on High setting for 30 seconds.

Cool, peel, eat. Vary cooking time to suit, overcooking will dry the nut and make it rubbery.

Glazed Chestnuts

3/4 lb fresh chestnuts
1/2 cup stock
2 T butter
salt and pepper
1 T honey or sugar



Lightly roast and peel the fresh chestnuts. In a skillet on a low heat melt the butter and stir in the honey or sugar. Add chestnuts and sauté until they become light brown. Add stock and salt and pepper. Serve on bed of winter greens. Serves 4.

Maple-glazed Pan-Roasted Brussels Sprouts with Chestnuts

1 tablespoon sea salt for the blanching water
1 1/4 lbs (560 g) Brussels sprouts – trimmed and cut in half
1 tablespoon unsalted butter
3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
1 tablespoon maple syrup (or brown sugar)
4 oz (115 g) vacuum-packed whole roasted chestnuts
2 large shallots – skinned, quartered and finely sliced (1/2 cup)
1/2 teaspoon sea salt
freshly ground black pepper to taste

Step 1: Fill a large bowl with cold water and several ice cubes.

Step 2: Fill a medium pot with water and bring to a boil. Add the salt and blanch the Brussels sprouts for 3 1/2 to 4 minutes (depending on their size) until tender. Scoop them out with a slotted spoon and transfer to the ice water bath until cool. Drain on paper towels. Once dry, transfer to a bowl and set aside.

Step 3: Heat a large heavy-bottomed skillet over high heat. Add the butter, olive oil and maple syrup, stir well. As soon as the butter is melted, add the Brussels sprouts and chestnuts and toss carefully with two wooden spoons (so as not to break the chestnuts) until the ingredients are well coated with the oil. Sauté for 6 to 7 minutes until golden-brown, tossing occasionally. Reduce heat to medium-high, add the shallots, salt and pepper and sauté for 1 to 2 minutes until shallots have softened. Transfer to a serving platter and serve immediately.



© 2014 Viviane Bauquet Farre — Food & Style NY LLC