

CHESTNUT ROASTING 101

from the University of Missouri Center for Agroforestry, www.centerforagroforestry.org

Chestnuts are a nutritious fall treat and nothing brings out their sweet flavor like roasting them over an open fire. The best part - it's not really that hard to do, especially with these five easy steps! Roasted chestnuts make any event extra special!

STEP 1

Make a single 1/8th-inch deep slit across the center (equator) on the rounded side of the nut. This creates a hinge that opens much like a clamshell when cooked. (Chestnuts will explode if not pierced prior to cooking, much like a potato.) Specialized knives for chestnut scoring are available although not required; see reverse for details.



STEP 2

Prepare a charcoal fire on your grill. Propane can also be used, but the charcoal gives the nuts an additional smoky flavor.

STEP 3 - OPTIONAL

Place up to three pounds of chestnuts into the microwave in a microwave-safe bowl covered with a wet paper towel. Cook about three to five minutes per pound on high. Stir nuts halfway through cooking time. (Including this step will lessen time

on the grill -- key if you are roasting large quantities.)

STEP 4

Place the cut nuts in a metal pan (see reverse for where to buy specialty chestnut roasting pans). Otherwise, a stainless steel wok or cast-iron skillet will work. Place the pan on the grilling rack.

STEP 5

Roast, turning the nuts frequently with a metal spatula. Roasting the nuts will take about 20 minutes. When cooled, the shells become brittle and are easy to peel with your fingers.

NOTE

Chestnuts also can be roasted on a bonfire with a long-handled metal pan. The nuts will only take about 5-10 minutes to cook over a hot fire or coals and they must be turned frequently to prevent scorching.



ROASTING SUPPLIES CHECKLIST

- Scoring knives
- Chestnuts
- Roasting pans and metal spatulas
- Grill
- Wood-based charcoal (with fruitwood, if available)
- Lighter fluid
- Paper cups to hand out samples
- Roaster or covered pan to keep already-roasted chestnuts warm
- Microwave (optional)
- Microwave-safe bowl (optional)
- Water for putting out coals

CHESTNUT ROASTING SUPPLIERS

Chestnut scoring knife and chestnut roasting pan: Fante's Kitchen Wares Shop (www.fantes.com/chestnuts.htm) The wooden-handled Lamson Pro knife is a good knife choice.

Chestnuts: Contact the University of Missouri Center for Agroforestry, 573-884-2874, if your local grocery or specialty foods stores do not carry locally grown chestnuts. Chestnut growers can also be found via The Chestnut Growers of America's Web site: <http://www.chestnutgrowers.com/>

Click on "Growers" and then "Directory."