

Published October 30th, 2019

## A warm and toasty take on a flavorful chestnut dish

By Susie Iventosch



Photos Sora O'Doherty

As it turns out, we have several foodies in our Lamorinda Weekly family. When Sora O'Doherty was working on her article about Winters Chestnuts farm for the last issue, she sent me a quick note with the idea of collaborating on a chestnut recipe. I told Sora that I'd love to work together on a recipe, but since I'd only tasted chestnuts one time in my life, I really didn't have a "go to" chestnut recipe. In fact, the time I tried them, they were really kind of mushy and mealy and not all that appetizing. All that said, I really love the romantic notion of roasting chestnuts on an open fire, and since the holidays are rapidly approaching, what could be more fun than working with Sora (who happens to be a marvelous cook) to create an enticing chestnut recipe?

We came up with what we think is a delicious fall holiday side dish, combining pumpkin, acorn squash, shallots and Fuji apples along with chestnuts and hazelnuts. Sora's familiarity with chestnuts was primarily

using canned chestnut products in baking and she remembers eating roasted chestnuts outside the British Museum in London. But neither of us had any idea how to cook the darn things! Thank goodness for the internet. Sora found a recipe for roasting the chestnuts, and they were quite tasty this way, but we thought a bit too dry. So, I picked up another bag of chestnuts at the produce stand and took a stab at steaming them. I think they came out a bit more moist with this cooking method. What we did not get around to was boiling them, so if any of you readers have experience with that, please let us know!

### Cooking and Peeling the Chestnuts

When it comes to cooking the chestnuts, whether roasting, steaming or boiling them, you must first make an "x" in the shell with a bread knife, which works best for cutting through the outer shell. We read that you should make the "x" on the flat side of the chestnut shell, which is a bit tricky, since the round side doesn't sit still while you are making the cut. After our kitchen adventure, I read that you can also make the "x" on the rounded side of the shell, which makes a lot more sense and is much easier, but I have yet to try it that way.

To roast them in the oven, place chestnuts on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper and bake at 425 F for about 25 to 30 minutes. Remove them from the oven and wrap in a kitchen towel, allowing the chestnuts to steam as they cool. If steaming them, place them on a French steamer in a pot with about 2 inches of boiling water in the bottom. Cover the pot with a lid and steam for about 15 to 20 minutes. Remove from heat and wrap chestnuts in a kitchen towel to keep warm. For both methods, when the chestnuts are cool enough to handle, but still warm, peel both the outer shell and the inner husk. The husk can get stuck in the grooves of the nut, but carefully pull the husk out of any crevices. It is much easier to peel the chestnuts when they are still warm, so the inner husk doesn't stick to the nut inside. By wrapping the cooked chestnuts in a kitchen towel, you can keep the batch warm as you peel each nut.

For more information on how to cook and peel chestnuts, please visit:

<https://www.thespruceeats.com/how-to-peel-chestnuts-2216932>

Chestnut Harvest Sauté  
(Serves 6 as a side dish)

### INGREDIENTS

12 chestnuts, roasted or steamed, peeled and quartered (see article above)

1/4 cup olive oil

1 sugar pie pumpkin, peeled, seeded and cubed into bite-sized pieces

1 acorn squash, peeled, seeded and cubed into bite-sized pieces

2 large shallots, peeled and thinly sliced

1 Fuji apple, cored and thinly sliced

1/4 cup dry sherry

1-2 teaspoons fresh thyme leaves

1/2 cup hazelnuts, roasted and halved

### DIRECTIONS

Cook and peel chestnuts according to directions above. Once cooked and peeled, quarter chestnuts and set aside. Place cubed pumpkin and squash on baking sheet (either sprayed or lined with parchment) and toss with 2 tablespoons olive oil to coat. Season with salt and pepper. Bake in 425 F oven for approximately 15-20 minutes, or just until tender. Remove from oven. Meanwhile, heat 2 tablespoons olive oil in a large sauté pan. Cook shallots with some thyme until translucent. Add sliced apples and continue to cook until shallots and apples just begin to caramelize. Toss the cooked pumpkin, squash, chestnuts and hazelnuts into the shallot-apple mixture in the pan and mix well. Season to taste with salt, pepper, fresh thyme and a splash of dry sherry. Continue to cook over medium heat until heated through. Serve warm.



Photos Sora O'Doherty



Susie can be reached at [suziventosch@gmail.com](mailto:suziventosch@gmail.com). This recipe can be found on our website: [www.lamorindaweekly.com](http://www.lamorindaweekly.com). If you would like to share your favorite recipe with Susie please contact her by email or call our office at (925) 377-0977.

Reach the reporter at: [suziven@gmail.com](mailto:suziven@gmail.com)

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA