



Gotta' Eat, Can't Cook

“Show-Me-How” Picture Book Cooking

CHRISTMAS

2009

PRIME RIB DINNER



Bruce Tretter

www.gotta-eat.com

bruce@gotta-eat.com

Twitter: [@gotta_eat](https://twitter.com/gotta_eat)

Contents

Timing an Easy, Stress-Free Christmas Prime Rib Dinner	i
Roast Prime Rib	1
Cranberry Sauce – Fresh, Flavorful & Very Easy	4
Mashed Potatoes – Quick & Easy	7
Oven Roasted Butternut Squash – Peel, Cut & Roast	11
Green Beans with Garlic & Butter – Quick & Easy	15
Fresh Chocolate Pudding – Quick & Easy	18
Roasted Chestnuts – Using an Oven or Toaster Oven	21

Timing an Easy, Stress-Free Christmas Prime Rib Dinner

This short ebook is intended to help you prepare a Christmas or any winter holiday prime rib dinner as simply and easily as possible. Here's what I suggest regarding timing.

Week before Christmas: Order a fresh prime rib from your grocery store/butcher if you want to guarantee having a fresh beef roast. That way you can pick it up the day before Christmas and don't have to worry about storing it at home for days or thawing before cooking it.

Week of Christmas: Buy all the ingredients you need to make your dinner (take this book to the store with you).

2 days before Christmas:

Make cranberry sauce (p. 4)

1 day before Christmas:

Make chocolate pudding (p. 18)

Christmas Day (start 4-5 hours before meal time)

4-5 Hours Before Dinner

Prepare prime rib and let sit 2 hours before cooking (pp. 1-2, through step 3)

Prepare butternut squash for roasting tossed in oil mixture (pp. 11-13, through step 8)

Peel, cut and cover potatoes with water for mashed potatoes (p. 7, through step 4 without turning on stove heat)

Prepare green beans and leave them in pot covered with water ready for cooking (pp. 15-16, through step 3)

About 2 ½ Hours Before Dinner

Preheat oven to 300 degrees and start roasting prime rib (p. 3, step 6 on)

45 Minutes Before Dinner

Roast butternut squash (p. 13, step 9 on)

Cook potatoes for mashed potatoes (p. 8, step 4 on)

Put cranberry sauce on table

½ Hour Before Dinner

Take prime rib (p. 8, step 7 on) out of the oven, check for doneness and let rest for 20 minutes

Finish mashed potatoes (p. 9, step 8 on)

Cook and finish green beans (p. 16, step 4 on)

Dinner Time

Slice prime rib (p. 3, step 9)

Serve & enjoy dinner

After Dinner

Roast Chestnuts (p. 21)

Wishing you a successful, merry and fully flavorful Christmas and New Years!

Bruce Tretter

Roast Prime Rib

1



TIP: Though the meat for this recipe, prime rib, is expensive, it's well worth it for special occasions and far less expensive than buying it in a restaurant. I highly recommend buying the meat fresh from a reputable butcher shop. I learned the incredibly easy cooking method presented in these directions from a butcher, who promised the meat would come out the way it does in a good beef restaurant. He was dead on right!

Preparation Time: 5-10 minutes plus 2 hours to let meat come to room temperature and 20 minutes to let the meat rest after it cooks.

Cooking Time: 25 minutes per pound (1 hour 40 minutes for a 4 pound medium rare roast)

Ingredients

(for 6)

1 Boneless Prime Rib (about 4 pounds)

Olive or Vegetable Oil

Garlic Salt

Ground Black Pepper



Equipment

Baking/Roasting Pan

Roasting Rack (optional but keeps the roast out of fat as the meat cooks)

Sharp Knife

Large Fork

Cutting Board

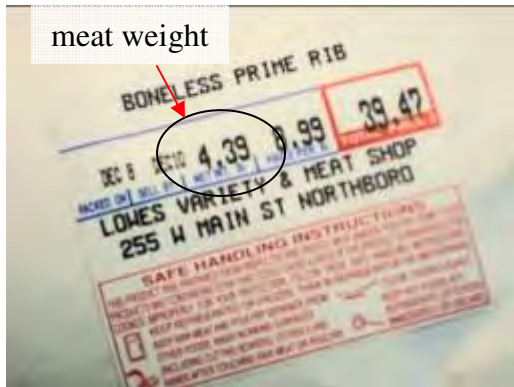
Heatproof Meat Thermometer

Potholders

Timer



1. First, make sure to note the weight of the **meat** on the price label before getting rid of the wrapper. You'll need to know the **meat** weight to estimate the cooking time.



3. Set a timer for 2 hours (1) and let the meat sit and warm naturally almost to room temperature (this is optional but will allow for more even cooking) (2).

(1)



(2)



2. Put the meat on a roasting rack (optional) inside a baking/roasting pan, drizzle oil or vegetable oil over all meat surfaces (1), and rub the oil evenly on the meat with your fingers (2). Then...

(1)



(2)



4. Set an oven rack a third to half way up from the oven bottom (1) and preheat the oven to 300 degrees (2).

(1)



(2)



...sprinkle on a light, even coat of **garlic salt** (1) and **ground black pepper** (2) over all surfaces, and rub that into the **meat** (3).



5. The tip of the heatproof meat thermometer should be placed as close to the center of the **meat** as possible to get the most reliable temperature reading. To get an idea how deeply to insert the thermometer, line up the thermometer probe as shown in (1) and then insert the thermometer into the middle of the **meat piece** as shown in (2).

(1)



(2)



6. Put the **meat** in the oven when the oven warms to 300 degrees (1) and set the timer for the proper cooking time according to the weight of the meat (2). (My roast was 4.39 pounds. At 25 minutes per pound, I set the cooking timer for 1 hour 50 minutes).

(1)

(2)



9. After the **meat** has rested, cut it in cross section slices about 1/2 - 3/4 inches wide (1) and either serve as is (2) or cut the slices into smaller pieces (3).



7. When the cooking timer sounds, check the meat thermometer. The **meat** is cooked to medium rare at 140 degrees (1), medium at 155-160 degrees and well done at 170 degrees. If however, the meat thermometer does NOT start to register as shown in (2), keep cooking and checking the temperature every 20 minutes or so until it registers at the desired doneness temperature.

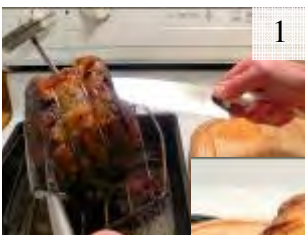
(1)

(2)



10. To make clean up easy, remove as much fat and meat juice from the baking/roasting pan as possible with a wad of paper towels (1). Then add a squirt of dish soap and enough warm tap water to cover the pan bottom (2). Let the pan sit for 10 minutes, then scrub it clean with a brush and/or sponge (3).

8. Transfer the **cooked roast** from the baking/roasting pan to a cutting board (1). Remove the meat thermometer and cut away the strings, if there are any (2). Then set a timer for 20 minutes (3), and let the **meat** rest until the timer sounds.



Cranberry Sauce

Fresh, Flavorful & Very Easy



NOTE: Fresh cranberry sauce has a great sweet & sour flavor – much better than canned cranberry sauce. And it's also no kidding as easy to make as boiled water.

Preparation Time: 1 minute

Total Cooking Time: 5 minutes

Ingredients

- Bag of Fresh Cranberries (usually 12 ounces)
- 1 Cup Sugar (I use brown sugar but any granulated sugar will work)
- 1 Cup Orange Juice (the cranberry package recipe will usually call for water, but orange juice adds great flavor and is just as easy to use)
- 1 Cinnamon Stick

Equipment

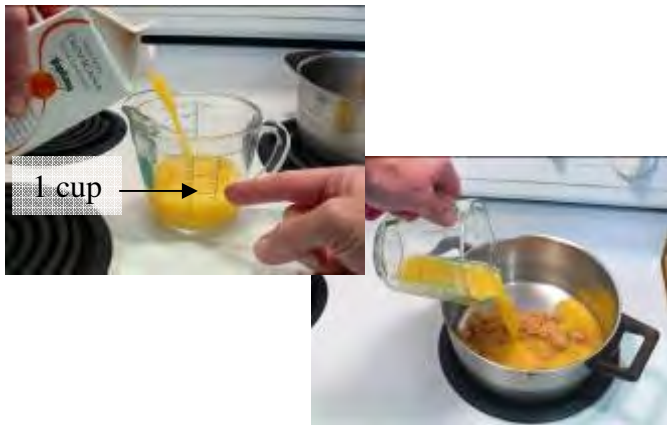
- Medium Sized Pot
- Measuring Cup
- Big Spoon
- Bowl



1. Add to a medium sized pot 1 cup (8 ounces) **brown (or any) sugar**,...



...1 cup **orange juice**,...



...1 **cinnamon stick**, and...



...1 bag of **cranberries**.



2. Turn on the stove heat to **MEDIUM-HIGH** and give the **cranberry mix** a quick stir with a big spoon.



3. Cook until the pot comes to a frothing boil and the **cranberries** just start to pop open.



4. Turn off the stove heat, put the pot on a cool burner and give the **cranberry sauce** a quick stir.



5. Let the pot sit until it is cool enough to handle. Then pour the **cranberry sauce** into a serving bowl and remove the **cinnamon stick**.



6. The **cranberry sauce** will thicken on its own as it cools to room temperature.



Mashed Potatoes

Quick & Easy

7



TIP: To ensure the best flavor and consistency, make fresh mashed potatoes right before serving them.

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

Total Cooking Time: 20-25 minutes

Ingredients

(for 4-6)

4 Idaho (or Russet) Potatoes

Milk or Heavy Cream

Butter or Margarine

Salt

Ground Black Pepper



Equipment

Medium Sized Pot

Vegetable or Dish Brush (you can also use your hands as shown in step 1)

Vegetable Peeler

Sharp Knife

Cutting Board

Colander

Potato Masher (can be substituted by big spoon)

Big Spoon

Timer (oven clock, egg timer, watch)



1. Either quickly brush or hand clean loose dirt from the **potatoes** under tap water.



or



2. Peel the **potato skins** with a vegetable peeler and give the **peeled potatoes** another quick rinse under tap water to remove any dirt from peeling.



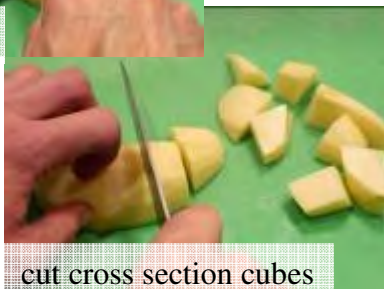
3. Cut the **peeled potatoes** in half lengthwise, then into strips about 1/2 - 3/4 inch wide, and finally into cubes also about 1/2 - 3/4 inch wide.



cut in half



cut strips



cut cross section cubes

4. Put the **potatoes** into the pot, add water until the **potatoes** are just covered, then put the pot on the stove and turn on the burner to **HIGH**.



5. Cook until the water comes to a rapid boil as shown here (this will take a few minutes). Then...



...turn down the burner heat to **LOW-MEDIUM** (to keep the water from boiling over) and set the cooking timer for 15 minutes.



6. When the timer sounds, check the **potatoes** for doneness by driving the tip of a knife into one of the thickest **potato pieces** in the pot. The **potatoes** are cooked through when they are soft throughout. If the **potatoes** are still firm in the middle, keep cooking until they are soft throughout without letting them cook so much they fall apart on their own.



7. When the **potatoes** are done, pour them with the water into a colander in the sink and let them drain.



8. Put the pot back on the stove, turn the burner heat down to **LOW**, and add 4 tablespoons of **butter** or **margarine** (use the wrapper as a guide as shown in the middle photo below).



9. Pour the **cooked potatoes** from the colander into the pot as the **butter** or **margarine** melts. Then...



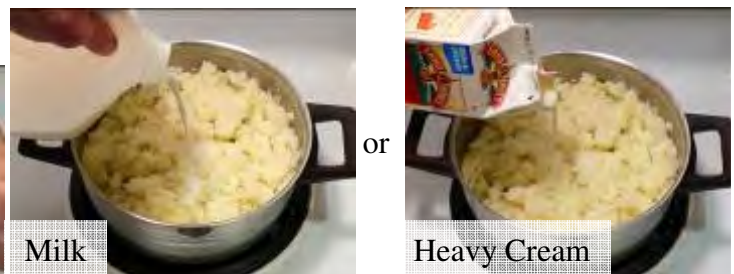
...mash the **potatoes** using either a potato masher (left) or big spoon (right) until they look like...



...this.



10. This step has to be done by feel – but it’s easy – because it all depends on the **cooked potato** moisture content and whether or not you’re using **milk** or **heavy cream**. So, start off adding a good splash of either **milk** (left) or **heavy cream** (right). Then...



...stir and...



...keep adding and mixing in small amounts of either **milk** or **heavy cream** until the **mashed potatoes** are smooth, not lumpy, but still firm in consistency as shown here.



serving bowl with a big spoon and serve warm.



11. Add and mix in as much **salt** and **ground black pepper** as shown below (more **salt** and **pepper** can always be added at the table according to individual tastes).



12. Finish by scooping the **mashed potatoes** into a

Oven Roasted Butternut Squash

Peel, Cut & Roast

11



Tip: Peeling the skin off the squash is the hardest part of this recipe. After that, this is the most hands free, easiest, fully flavorful way I've found to cook squash.

Preparation Time: 5-10 minutes

Total Cooking Time: 40-45 minutes

Ingredients

(for 4)

1 Butternut Squash
Olive or Vegetable Oil
Garlic Salt
Italian Seasoning
Ground Black Pepper
Balsamic Vinegar (optional)



Equipment

Vegetable Peeler
Sharp Knife
Cutting Board
Teaspoon
Bowl
Baking Dish
Big Spoon
Timer (oven clock, egg timer, watch)
Potholder



1. Use a vegetable peeler to remove the skin from the **squash**.



2. Cut off both ends of the **squash**.



3. Use curled fingers to hold the **squash** in place, cut the **squash** in half lengthwise, and use a teaspoon to scoop out the **squash seeds**.



4. Make sure the oven rack is between the bottom third and half way up from the bottom of the oven, and pre-heat to 450 degrees.



5. Slice the **squash** lengthwise into strips $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$ inch wide and then cut those strips in cross section cubes again about $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$ inch wide.



6. Scoop the **squash pieces** into a bowl and add...



...just enough **olive** or **vegetable oil** to coat the **squash** lightly (start with less than you think you'll need – you can always add more later),...



...a few shakes of **garlic salt**,...



...Italian seasoning,...



...ground black pepper, and...



...a shot of balsamic vinegar (optional, but adds a good sweet & sour flavor).



7. Stir with a big spoon until the **squash** is evenly coated as shown in the bottom photo.



8. Spread the **squash** evenly on a baking sheet.



9. When the oven has reached 450 degrees, put **squash** in the oven and set a timer for 40 minutes.



10. When the timer sounds, use a potholder to remove the baking sheet from the oven. Then check the **squash** for doneness by driving the tip of a knife into one of the thickest pieces on the baking sheet as shown in the bottom photo. The **squash** is done when it is soft throughout without being firm in the middle of the piece. If the middle of your **squash piece** is still firm, cook for another 5-10 minutes and check again for doneness.



11. Scoop the **roasted squash** from the baking sheet into a serving bowl with a big spoon and serve warm.

14



Green Beans with Garlic & Butter

Quick & Easy

15



Tip: Cutting the ends off the green beans is the hardest part of this recipe. After that, this recipe is mostly hands free, very easy and fully flavorful.

Preparation Time: 5-10 minutes

Total Cooking Time: 10-15 minutes

Ingredients

(for 4)

¾ Pound Green Beans

Butter or Margarine

Garlic Powder or Packaged Chopped Garlic

Salt

Ground Black Pepper



Equipment

Sharp Knife

Cutting Board

Colander

Medium Sized Pot

Teaspoon

Big Spoon

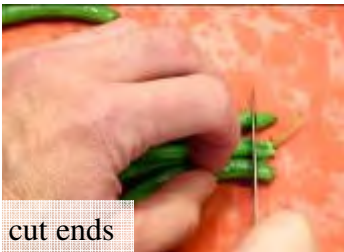
Timer (oven clock, egg timer, watch)



1. Put the **green beans** in a colander and rinse them under cold tap water.



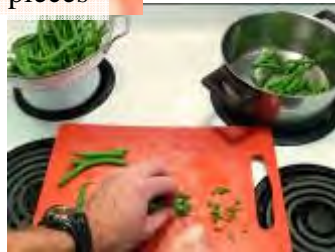
2. Cut both ends off the **green beans**, cut the **beans** into bite sized pieces (you don't have to be exact about this), and put the **cut beans** into a medium sized pot.



cut ends



cut to bite sized pieces



3. Fill the pot with enough water so that the **beans** just start to float.



4. Put the pot on the stove and turn on the burner heat to **HIGH**.



5. As soon as the water comes to a full boil as shown below, set a cooking timer for 2 minutes.



6. When the timer sounds, pour the **cooked green beans** and water into a colander in the sink. Then put the pot back on the stove and turn down the burner heat to **LOW**.



7. Add 1 tablespoon of **butter** or **margarine** to the pot (use wrapper as a guide as shown in the top left photo). Then...



8. Stir with a big spoon until all the ingredients are well mixed together as shown in the bottom right photo. Then...



...add the **cooked beans** from the colander,...



...scoop the **cooked green beans** into a serving bowl with a big spoon and serve warm.



...either ½ teaspoon of **garlic powder** or about 1 teaspoon of **packaged chopped garlic**, and...



garlic powder



packaged chopped garlic

or

...a good dash of **salt** and **ground black pepper** (you can always add more to taste at the table).



salt



ground black pepper

Fresh Chocolate Pudding Quick & Easy



TIP: The base recipe using 1% or 2% milk and no optional chocolate chips is low fat. If, however, you add the optional chocolate chips (dark and/or white chips), sure the fat content will go up, but you'll also taste an incredibly fully satisfying chocolate pudding that just can't be rivaled by any commercial pudding or pudding mix.

Preparation Time: 20-25 minutes

Ingredients

(for 4)

- 1/3 Cup Cocoa Powder (I recommend Dutch processed cocoa but any cocoa will do)
- 1/3 Cup Sugar
- 1/4 Teaspoon Salt
- 3 Tablespoons Corn Starch
- 2 1/2 Cups Milk (use 1 or 2% milk for a low-fat version, otherwise any milk will do)
- 1 Teaspoon Vanilla Extract
- Chocolate Chips (optional)



Equipment

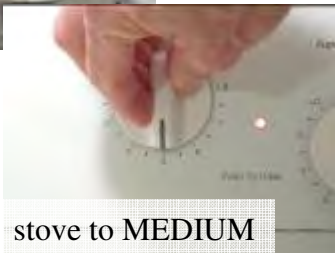
- Medium Sized Pot
- Whisk
- Measuring Cup
- Teaspoon
- Tablespoon



1. Measure 2 cups of **milk**, pour the **milk** into a medium sized pot, and turn on the stove heat to **MEDIUM**.



2 cups milk



stove to **MEDIUM**

2. While the **milk** warms, add to the measuring cup 1/3 cup **cocoa powder**, 1/3 cup **sugar**,...



1/3 cup cocoa powder



1/3 cup sugar

...1/4 teaspoon **salt** and 3 tablespoons **corn starch**.



1/4 teaspoon salt



3 tablespoons corn starch

3. Mix the **dry ingredients** together with a tablespoon. Then, add a few tablespoons of **milk** (you don't have to be precise – just estimate). Stir the **ingredients** together until all the lumps are smoothly dissolved into a thick paste. Add the rest of the 1/2 cup of **milk** to thin out the paste.



4. As soon as the **milk** starts to steam, add the **chocolate paste** to the pot and...



...make sure to stir the pot slowly and steadily (to avoid the **chocolate** burning to the pot bottom) until...



...the **pudding** bubbles with a boil and starts to thicken enough to coat the whisk about as shown below. As soon as the **pudding** comes to a boil,...



boiling pudding bubbles



whisk coated with pudding

...turn off the stove and transfer the pot to a cool burner where the **pudding** will continue to thicken on its own. Then...



...add and stir in 1 teaspoon of **vanilla extract** and...



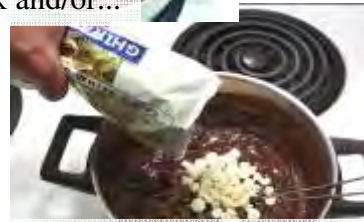
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

...either skip to step 5 or add and stir a handful of optional **chocolate chips** (dark and/or white chips) to the **pudding** now if you want them to melt completely and smoothly into the **pudding** or add them later when the **pudding** starts to cool if you want

the **chips** still slightly firm.



Add dark and/or...



white chocolate chips and...



stir them into the pudding.

5. Let the **pudding** sit until it is cool enough to touch. Then either scoop it into bowls and serve warm or refrigerate it to serve later cool.



Roasted Chestnuts

Using an Oven or Toaster Oven



TIP: Well, this isn't quite "chestnuts roasting on an open fire", but it's the easiest next best thing. I like using a toaster oven for convenience and power savings, but if you don't have a toaster oven, the regular kitchen oven works just as well. Just make sure you always cut into the chestnut shells before roasting as shown in step 3 to avoid the chestnuts exploding in whichever oven you're using as it's a nasty mess to clean up (yes, I know this from experience).

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

Cooking Time: 25 minutes

Ingredients

(for 2-4)

1 Pound Fresh Chestnuts



Equipment

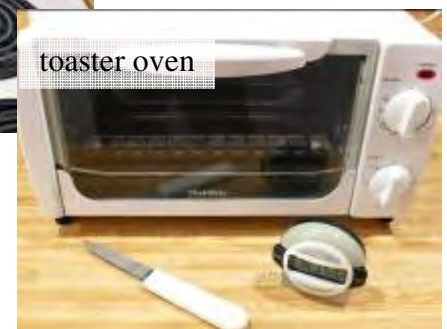
Oven or Toaster Oven

Small/Paring Knife

Baking Pan (only if you're using a big oven)

Timer

Potholder (only if you're using a big oven)



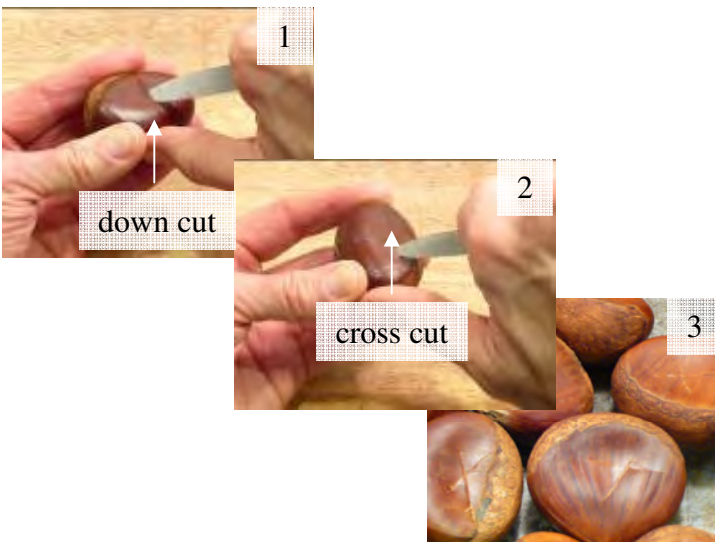
1. When buying **fresh chestnuts**, select those that are firm to the touch and don't have any signs of mold or small round shaped worm holes in their shells. Then, either roast the **chestnuts** within a few days after buying them or refrigerate them for use within 2 weeks.



2. If you're using a toaster oven, skip to step 3. Otherwise, pre-heat a kitchen oven to 450 degrees.



3. Use a sharp small/paring knife to make 1/2 - 3/4 inch long, shell penetrating shallow cuts down (1) and across (2) both the rounded and flat sides of the **chestnuts** so that the **chestnuts** look as shown in (3). (This allows steam that will form inside the **chestnuts** during cooking to escape and prevent the **chestnuts** from exploding.)



4. Do as follows according to whether you're using a big oven (left) or toaster oven (right).

Oven Roasting

a. Set the oven rack a third to halfway from the oven bottom.



b. Put the **cut chestnuts** in a baking pan.



c. When the oven reaches 450 degrees put the **chestnuts** in the oven and....



...set a timer for 25 minutes.



Toaster Oven Roasting

a. If your toaster oven allows, place the rack in the middle of the toaster oven.



b. Put the **cut chestnuts** on the toaster oven rack.



c. Turn on the toaster oven to 450 degrees (you might have to estimate the temperature as shown here) and...



...set a timer for 25 minutes.



d. When the timer sounds, remove the baking pan from the oven with a potholder and...



d. When the timer sounds, transfer the **roasted chestnuts** from the toaster oven to a plate.



...pour the **roasted chestnuts** onto a plate.



5. Let the **roasted chestnuts** cool for 5-10 minutes and then...



...peel them as shown and enjoy them warm.

