

How to Roast Chestnuts in a Conventional Oven or Toaster Oven



TIPS:

1. **Conventional oven vs. toaster oven:** I like using a toaster oven to roast chestnuts for convenience and power savings, but if you don't have a toaster oven, a conventional kitchen oven will work just as well.

2. When buying fresh chestnuts, select those that are firm to the touch - the shell should not give when squeezed with your thumb as shown in the picture below. Also, choose those chestnuts that are heavier rather than lighter in weight and don't have any signs of mold or small round wormholes in their shells.



3. To prevent chestnuts from exploding while roasting and avoid a nasty mess to clean up (you bet, I know this from experience), make sure to cut into the shells before roasting chestnuts as shown in step 2.

4. **Storing chestnuts:** If you're not roasting fresh chestnuts the same day you bought them, put them in a plastic bag and store them in the refrigerator for about 1 week. Just beware that the meat of the chestnut inside the shell dries out steadily over time.



Preparation Time: 5 minutes

Cooking Time: about 25 minutes

Needed

About 1/4 Pound Fresh Chestnuts Per Person

Conventional Kitchen Oven or Toaster Oven

Small Sharp (Paring) Knife

Timer

Potholder or Folded Dishtowel



Toaster Oven



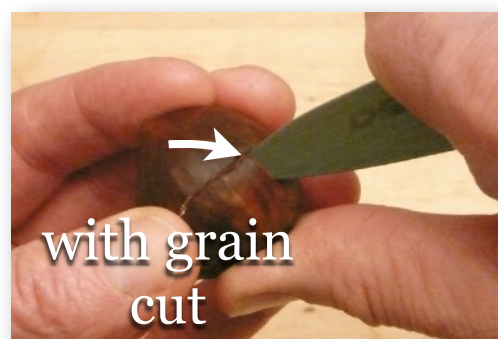
Oven

1. If you're using a **toaster oven**, skip to step 2. Otherwise, for a conventional oven, set an oven rack a third to halfway up from the oven bottom, and pre-heat to 450 degrees (235° C).







2. Use a small sharp (paring) knife to make 1/2 - 3/4 inch long, shell-penetrating shallow cuts both across and with the grain of the

shell of **both sides of the chestnuts** so that the **chestnuts** look as shown in the “cross cut” picture below. (These cuts will allow steam to escape during roasting and prevent the chestnuts from exploding while they roast.)



3. Do as follows below according to whether you are roasting the **chestnuts** in a conventional kitchen oven (left column) or toaster oven (right column). **Of note: If you're using American chestnuts, which are smaller than Italian chestnuts, cut roasting time in half.**

Conventional Kitchen Oven	Toaster Oven
Put the cut chestnuts on a baking pan.	If your toaster oven allows, place the rack in the middle of the toaster oven.
	
When the oven reaches 450 degrees, put the chestnuts in the oven and,...	Put the cut chestnuts on the toaster oven rack.
	
...set a timer for 25 minutes.	Turn on the toaster oven to 450 degrees (235° C) - you might have to estimate the temperature as shown here), and...
	

Conventional Kitchen Oven	Toaster Oven
<p>When the timer sounds, remove the baking pan from the oven with a potholder, and...</p>	<p>...set a timer for 25 minutes.</p>
	
<p>...pour the roasted chestnuts onto a plate.</p>	<p>When the timer sounds, use a potholder or folded dishtowel to pull out the toaster oven rack, and...</p>
	
	<p>...then carefully transfer the roasted chestnuts onto a plate.</p>
	

4. Let the **freshly roasted chestnuts** cool until they are comfortably safe to touch.

Then crack and peel the shell, and...



...remove as much of the **fuzzy membrane** as possible, which is actually optional. I sometimes like the added crispy crunch and flavor from the **chestnut membrane**, though that is certainly a matter of taste. Bottom line: don't worry if you can't peel away the entire **membrane**.

