

# NUTS: CHESTNUTS

## LOG IN!

1 Read the information about chestnuts and answer the following questions.

**Biological name:** Castanea spp

**Family:** Fagaceae

**Season:** autumn for fresh fruit and spring for preserved fruit and flour

### Characteristics

The chestnut is a majestic tree belonging to the same botanical family as oak. This tree can grow up to 30 meters tall, with a trunk reaching up to 1 meter in diameter. It has dark green jagged leaves and its hard and fine wood is highly valuable. The chestnut can live up to 500 years old and it starts to fructify only after about 25 years. There are over one hundred known varieties, mostly producing 2-3 glossy red-brown chestnuts inside a green spiky husk. Some species produce only one chestnut, which is fleshier, tastier and sweeter.

### Nutrition facts

Fresh chestnut is a good source of potassium and vitamin C. In addition, it contains magnesium, copper, iron, phosphorus, folic acid, thiamine and vitamin B6. Chestnut is considered to have antiseptic, anti-anemic and stomachic properties.

### Use

Chestnuts must be firm and heavy, with a shiny skin and no wrinkles. They can be eaten roasted, boiled or stewed and they are preserved whole, peeled, in syrup, in alcohol, in jams or candied (as marron glacé). They can also be added to soups, salads and reduced to a purée and used in fillings. Chestnuts aromatize puddings, tarts, ice creams and sweet creams; moreover, they pair well with poultry and game and can be made into flour.



	per 100 g of fresh product	per 100 g of boiled product
water	52%	68.2%
protein	3 g	2 g
fat	1.2 g	1.4 g
sugar	44.2 g	28 g
fibre	20 g	0.7 g
calories	303	165

- 1 What does a chestnut tree look like?
- 2 How long does it take for a chestnut tree to bear fruit and how long can the tree live?
- 3 How do the single-chestnut husks differ from the multi-chestnut ones?
- 4 What are the health properties of chestnuts?
- 5 How can chestnuts be cooked, preserved and used?

## ON THE NET!

2 Have a look at the video *Christmas Recipes: Brussel Sprouts with Pancetta and Chestnuts* with celebrity chef Gordon Ramsay and match the two halves of the sentences together.

- 1 I'm cutting them in half,
  - 2 I want a really nice robust flavour
  - 3 Once it hits the pan,
  - 4 As the lardons start to crisp up,
  - 5 Don't put the chestnuts in too early,
  - 6 Lemon zest over
- a  makes the sprouts and the bacon harmonise.
  - b  otherwise they'll go to mush.
  - c  so that when I sauté them they cook evenly.
  - d  take your sprouts out and drain them.
  - e  that fat on top of the pancetta melts.
  - f  to go with that earthy texture of the sprout.



## LOG OUT!

3 Write a traditional recipe using chestnuts.