

A warm and toasty take on a flavorful chestnut dish



Photos Sora O'Doherty

By Susie Iventosch

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. Re-

move 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)
- ¼ 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
- ¼ cup dry sherry
- 1-2 teaspoons fresh thyme leaves
- ½ 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.

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This recipe can be found on our website: 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.

You can find most of the recipes published in the Lamorinda Weekly on our website. Food tab: www.lamorindaweekly.com/html2/food1.html



Lynn's Top Five

Spooky financial decisions that might come back to haunt you!

By Lynn Ballou,
CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™

It's always fun to have a theme for my column. With Halloween here tomorrow, this is a wonderful opportunity to dig into my bag of planning treats to share five "tricks" to avoid in your financial planning. See if you recognize yourself in any of these disguises and if so, treat yourself to a better costume!

1) Taking better care of others than yourselves: If you dress up as the Statue of Liberty in life and care for everyone to your own financial jeopardy, it's time to rethink your costume. If you run out of assets, who will care for you? Work with your planning team to determine just how generous you can afford to be. Whether it's family, friends or your

favorite charitable organizations, if you need to give time instead of money, make that change!

2) The Pinball Machine costume: I frequently see clients who have spent much of their adult lives avoiding setting up a proper plan and just end up bouncing from thing to thing with no real path in mind. Sometimes they do so because they are concerned about the cost of working with a planning professional and worried that financial planning is just a ruse to sell them something that's not in their best interests. So, my advice: get out of the maze and treat yourself to a proper planning session with a qualified financial advisor such as a Certified Financial Planner who is a fiduciary acting on your behalf. The peace of mind and focused approach you can achieve working with the right advisor team can be both a time and money saver and help you live a focused financial life.

3) The Time Value of Money Ghost: Most everyone I talk to tells me they wish they had started saving earlier – they just don't know where the time went. Envision your future self as something more than a nebulous ghost like apparition. Have a true vision of what you'd like to do and be and start putting money away now for that future. We can outrun many things, but time isn't one of them. Think of time as your pal, just like Casper the Friendly Ghost, and start saving as much as you possibly can for your future and those whom you love, everyday.

4) The Devil on our Shoulder:

Ever been in a store staring at something you crave but do not need? And then you wage an internal battle of to buy or not to buy? It's like having an angel on one shoulder and a devil on the other. Disarm the devil with facts: using your plan, determine just how much you can afford to spend on wants versus needs and then look at that potential purchase through that lens only buying if it's within your budget. We can handily disarm that spending devil with facts. If you aren't sure and you need to think it through, just step away and then go home and do the math. You can always go back later if you can afford it and it really means that much to you. Typically, that purchase "devil" is an impulse that can be thwarted with solid planning and review.

5) Dressing up as a "Jim Cramer" TV type personality: While very entertaining, you should view your portfolio in a long-term lens and not as a television personality day trader. The taxes, the fees, the lack of purpose – all of the bad characters that work against a successful approach to life-time investing make great TV but poor life choices. Whether you invest your own portfolio assets or work with a truly qualified team of professionals, focus on what your money needs to do for you and in what time frames and don't become distracted by the noise from those who are selling media time and aren't working for you and in your personal best interests.



I hope this has been a fun way to tackle some easy to ignore tricks that can undermine our best planning selves. Wishing you only the best treats this Halloween!



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