

Eat Chestnuts!

Our Top Three Chestnut Experiences:

1. Nibbling still crunchy, pleasantly bitter chestnuts picked from the ground during a wander in the park.
2. Following our nose to a stand on a London street (wet with rain and reflecting street lamps like oil) and warming our fingers on a small (much smaller than last year) paper bag of roast chestnuts.
3. Tucking into special, rarely made treats like *Chestnut and Pumpkin pie* (see our chefs recipes).

HISTORY - Chestnuts trees have grown across China and Japan since ancient times. The Greeks brought them to Europe from Asia Minor and later they spread across the continent with the Romans.

For many Europeans in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries chestnuts were an important staple food and Italians used them to make polenta before the introduction of maize from the New World.

BIOLOGY - Many varieties of chestnut tree exist, the common European chestnut being *Castanea sativa*. The trees take 20 years to fruit but remain productive for centuries.

BUYING - After picking, chestnuts slowly dry out and shrivel. Choose nuts that are heavy for their size with shiny, smooth shells. Give a squeeze to check that the nut inside is plump and full.

Flavour and sweetness are increased by frost, so parsnips are better during mid/late winter.

COOKING - Scan the code below to view the recipe for '*Chestnut & pumpkin pie*' on the seasonal recipes blog.



or visit: qmul sustainability.wordpress.com/recipes