



Chestnut Soup

Serves 6

This recipe from Wolfgang Puck highlights the silky rich taste of chestnuts. Serve with a green salad with a lemon vinaigrette dressing and some crusty bread for a delicious cool weather dinner. For a fantastic appetizer, serve in small bowls or cups and top with fresh chives or parsley.

4 tablespoons unsalted butter
1 medium carrot, finely chopped
1 celery rib, finely chopped
1/2 medium onion, finely chopped
2 cups cooked chestnuts (one 14.8-ounce vacuum-packed bag)
1 cup ruby port
1 thyme sprig
3 cups chicken stock or low-sodium broth
1/2 cup heavy cream
Salt and freshly ground pepper

1. Melt the butter in a medium saucepan. Add the carrot, celery and onion and cook over low heat, stirring, until softened, about 10 minutes. Add the chestnuts and cook for 4 minutes. Add the port and thyme and cook over medium heat until the port is reduced by half, about 4 minutes. Add the stock and bring to a boil. Cover partially and simmer over low heat for 30 minutes. Discard the thyme sprig.
2. Add the cream to the soup. Working in batches, puree the soup in a blender. Return the soup to the saucepan and bring to a simmer. Season with salt and pepper and serve.

Chestnut Blondies

Makes 24 bars

This delicious riff on blondies uses chestnut flour and chopped chestnuts for a lovely layered chestnut flavor. Can you eat just one? (Ask the Asheville office about these!)

1 cup chestnuts, peeled, roasted, and coarsely chopped
1 ½ cups coconut unsweetened shredded
1 ½ cups chestnut flour (7 ½ ounces)
1 teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon table salt
12 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted and cooled
1 ½ cups light brown sugar packed (10 ½ ounces)

2 large eggs, lightly beaten
4 teaspoons vanilla extract
6 ounces white chocolate chips (1 cup)

1. Adjust oven rack to the middle position and heat oven to 350 degrees. Toast coconut on a rimmed baking sheet, stirring 2 to 3 times, until light golden, about 5 to 7 minutes.
2. While coconut toasts, cut an 18-inch length of foil and fold lengthwise to 8-inch width. Fit foil into length of 13 by 9-inch baking pan, pushing it into corners and up sides of pan; allow excess to overhang pan edges. Cut 14-inch length foil and fit into width of baking pan in same manner, perpendicular to first sheet. Spray foil-lined pan with nonstick cooking spray.
3. Whisk flour, baking powder, and salt together in a medium bowl; set aside.
4. Whisk melted butter and brown sugar in medium bowl until combined. Add eggs and vanilla and mix well. Using rubber spatula, fold dry ingredients into egg mixture until just combined; do not overmix. Fold in chocolate, coconut, and nuts and turn batter into prepared pan, smoothing top with rubber spatula.
5. Bake until top is shiny, cracked, and light golden brown, 22 to 25 minutes; do not overbake. Cool on wire rack to room temperature. Remove bars from pan by lifting foil overhang and transfer to cutting board. Cut into 2-inch squares and serve.

Chestnut Pasta in Butter and Sage Sauce

Serves 4

This traditional Italian recipe is "peasant food" of the finest kind; in the past it was made during the fall and winter by those too poor to be able to afford wheat flour. It is delicious and well- worth the "artisanal effort" to make it!

- 2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
 - 4/5 cup/100 grams chestnut flour
 - 4 eggs
 - 2 tablespoons olive oil
 - 1/2 cup unsalted butter
 - 1 sage leaf, or more to taste
 - salt (to taste)
 - black pepper (to taste)
 - 3 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
 - *Optional* freshly grated parmesan cheese
1. Sift flours together and pour into a mound on a wood surface. Make a crater in the mound and crack the eggs, olive oil, and a pinch of salt into the crater.
 2. Knead the dough by hand for 10 to 15 minutes or until it is firm and elastic. If using a stand mixer, knead on low for 3 minutes or until it cleans the side of the bowl. Continue kneading for three to four more minutes until the dough forms a ball. Kneading in any automated mixer should not take more than eight minutes in total.
 3. Roll the dough out to about the thickness of a dime, then cut the sheet into irregular pieces using a knife or serrated pastry wheel or run through a pastry machine to cut into long, thin *tagliatelle*.
 4. Set a large pot of water to boil over high heat for the pasta.

5. Meanwhile, melt the butter in a small pot over low heat with the sage, which will flavor it. Let the sage leaf infuse into the butter for one to two minutes, then remove the leaf and discard it. Season the melted butter to taste with salt and pepper.
6. When the pasta water reaches a rolling boil, add one to two tablespoons of coarse sea salt to the water. Return to a rolling boil, add the pasta, and cook for one to two minutes (fresh pasta cooks very quickly!).
7. Drain the pasta, return it to the pot, and toss it gently with the sage-infused butter.
8. Serve with the grated parmesan cheese and parsley.