

Purée de Marrons

(Chestnut Purée)

As many of you know, chestnuts are prized in Europe for their culinary versatility and delicious flavor. We are delighted to share a story of chestnut enthusiast Ariane Wellin, who was born in France to a Russian father and French mother. TACF President and CEO Lisa Thomson met Ariane in Florida earlier this year, and she spoke fondly of her love of a traditional chestnut purée recipe, Purée de Marrons, and declared, “I make the purée every year at Thanksgiving, whether I’m entertaining a house full or am by myself!” She said although the recipe is fairly simple, the labor is in the careful peeling of the chestnuts themselves. Ariane also recalled as a child eating Marrons Glacés, delectable confections where chestnuts are consumed as candies or added to an infinite variety of recipes. Bon appétit!



Yield

6 to 8 servings

Ingredients

8 cups peeled chestnuts

2 stalks celery

1 medium herb bouquet: 4 parsley sprigs, 1/2 bay leaf, and 1/8 tsp thyme tied in cheese cloth

3 cups good brown stock or 2 cups canned beef bouillon and 1 cup of water

3 to 6 Tb softened butter, or butter and whipping cream

Salt and pepper

Pinch of sugar, if needed

Equipment

A 3-quart, heavy-bottomed saucepan

A food mill

Method

Place in the saucepan the chestnuts, celery stalks, and herb bouquet. Pour in enough stock, or bouillon and water to cover the chestnuts by 1 1/2 inches. Simmer very slowly and uncovered for 45 to 60 minutes, or until the chestnuts are cooked through. Do not overcook and allow them to become mushy. Drain immediately; remove celery and herb bouquet. Purée the chestnuts in the food mill, then return them to the saucepan.

Beat in the butter, or butter and cream. If purée is too thick, beat in spoonfuls of the cooking liquid. Season to taste with salt and pepper, and a pinch or two of sugar if you feel it necessary.

*If not to be used immediately, instead of beating in the butter, spread it over the surface of the purée. To reheat, cover and set over boiling water, beating occasionally.

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