DIRECT · EASY

Chestnuts and Sweet Potato Roasted in the Kamado Embers

When the kamado has done its work and only spent embers and hot ash are left, a second cook begins: cross-scored chestnuts and whole sweet potatoes buried in the ash. The autumn snack that runs on heat you already paid for.



PREP	COOK	SERVINGS	TEMPERATURE
15 min	45 min	6	180 °C

Ingredients

- **600 g** fresh chestnuts, large and free of holes
- **40 g** butter, at room temperature
- **1 cdta** sweet Pimentón de la Vera
- **1 pizca** freshly ground black pepper
- **1 cda** rosemary honey (optional, for the sweet potato)
- **4 ud** medium sweet potatoes (200-250 g each)
- **2 cda** extra virgin olive oil
- **1 cdta** flaky sea salt
- **2 ud** sprigs of fresh rosemary
- **50 ml** dry anise liqueur or young wine to serve (optional)

Method

1 BUILD THE EMBER BED

At the end of a long cook, once the dome drops to around 180 °C, put on your Grill Heat Aid gloves and lift out the grate and the deflector. With the Grilliance ash rake, spread the spent embers and ash into an even layer about five centimetres deep. Leave the bottom vent open a finger's width and the chimney nearly shut: you want steady heat, not flame.

2 SCORE THE CROSSES

Wash the chestnuts and pat them dry. Sit each one on its flat face and, with a small serrated knife, cut a cross about two centimetres across the domed side, through the shell and the brown skin beneath without splitting the nut. Do not skip this: an unscored chestnut will burst in the embers. Soak them in warm water for ten minutes, then drain.

3 BURY THE SWEET POTATOES

Wash the sweet potatoes, dry them and prick each one three or four times with a fork. Do not wrap them in foil: this is dry ash cooking, not steaming. Using the Rösle charcoal tongs, open a hollow and bury them completely under about three centimetres of hot ash, close to the live embers but not sitting on them. Close the lid and wait twenty minutes.

4 ADD THE CHESTNUTS

Open the lid, rake a little ash aside and set the chestnuts cross side up, half buried in the bed. Scatter a pinch of salt over them and draw a thin layer of ash back over, leaving the crosses visible. Lay the rosemary sprigs on the embers and close the lid for another fifteen minutes.

5 RAKE EVERY FIFTEEN MINUTES

Every fifteen minutes, open up and turn the ash over with the rake: that is what spreads the residual heat and stops the underside from scorching while the top cools. Take the chance to give each sweet potato a quarter turn with the tongs. The dome will drift from 180 down to 140 °C over the cook, and that is exactly right.

6 CHECK FOR DONENESS

At twenty-five minutes the chestnuts will have crosses peeled wide open and shells curling back: pull them out. The sweet potatoes need about forty-five minutes in total; they are ready when a skewer slides into the thickest part with no resistance at all. If it meets any, bury them again and give them ten more minutes.

7 BRUSH OFF AND SERVE

Brush the ash off with a dry brush or a cloth, never water, which cakes it onto the skin. Wrap the chestnuts in a tea towel and peel them while hot. Split the sweet potatoes lengthways, crush the flesh with a fork and add butter or a thread of extra virgin olive oil, flaky salt, Pimentón de la Vera, black pepper and a few drops of honey. Serve with a finger of dry anise or young wine.

Editor's tips

- Pick chestnuts that feel heavy for their size, with taut shells and no holes; if in doubt, drop them in cold water, because the ones that float are dried out or already inhabited.
- Since the food touches the ash, use clean lump charcoal such as Orework Carbón de Encina Española, and never a fire lit with fluid or briquettes with binders.
- Sweet potatoes over 300 grams want sixty to seventy minutes; if you are in a hurry, halve them lengthways and bury them cut side up.
- Cold chestnuts are miserable to peel; if they cool down on the table, return them to the hot ash for thirty seconds before trying again.

Gear for this recipe

Big Green Egg Large

mikamado.es/en/kamados/big-green-egg-large

Orework Spanish Holm Oak Charcoal 15 kg

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/orework-encina-espanola-15kg

Rösle Charcoal Tongs

Burying four sweet potatoes beside the live embers without ever setting them on top calls for a tool that really grips, and the Rösle charcoal tongs are built to move burning coals, not to serve food at the table. With them you open the hollow in the ash, place each sweet potato at exactly the right distance from the heat and give it a quarter turn every fifteen minutes without tearing the skin or raising a cloud of ash over the food.

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/rosle-pinzas-carbon

Grill Heat Aid – Heat-Resistant Aramid/Kevlar BBQ Gloves

The first move of this recipe is lifting out the grate and the ceramic deflector while the dome still reads 180 °C, and then working for half an hour with your hands over an ash bed that is considerably hotter than the embers you can see. The aramid Grill Heat Aid gloves reach up the forearm and keep enough dexterity to hold a freshly unearthed sweet potato or wrap the hot chestnuts in a tea towel.

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/grill-heat-aid-guantes-bbq-resistentes-calor

Grilliance stainless steel ash rake for kamado

This recipe is not cooked on the grate but inside the ash bed, and there the tool in charge is the Grilliance stainless steel ash rake. It first levels the spent embers into an even layer five centimetres deep, and then turns that layer over every fifteen minutes, which is what spreads the residual heat and stops the underside of a sweet potato from scorching while its top face goes cold. The long handle keeps your hand away from the embers.

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/grilliance-rastrillo-ceniza-acero-inox-universal

Full recipe at: mikamado.es/en/recetas/castanas-boniato-rescoldo-kamado

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