

Chestnut Flour Ricotta Cake with Orange Marmalade (Italian Torta di Castagne)

Cooking Times + Servings

- **Prep Time:** 15 minutes
 - **Bake Time:** 40 minutes
 - **Cool Time:** 20 minutes
 - **Servings:** 8–10 slices
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Ingredients

Cake Batter

- 1 cup chestnut flour (about 100g)***
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup 00 flour (about 100g)
- 1 cup ricotta cheese (about 250g)
- 2 large eggs
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup granulated sugar (about 150g)
- 2 Tbsp neutral oil (vegetable/sunflower) (about 30g)
- 3 Tbsp water (about 50g)
- 2 Tbsp rum (about 25g)
- 2 tsp baking powder (about $\frac{1}{2}$ packet)
- 1 packet vanilla sugar (*or 1 tsp vanilla extract*)

Filling + Finish

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup orange marmalade (more if desired)
 - Powdered sugar, for dusting
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Instructions

1. Preheat & prep pan

Preheat oven to **350°F (180°C)**. Line an **8-inch round cake pan** with parchment (bottom + sides).

2. Whip eggs + sugar

Beat **eggs and sugar** until **pale, fluffy, and airy** (3–4 minutes).

3. Add ricotta, then oil

Mix in **ricotta** gradually until smooth. Stir in the **oil**.

4. **Mix dry ingredients**

In a separate bowl, whisk together **chestnut flour, 00 flour, baking powder, and vanilla sugar**.

5. **Combine (gentle!)**

Fold the dry ingredients into the wet mixture **by hand**, a little at a time.

6. **Finish with water + rum**

Stir in **water** and **rum** until batter is smooth and thick.

7. **Bake**

Pour into pan and bake **40 minutes**, or until a toothpick comes out clean.

8. **Cool, slice, fill**

Cool **20 minutes**, then remove from pan. Once warm (not hot), slice horizontally into 2 layers and spread **orange marmalade** over the bottom half.

9. **Finish**

Replace top layer and dust generously with **powdered sugar**.

Tips & Tricks

- If ricotta is watery, **drain 15–20 minutes** for a fluffier texture.
- Add **1 tsp orange zest** to the batter for extra aroma.
- Don't overmix after adding flour—**fold gently** to keep it soft.

How to Make Chestnut Flour at Home (Yes—Possible!)

You *can* make chestnut flour at home, but the key is **drying the chestnuts completely** so the flour stays shelf-stable and doesn't clump or spoil.

What you need

- Fresh chestnuts (or peeled chestnuts)
- Oven or dehydrator
- Food processor / high-speed blender
- Fine-mesh sieve
- Airtight jar

Method A: Oven-Dried Chestnut Flour (Most practical)

1. **Score and roast to peel easily**

Cut an "X" on each chestnut. Roast at **400°F (200°C) for 20–25 minutes** until shells split.

2. **Peel while warm**

Remove outer shell + inner skin (the papery layer). (This is easier while they're still warm.)

3. **Slice for faster drying**

Cut chestnuts into thin slices or rough chunks.

4. **Dry low and slow**

Spread on a baking sheet. Dry at **200°F (95°C)** for **2.5–4 hours**, turning occasionally, until they feel **hard and brittle** (no softness inside).

- Tip: Prop the oven door slightly open with a wooden spoon if your oven traps moisture.

5. **Grind**

Blend to a fine powder.

6. **Sift & regrind**

Sift through a fine mesh. Re-grind larger bits and sift again.

7. **Store properly**

Store in an airtight jar in a **cool, dark place**. For best freshness: **refrigerate or freeze**.

Method B: Dehydrator (Best results)

- Dry peeled, sliced chestnuts at **135°F (57°C)** for **8–12 hours** until brittle, then grind + sift.

Important notes

- **Do not grind chestnuts that still feel soft** inside—your flour can turn pasty and spoil faster.
- Homemade chestnut flour is often **slightly coarser** and more aromatic (amazing in cakes).