

St. Charles Cancer Treatment Center
DEFEAT Cancer's April, 2008

HARVEST for HEALTH



It's ARTICHOKE!

What Is An Artichoke?

The artichoke is an immature flower bud that, if left to bloom, boasts a bright-purple, thistle-like flower. The cone-shaped buds are enclosed by overlapping outer leaves, ("bracts"). At the center of the bud is an inedible fuzzy thistle, the "choke," with a purplish color that would eventually become the flower, if allowed to mature. The edible "heart" of an artichoke is the round, tender, firm base of the bud that is revealed after pulling off the petals and choke.

Did You Know?

The area around Castroville, California grows about 75% of the artichokes in the U.S. In 1948, a young Marilyn Monroe was crowned Castroville's first "Artichoke Queen."

Nutritional Value

One large artichoke contains only 25 calories, no fat, 170mg potassium, and is a good source of vitamin C, folate, magnesium and dietary fiber. Since many people like to eat their artichoke "dipped", the trick to this healthy delicacy is to keep dressings, sauces and dips low in fat, too.

Selection

Choose plump heads with tightly closed leaves, heavy for size. When squeezed, the artichoke should emit a squeak. Avoid those with black blemishes under the leaves. During winter, white, blistered or bronze appearance does not affect quality. Artichoke hearts are also available canned or frozen, for quick and easy use.



Storage

Although artichokes appear tough and hardy, they are fairly delicate and should be refrigerated upon purchase and eaten within 4-5 days.

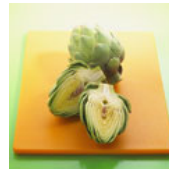
How to Prepare

Rinse under cool running water. Pull off small lower leaves. Cut bottom stalk to 1" or less. Cut off top quarter of artichoke with a sharp knife, or snip off thorny tips of leaves with scissors. Cook until a leaf near the center can be pulled out easily, or a fork can pierce the soft bottom through the stalk.

To boil: Stand prepared artichoke in deep saucepan or pot with 3 inches boiling water. (If desired, oil, lemon juice and seasonings can be added to cooking water.) Cover and boil gently 25 to 40 minutes.

To steam: Place prepared artichoke on a rack above an inch or two of boiling water. Cover and steam 25 to 45 minutes.

To microwave (700 watt oven): Set one medium sized prepared artichoke upside down in a small glass bowl (a 2 cup measure will do) with ¼ cup water, ½ tsp. each lemon juice and oil. Cover with plastic wrap. Cook on high 6 to 7 minutes. Let stand covered 5 minutes after cooking.



How To Eat An Artichoke

Remove the outer leaves one at a time, starting at the bottom. Dip the fleshy base in sauce if desired, then place the bottom half of the leaf, concave side down, in your mouth as you draw it across your teeth, scraping off the soft, fleshy pulp of the leaf. Discard what is left. Continue to eat the fleshy leaves until you reach the inner rose-colored petals. Under the petals you will find the furry choke. Pull or scrape off the choke to expose the artichoke bottom. This is your reward – dense and velvety, the entire bottom can be cut into quarters, dipped and eaten. It's a yummy labor of love – and can be eaten hot or cold!

Note: Baby artichokes are entirely edible, even the choke. To prepare, trim away the stem, top portion and a few outer leaves, then cook.

For a detailed visual description on how to cook, grill or eat artichokes, go to www.cookingforengineers.com and type "artichokes" in the search engine.

Add More Artichokes to Your Life

Artichokes are perfect for kids or adults who like to “play with food” because they are eaten with fingers! Artichokes are available year-round, with peak harvests in the spring and fall. If you’d rather not fool with preparing them, canned and frozen artichoke hearts are a healthy addition to any recipe.

- Toss some quartered artichoke hearts into a green salad.
- Add hearts to a pizza with sun-dried tomatoes and feta cheese. Divine.
- Add chunked hearts to traditional bean salad for added nutrition.
- Top chicken breasts or baked fish with artichoke hearts and green onions sautéed in a little olive oil and garlic.
- Pasta sauce with artichoke chunks, zucchini and yellow squash is terrific.



Dipping Suggestions

Low Calorie Dill Dip

- 1 c. plain low-fat yogurt
 - ¼ c. reduced calorie mayonnaise
 - 2 Tbl. minced green onion
 - 3 tsp. chopped capers
 - ¾ tsp. dried dill weed
- Combine all ingredients & chill.

Dijon Mustard Mayonnaise Sauce

- 2 Tbl. low-fat mayonnaise
 - 1 tsp. Dijon mustard
 - ¼ tsp. Worcestershire sauce
- Combine all ingredients; mix well.

Other Options

- Chili sauce
- Honey mustard sauce
- Low-fat ranch dressing

Low-Fat Hot Artichoke Dip

- 1/2 c. plain low-fat yogurt, drained
- 1/4 c. fat-free mayonnaise
- 1/2 c. shredded parmesan cheese
- 1/4 c. finely chopped onion
- 14 oz. can artichoke hearts, drained & chopped
- black pepper to taste

Combine yogurt, mayonnaise and cheese in a small bowl. Add onion and artichoke hearts.

Transfer to a small casserole dish. Bake for 20 minutes at 350 degrees. Serve hot, warm or cold with whole grain pita triangles, cut veggies or baked tortilla chips.

Serves 4; 1/4 cup each; 51 cal (16 from fat); 1.7g fat; 6 mg cholesterol; 368mg sodium; 5.2g carbs; 1.3g fiber; 3.6g protein.

Recipe from: www.lowfatcooking.about.com

Roasted Potatoes and Artichokes with Feta Cheese

- 2 lbs. small red potatoes, quartered
- 2 (14-oz) cans artichoke hearts, halved
- 2 Tbl. chopped fresh or 2 tsp. dried thyme
- 1 Tbl. olive oil
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. black pepper
- cooking spray
- 1/2 cup (2 oz) crumbled feta cheese

Toss the first 6 ingredients in a large bowl. Arrange the mixture in a 13 x 9” baking pan coated with cooking spray. Bake at 425 for 40 min. or until the potatoes are tender, stirring occasionally. Add feta cheese and toss.

Serves 4 ; 2c. each; 337 cal (19% from fat); 7g fat; 14g protein; 13 mg cholesterol; 656 mg sodium; 4g fiber; 60g carbs. Recipe from www.cookinglight.com

Resources

Remember to look for low-fat recipes, or substitute high-fat ingredients with low-fat options.

Artichoke Recipes

- www.artichokes.org
- www.cookinglight.com
- www.allrecipes.com
- www.eatingwell.com
- www.lowfatcooking.about.com

Cancer/Nutrition Websites

- www.caring4cancer.com/go/cancer/nutrition
- www.cancerproject.org
- www.aicr.org
- www.cancer.net

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www.bendcancer.org & www.defeatcancer.info

