

# EAT YOUR HEART OUT

## AN ARTICHOKE'S SUBTLE FLAVOR WORKS IN MANY RECIPES

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Pretty as a flower and subtle in flavor as a delicate food, people have a strange relationship with them - they either love them dearly or hate them to death!

To lovers, they are the star of the meal or at least play a hearty supporting role. To haters, they're best left for dried floral displays, which quite frankly are appealing to lovers, too! But if there is one thing that age has definitely taught me, it's that you should never knock something until you have tried it and, you shouldn't count it out until you have tried it served just right.

Although mankind has been eating artichokes for more than 3000 years, the fall of Rome plunged the artichoke into obscurity until its revival in Italy during the mid-15th century.

The ancients considered artichokes to have many benefits.

Its leaves were thought to be an aphrodisiac, a diuretic, a breath freshener and even a deodorant.

Decoctions of artichoke leaves have been used as blood cleansers, to improve bile production and secretion and to detox the liver and the skin.

Artichokes also have powerful antioxidant properties and may help the liver regenerate healthy tissue.

Plus, artichokes are nutrient dense, so, for the 25 calories in a medium artichoke, you're getting 16 essential nutrients! Summer is the perfect time to try one first because that's when the fresh globe artichokes are in season.

Buying in season not only makes them lower in price but also fresher than you will find them at any other time of year.

Native to

the Mediterranean region, the artichoke is the edible flower bud of a thistle-like plant in the sunflower family that is eaten as a vegetable. They are most commonly steamed and served warm with a variety of dipping sauces, but they can be fried or baked or even grilled if you know what you are doing.

If you are looking to enjoy the nutty flavor of these beauties without all the hassle a fresh bud gives, then try some canned or jarred artichoke hearts, which is the meaty center of the artichoke, available year round in the canned vegetable aisle.

To prepare an artichoke for steaming, use a large knife and cut off the top 1-1/2" to 2" of the artichoke, then slice the bottom stem off flush with the base and dip in juice. Sprinkle cut surfaces with lemon juice to prevent browning.

Your artichoke is now ready to be cooked!



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**Eat-Your-Heart-Out Bread**

- 1/4 cup butter
- 2-3 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 teaspoons sesame seeds
- 1 (14-ounce) can artichoke hearts, drained & chopped
- 1 cup shredded Monterey jack cheese
- 1 cup grated parmesan cheese
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 loaf French bread
- 1/2 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Melt butter in a skillet over medium heat.
- Add garlic and sesame seeds. Sauté until lightly browned.
- Remove from heat and stir in artichoke, Monterey jack, parmesan and sour cream.
- Cut bread in half lengthwise. Scoop out center of each piece, leaving a 1-inch shell.
- Add approximately 1/2 of the removed bread pieces to the artichoke mixture. Stir to blend.
- Spoon artichoke mixture into French bread shells and sprinkle with cheddar cheese.
- Place on baking sheet and cover with foil.

- Bake for 25 minutes.
- Remove foil and bake 5 minutes more. Serve immediately.
- Makes 12 servings.

**Per serving:** Calories 288; Fat 16g; Sodium 584mg; Carbohydrates 25g; Fiber 3g; Sugar 04g; Protein 12g.

**Fried Artichoke Hearts**

- 2 eggs
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1 15-ounce can quartered artichoke hearts, drained
- 1-1/2 cups Italian bread crumbs
- 2 cups of oil for frying
- 1/4 cup parmesan cheese, grated
- Heat oil in a deep-fryer or heavy deep skillet to 350 degrees. In a small bowl, whisk together eggs and milk.
- Place seasoned bread crumbs in a separate bowl.
- Dip artichoke hearts in the egg mixture, and then roll in bread crumbs until they are fully covered.
- Makes 24 servings.
- Per serving:** Calories 67; Fat 3g; Sodium

333mg; Carbohydrates 7g; Fiber 1g; Sugar 04g; Protein 2g.

**Easy-Cheesy Artichoke Dip**

- 2 (14-ounce) cans artichoke hearts, drained
- 2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese
- 1 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 1 teaspoon dried parsley
- Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Drain the artichokes, squeeze the juice out of them, pull them apart and place in a 1-quart casserole dish.
- In a medium-sized mixing bowl, combine Mozzarella cheese, Parmesan cheese and mayonnaise.
- Pour this mixture into the casserole and mix well until the artichoke hearts are mixed in well.
- Sprinkle the parsley over the top. Bake for 40 minutes or until the dip is brown on top.
- Makes 14 servings.
- Per serving:** Calories 220; Fat 18g; Sodium 601mg; Carbohydrates 7g; Fiber 2g; Sugar 04g; Protein 8g.