

Eating Local and Seasonal: Artichokes

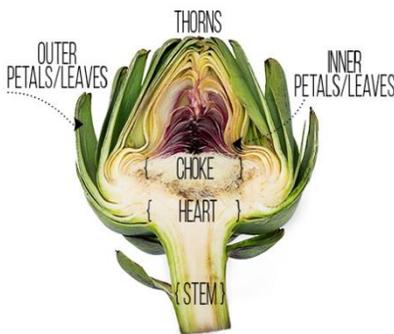
By Lisa Lau, Registered Dietitian at the Georgina Nurse Practitioner Led Clinic

What do you do with this vegetable when it's not already in the form of a dip ready to eat? Discover how to prepare and use fresh artichokes in this issue, then put your skills to the test by making our Artichoke Bruschetta (recipe on back)!



Ways to Enjoy Artichokes...More than Just Dips

That's right, this nutritious vegetable can be enjoyed in so many other ways aside from that artichoke dip we are all familiar with! Fresh artichokes can be steamed, grilled, or baked. Once cooked, the outer leaves (technically called bracts) are eaten by removing it from the plant and dipping into a creamy dipping sauce. Only the flesh inside these leaves can be eaten, so you will need to use your teeth to pull out the soft inner bits.



At the bottom of the plant underneath the inedible fuzzy choke is the artichoke heart, the sweetest and most tender part of the vegetable. This part can also be eaten with a dip, or incorporated into dishes like dips, salads, pastas, pizzas, and so on. Canned artichoke hearts are available for a quicker way to cook with artichokes.

Nutritional Goodness

Artichokes are a good source of fibre, magnesium, folate and vitamin C.

How to Prepare Artichokes for Cooking

There are several ways to prepare artichokes depending on how you will use it. The following method is a quick method to prepare the artichoke for steaming or baking. For first-timers, consider having a bowl of lemon water on the side to keep the cut-up parts from browning.



1. Using a sharp knife, remove the top of the artichoke.



2. With scissors, trim off the thorny tips of the artichoke leaves. Rinse the vegetable and between the leaves.



3. Trim off the very bottom of the stem. Then use a vegetable peeler to peel off the stem's tough outer layer.



4. Steam for 30–45 mins or bake for about 1 hr. Then, remove outer leaves, cut remaining bulb into quarters and remove the choke.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH

August 2016

Artichoke Bruschetta

Get the most out of your fresh artichokes by adding artichoke hearts into this bruschetta and serving it on artichoke leaves!



Makes 2 servings (1 serving = ½ cup)

Ingredients:

1	Roma tomato, diced
1 tbsp.	Red onion, finely diced
2	Artichoke hearts, diced
1 tbsp.	Olive oil
1 tsp	Red wine vinegar
½	Garlic clove, minced
3-4	Fresh basil leaves, chopped
¼ tsp	Dried oregano
1 tbsp.	Feta cheese
	Ground black pepper
	Squeeze of lime juice

Directions:

1. Wash artichokes and chop off the top 1/3 of the vegetable. Trim off bottom of the stem and use a peeler to remove outer skin of stem. Place in a steamer with the stem facing up and steam two large artichokes for 45 minutes.
2. In the mean time, chop and prepare remainder of ingredients and combine in a bowl.
3. Check if artichokes are ready by inserting a small sharp pairing knife into the base of the artichoke. The knife should be able to insert easily.
4. Once artichokes are cooked, remove leaves and set on a serving plate. Continue this until reaching the purple coloured leaves in the centre. At this point, cut the artichoke in half and remove the purple leaves. Make a small cut under the fuzzy choke and remove. Dice the remainder of the artichoke hearts and combine into bruschetta.
5. Serve bruschetta over artichoke leaves.

Nutrition information (Per serving):

150 calories, Fat 8 g (12% DV), Carbohydrate 19 g (6% DV), Fibre 9 g (36%), Protein 7 g, Sodium 350 mg (15% DV), Sugars 4 g, Vitamin A 8%, Vitamin C 35%, Calcium 8%, Iron 15%