

16 TEMPTING WAYS TO COOK ARTICHOKE

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TENDER AT HEART

With their ancient mystique and otherworldly looks, artichokes are an everyday wonder at the table

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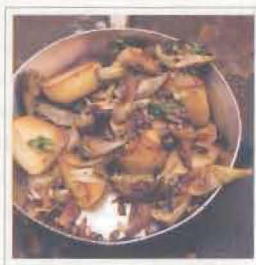
ARTICHOKES

interior. (For illustrated, step-by-step instructions on trimming baby artichokes, see page 92.) Put trimmed artichokes into lemon water; set aside.

2 Heat the oil in a dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add the garlic, mushrooms, and carrots and cook, stirring frequently, until soft, about 8 minutes. Season the chicken with salt and pepper. Increase heat to high and add the chicken and tomato paste; cook, stirring occasionally, until chicken is lightly browned, about 6 minutes. Add the vinegar and cook, stirring constantly, until liquid has evaporated, about 1 minute. Drain the artichokes and add them, along with 2 tbsp. tarragon and the chicken broth, to the pot. Bring broth to a boil and

reduce heat to medium-low. Simmer until chicken and artichokes are very tender and the broth has reduced by half, about 40 minutes. Season with salt and pepper and set sauce aside.

3 Meanwhile, bring a pot of salted water to a boil over high heat. Add pasta and cook until al dente, about 7 minutes. Reserve 1 cup pasta water. Drain pasta and transfer to pot with artichoke and chicken sauce; set over high heat. Bring sauce to a boil, stir in $\frac{1}{2}$ cup parmesan and cook, tossing occasionally with tongs, until sauce thickens and clings to pasta, about 2 minutes. (If sauce is too dry, pour in a little pasta water.) Add remaining tarragon and season with salt and pepper. Transfer pasta to 4 bowls and sprinkle with remaining parmesan.



SKIRT STEAK WITH ARTI- CHOKE AND POTATO HASH

SERVES 4

This recipe is based on one from David Tanis, the author of *A Platter of Figs* (Artisan, 2008) and the chef at Chez Pannise in Berkeley, California.

- 2 lbs. skirt steak, cut into 4 portions
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup plus 3 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 lbs. medium potatoes, such as yellow finn or yukon gold, peeled and cut into 1" chunks
- 15 baby artichokes (about 2 lbs.)
- 2 lemons, halved
- 1 cup flat-leaf parsley leaves, roughly chopped
- 2 tbsp. capers
- 4 cloves garlic, finely chopped

1 Season steaks with salt and pepper. Massage steaks with 2 tbsp. oil. Let sit at room temperature for 1 hour.

2 Bring 6 cups salted water to a boil in a 2-qt. saucepan. Transfer potatoes to boiling water, reduce heat to medium, and simmer until almost tender, about 4 minutes. Drain potatoes; transfer to a baking sheet; let cool.

3 Trim away tough outer leaves of artichokes to expose their tender, pale green interior. (For illustrated, step-by-step instructions on trimming baby artichokes, see page 92.) Slice artichokes lengthwise into $\frac{1}{4}$ "-thick wedges. Rub artichokes with the cut sides of the halved lemons; set aside.

4 Heat $\frac{1}{3}$ cup oil in a 12" cast-iron

skillet over medium-high heat. Add potatoes and cook, flipping occasionally with a metal spatula, until they are light brown, about 10 minutes. Add artichokes and cook, flipping occasionally, until artichokes and potatoes are golden brown and tender, about 10 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Add parsley, capers, and garlic. Stir to combine and set hash aside off heat.

5 Heat remaining oil in a 12" cast-iron skillet over medium-high heat or prepare a medium-hot charcoal fire in a grill. Add steak and cook, flipping once with tongs, until seared, crusty, and medium rare, 6–8 minutes. Transfer to a platter and let sit for 5 minutes. Slice steak against the grain, divide between 4 plates, and squeeze the lemon halves over steaks. Serve with the hash.



GREENS AND ARTICHOKES STEW

SERVES 4

The recipe for this dish, a springtime favorite in the Middle East, comes from Greg and Lucy Malouf, the authors of *Turquoise* (Chronicle, 2008).

- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup plus 2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 6 large, full-size artichoke hearts with stems quartered (see page 72 for step-by-step trimming instructions)
- 8 shallots, halved
- Kosher salt, to taste
- 2 tsp. poppy seeds
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. ground sumac, plus more for garnish (optional; see page 96)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. hot paprika
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- 8 oz. curly endive, roots trimmed
- 8 oz. swiss chard, stemmed and

THE WINE QUESTION

Of all the ingredients you can pair with wine, the artichoke surely comes with the biggest "Thou shalt not" staring the would-be sommelier in the face. I've heard the alarmist claims: "Don't drink wine with artichokes!" "Only water goes with artichokes!" And I can confidently say, it's all bosh. In fact, the flavor of water responds to artichokes in exactly the same way that the flavor of wine does, and, once you understand that interaction, you can contrive to drink anything you darned well please with artichokes.

At the heart of the matter is a naturally occurring acid called cynarin, a chemical component of all artichokes. Savvy sommeliers have long been hip to the fact that cynarin causes people who are eating an artichoke to perceive a little sweetness in the very next bite or gulp of anything. This curious property—far from messing up the wine-with-food equation—actually gives the matcher a huge advantage. Finding the right wine always comes down to understanding the interplay of a few basic gustatory qualities: sweetness, dryness, acidity, bitterness, tannin level. No other food gives you the head start that artichokes give you: the matcher knows that any prospective wine for artichokes is going to taste sweeter next to the food. What's so perplexing about that?

When choosing a wine to go with artichokes, then, do not choose an off-dry riesling, which is going to taste like a sweet riesling (unless you want a sweet riesling with your artichoke). And do not choose a 1961 Château Latour from Bordeaux, whose exquisite balance is going to be tipped by an artichoke. Do choose a wine that can get a boost from an enhanced impression of sweetness. Formidably dry no-dosage champagnes (which are made without added sugar), like Laurent-Perrier Ultra-Brut, pair brilliantly with artichokes, as do some of the more famously austere rosés from southern France, like those of the Tavel appellation. There are also wines from the Republic of Georgia—made from relatively obscure grape varieties like mtsvane and kisi—that are beautifully softened and romanced by artichokes. And if reds are your thing, take heart: they too can love the thistle! Look for something like a very dry barbera from the Piedmont region of Italy; its fearsome acidity will be civilized by the cynarin interaction.

I suppose it bears mentioning that the concentration of cynarin is the strongest in the artichoke leaves and the weakest in the artichoke's bottom, or heart, and perhaps there are sommeliers out there who, when asked to pick a wine for pairing with artichokes, respond by asking, "Bottom or leaves?" As far as I'm concerned, that's unnecessarily complicating a perfectly simple equation. —David Rosengarten