



A monthly publication for members of the Olympia Food Co-op and its surrounding communities

March 2020

The Art of Artichokes

Lots of shoppers pass over artichokes because they've never eaten them and aren't sure what to do with them. When I was young, artichokes were a food I looked forward to eating because they were fun and social- we had to take turns waiting to dip our petals- and they were a special treat. The primer below is a great explanation of how to cook and eat artichokes. If you haven't ever tried them, I hope you will. They are often abundant and affordable. in March.

How to Cook and Eat an Artichoke

by Elise Baur of simplyrecipes.com

- **1 or more large globe artichokes**
- **1-2 cloves of garlic, cut in half (can leave skin on)**
- **1 bay leaf**
- **1 slice of lemon**

1. Cut off the tips of the leaves: If the artichokes have little thorns on the ends of their leaves, take a kitchen scissors and cut off the tips. This step is mostly for aesthetics as the thorns soften with cooking and pose no threat to the person eating the artichoke. But snipping them off will make the artichokes easier to handle.

2. Slice off the top of the artichoke: Slice about 3/4 inch to an inch off the tip of the artichoke. A serrated bread knife works great for this.

3. Remove small leaves at the base: Pull off any smaller leaves towards the base and on the stem.

4. Cut off excess stem: Cut off excess stem, leaving up to an inch on the artichoke. The stems can be more bitter than the rest of the artichoke, but some people like to eat them. The inner cores of the stems taste like the heart. (Alternatively, you can leave the whole long stem on the artichoke,



just cut off the very end of the stem, and peel the tough outside layer of the stem with a vegetable peeler.)

5 Rinse the artichokes: Rinse the artichokes in running cold water. While you rinse them, open up the leaves a little so that the water gets inside more easily. (This is where it helps to have cut off the thorny tips, it makes the artichoke easier to open without getting poked!)

6 Set up a pot with some water, aromatics, and a steaming basket: In a large pot, put a couple inches of water, the garlic, a slice of lemon, and a bay leaf (this adds wonderful flavor to the artichokes). Insert a steaming basket.

7 Steam the artichokes: Place artichokes on top of the steaming basket. Cover the pot. Bring to a boil and reduce heat to simmer. Cook for 25 to 35 minutes or longer, until the outer leaves can easily be pulled off.

Artichokes may be eaten cold or hot, but I think they are much better hot. They are served with a dip, either melted butter or mayonnaise. My favorite dip is mayo with a little bit of balsamic vinegar mixed in.

To Eat:

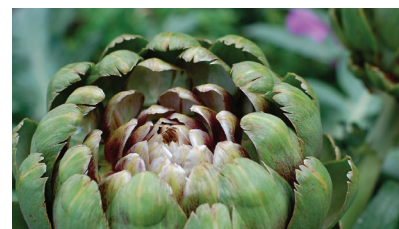
1 Pull off the leaves and dip: Pull off the outer leaves, one at a time. Dip the white fleshy end in melted butter, a vinaigrette, or sauce.

2 Place light end in mouth, dip side down, pull, scraping through your teeth: Tightly grip the other end of the petal. Place in mouth, dip side down, and pull through teeth to remove soft, pulpy, delicious portion of the petal. Discard remaining petal.

Continue until all of the petals are removed. When you get to the tender inner leaves with the purple tips, you can remove them all at once. Dip and eat just the light colored parts of these leaves.

3 Scrape out the choke: With a knife or spoon, scrape out and discard the inedible fuzzy part (called the "choke") covering the artichoke heart.

4 Cut the heart into pieces and eat: Underneath the artichoke choke is the heart. Cut the heart into pieces and dip into melted butter, a vinaigrette, or a sauce to eat. ■



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Avocado Sunshine



Recently the Produce Department had our monthly staff meeting, and we shared which fruits and vegetables we'd cooked with recently that were delicious. One of my co-workers mentioned making a citrus salad with mint. That sounded so wonderful that I thought I'd include a recipe in this month's newsletter. We've had lots of great citrus over the past month! Feel free to experiment and add one or more types. Citrus and mint are natural flavor affinities, and the avocado adds a nice element of creaminess. I think this would be excellent with some marinated baked tofu or other protein on top too. ■

Sunshine Citrus Avocado Salad

Adapted slightly from gimmesomeoven.com

SALAD INGREDIENTS:

- **1 5-ounce package mixed greens or baby arugula**
- **2 large ruby-red grapefruits or 3 blood oranges or Shasta gold tangerines, peeled and sliced into wheels**
- **1 large ripe avocado, peeled, pitted and sliced**
- **1 handful fresh basil leaves, roughly chopped**
- **1 handful fresh mint leaves, roughly chopped**
- **Half of a medium red onion, thinly sliced**
- **1/2 cup sliced or slivered almonds, toasted**
- **Optional topping: toasted sesame seeds**

SESAME VINAIGRETTE INGREDIENTS:

- **2 tablespoons oil**
- **1 tablespoon low-sodium soy sauce***
- **1 tablespoon rice vinegar**
- **1–2 teaspoons maple syrup or honey**
- **1/2 teaspoon toasted sesame oil**
- **1/4 teaspoon each: ground ginger and garlic powder**
- **Sea salt and freshly-cracked black pepper, to taste**

1. To Make The Vinaigrette: Whisk all ingredients together in a bowl (or shake together in a mason jar) until combined. Taste and add additional sweetener if desired. Use immediately or refrigerate in a sealed container for up to 3 days.

2. To Make The Salad: Combine all ingredients in a large salad bowl, drizzle evenly with the vinaigrette, and toss until evenly combined. Sprinkle with toasted sesame seeds plus an extra twist of freshly-cracked black pepper. Serve immediately and enjoy! ■

Pineapple Perfection

Lately we've been getting in some beautiful and well-priced fresh pineapples. How to know if a pineapple is ripe? Smell it. Pineapples should give off a nice, slightly sweet fragrance when they're close to being ripe. If they don't smell like anything, they're usually not ready to eat, and if they smell like alcohol/fermentation, they've probably gotten too ripe. Another way to know that they are ready is if the leaves separate from the body of the fruit very easily. ■



Pineapple Fried Rice

by Rian Handler at delish.com

- **2 tbsp. coconut oil**
- **1 medium onion, chopped**
- **1 red bell pepper, diced**
- **1 c. diced fresh pineapple**
- **3 cloves garlic, minced**
- **1/4 c. cashews, chopped**
- **3 c. cooked rice (preferably day old)**
- **1/2 c. frozen peas, thawed**
- **Juice of 1 lime**
- **2 tbsp. low-sodium soy sauce or tamari**
- **1 tsp. Sriracha**
- **2 large eggs, beaten**
- **2 green onions, thinly sliced**

1. In a large skillet over medium heat, heat oil. Add onion, peppers, and pineapple and cook until vegetables are soft and pineapple is caramelized, about 5 minutes. Stir in garlic and cashews and cook until fragrant, 1 minute more.

2. Stir in rice and peas, then add lime juice, soy sauce, and Sriracha. Cook to coat and warm rice, about 3 minutes more.

3. Push rice to one side of the skillet and add eggs. Stir constantly until almost fully cooked, then fold into rice mixture.

4. Garnish rice with green onions and serve. ■

-Erin, OFC Produce Manager