



Steamed Artichokes with Lemon Herb Mayonnaise

Artichokes are immensely satisfying, partly because enjoyment of the sweet tender flesh from the hearts is the result of a lot of hard work! But it doesn't have to be difficult to prepare artichokes; this simple classic is so satisfying, and here we explain the basic technique for preparing artichokes for any recipe. The accompanying herbed mayo is refreshingly tart thanks to the addition of lemon zest and juice, and is especially resplendent when tarragon is used.

4 servings

Ingredients

4 large artichokes
2 lemons, 1 zested
1 tablespoon fresh herbs (parsley, chives, tarragon, or chervil), minced
1 cup mayonnaise
Salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste

Equipment

Sharp knife, kitchen scissors, spoon, pot with steamer insert

Preparation

Fill a pot with a steamer insert with about 1-2 inches of water and set it to boil, covered. Meanwhile, fill a bowl with very cold water and the juice of one of the lemons. Have this ready before prepping the artichokes so you can immediately plunge them into the acidulated water to prevent discoloration. Reserve the squeezed lemon halves and put them in with the hot water.

Prepare the artichokes:

Working with one artichoke at a time, and using a very sharp knife, trim the bottom of the stem of each artichoke, and trim the outer skin of the stalk. Leave as much of the stalk as possible, since the tender inner part is edible and quite good. Next, cut the top ½"-1" off each artichoke, being sure to remove the spiny tips. Remove the outermost leaves, and then with kitchen scissors snip the spiny tips from the remaining leaves.

Gently loosen the tightly packed inner leaves to get at the inner leaves and the choke. Using a spoon, gently dig into the center and scrape inward, pulling out the choke. Be sure to scrape away all the hairy fibers, as they are inedible and irritating.

[Chef's Note: An alternative way to clean the artichokes, depending on the needs of your recipe, is to first snip off the spiny tips, then to quarter them while still whole and scrape out the choke from each quarter.]

Rinse the artichoke to remove any last fibers from the choke and immediately plunge into the acidulated water. Repeat the process with the remaining artichokes.

Place the artichokes in the steamer basket stem-side up so they fit snugly. Cover and steam for 25-30 minutes, until an outer leaf pulls away easily and the stalk is knife tender.

Prepare the herbed mayonnaise:

While the artichokes steam, prepare the mayonnaise by adding the minced herbs, lemon zest and juice to the mayonnaise and mixing thoroughly to combine. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

April 2007

Service

To serve hot, drain the artichokes upside down for a minute or two, then plate with a small bowl of herbed mayonnaise on the side for dipping. The outer leaves can be pulled off and dipped into the mayo, then the fleshy bit at the bottom of each leaf eaten by scraping with the teeth. Once the outer leaves have been removed, the heart and bottom can be eaten with a knife and fork.

The artichokes can also be served chilled or at room temperature. To store, place cut-side down in an airtight plastic container.

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