

Artichokes. The first story. How we cooked it in the simplest way.

Its Highness The Artichoke! So elegant... extremely elegant!

It came into my life somehow in a timid way... Most often I met the artichokes in the international movies I was watching on TV. I never wondered if I would like to discover this gastronomic fruit, so exotic somehow in Moldova, probably not even present in supermarkets. It wasn't until I arrived in the UK that I rediscovered artichokes as a common ingredient. Well, you can't find it raw in all supermarkets, but in several, though it can be found easily in tins, with so many flavors. Also, it can be found raw in spring at almost all the fruit and veggie shops.



From the very beginning we arrived in UK, Valeriu prepped a lot of artichokes at almost all the restaurants where he worked. He prepared them, most often in the French way, when you carve more and more of the artichokes until the heart is reached, that super soft and delicate part of the plant. By the way, at the restaurant where he is working now, he discovered that everything can be eaten in an artichoke. So, recently, after a masterclass offered by Valeriu, I discovered how artichokes are prepared and consumed. I also learned that all artichoke leftovers are very good for getting veggie stocks.

By me this plant has a nutty and herby flavor... In this post we will tell you how to cook artichokes in the simplest way. But not before mentioning some of its benefits:

- This plant is one of the best natural antioxidants
- Detoxifies the liver and the gall bladder



- It is recommended in case of angina pectoris, chronic hepatitis, atherosclerosis, liver cirrhosis, as well as in intestinal infections
- Decreases blood sugar levels



A little about the geography of artichokes. If we talk about Europe, then artichokes are at home, especially in Italy, France and Spain, where it is widely cultivated, and festivals, hundreds of recipes and traditions are dedicated to it. It is also present in other European countries: only in trade in the form of a raw and preserved plant. I recently found out that raw artichokes are also present in trade in Romania, but I haven't heard if they are also in Romanian agriculture. The United States has the forefront in the cultivation of artichokes. We do not know if the artichokes reached the retail trade in Moldova. Please share it with us if you know.

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How we prepped, cooked and enjoyed the artichoke.

Ingredients:

1 enough large artichoke (when you buy it, take the plant in your hands and check it; it is important that it is heavy enough, so you will understand that it is rich and has many layers of petals, and that it is enough hydrated and fresh)

1 lemon

3-4 cloves of garlic

A few tablespoons of olive oil

Aioli sauce

Pesto sauce (we used our home-made wild garlic pesto)

Herbs (eg. parsley)

Preparation method:



1. We washed the artichokes thoroughly. And just trimmed the tops of the petals and the very top of the plant, which were quite dehydrated (that's ok, especially for artichokes that are not enough fresh). We applied then freshly squeezed lemon juice on all carved parts. It was to keep the color of the plant as vibrant as possible.

2. We placed then the artichokes in a large enough pot. We poured 1-2 glasses of water over it. Then added the lemon pieces from which we previously squeezed the juice in nr1 step. We also added the cloves of garlic. A pinch of salt and some good olive oil.

3. We covered the pot with a lid so as to create a steaming atmosphere, and put it on a medium to low heat for roughly 40 minutes. But, dear friends, depending on the size of the artichoke, you will decide how long to cook it. If you cook some small artichokes then it will be enough for them to cook in 20-25 minutes. We consider that the way we've chosen to cook the artichoke is the healthiest one – the steaming <3

4.OOOk... Now, the so much awaited moment has come! How did we serve and enjoy the artichoke? Easy peasy! We cut the artichoke into 4 (we also kept the stem. It is as tasty as the artichoke heart!). We served the pieces on a plate with aioli sauce (mayonnaise and garlic), some wild garlic pesto (it could be other types of pesto indeed), and then we squeezed more lemon juice over. We started with the petals. One by one, soaking them in aioli or pesto and enjoying the soft and rich part of it, discarding the fibrous part of it. The heart of the artichoke and the stem were both soft like butter and very tender...

Dear friends, this time we cooked the artichoke as simply as possible. Another easy way to cook it is in the oven, stuffed with meat and other delicious mixes, but already, the taste of artichokes will not be as intense. You'll mostly feel the meat rather than the artichoke. We have shared with you the simplest recipe to make you discover the authentic flavor of the artichoke. In the proximate future we will return with cooked artichokes in a more complex way, with a new story.



So, let's keep in touch, dear friends and bon appetit!