



For the Love of Good Food

sjprescott@sbcglobal.net

A Warm Salad of Artichokes New Potatoes and Bacon

Artichokes, like avocados and sun dried tomatoes seem to be an essential ingredient in Californian cuisine. The fresh ones are now appearing in the supermarkets in abundance and at a reasonable price, but if you do not want to take the trouble to prepare them use the bottled or frozen ones in this recipe. The following serves 4 as an entrée or 6 as an appetizer.

Ingredients (serves 4/6)

4 artichokes

1 lemon

1lb small Yukon gold potatoes

1 small head Romaine lettuce

1 head endive, sliced

2oz button mushrooms, sliced

3tbsp peanut oil

8oz bacon cut into strips

2tbsp wine vinegar

2tsp grainy mustard

1tsp chopped lemon thyme

1. Prepare the artichokes by snapping off the stem; thinly slice the base with a stainless steel knife to reveal the underside of the heart. Rub the cut edge with lemon juice. Peel away any loose leaves from around the base and trim away $\frac{3}{4}$ of the leaves, then cut across the artichoke to reveal the pink choke inside.
2. Bring a large stainless steel or enamel saucepan of salted water to the boil. Add the lemon juice and boil the artichokes for 12-15 minutes until the outside leaves pull away easily. Immerse the artichokes in cold water to prevent them from over-cooking. Peel off the leaves and scrape away the fibrous choke with a teaspoon. Trim the bases neatly with a small knife and cut diagonally into slices.
3. Bring the potatoes to the boil in a saucepan of cold salted water and simmer for 20 minutes.
4. Wash the lettuce and tear into bite size pieces. Combine with the endive and mushrooms in a large salad bowl.
5. Heat the oil in a skillet and crisp the bacon over a moderate heat. Add the vinegar, mustard and thyme and heat gently. When ready to serve, add the sliced artichokes to the pan and warm with the bacon, add the potatoes and toss together with the salad leaves. Season with salt and freshly ground pepper and serve immediately.

N.B. The stainless steel and the lemon juice are used to stop the artichoke from discoloring. Be careful to scrub your hands when you have finished preparing the raw artichokes or you may end up with black fingertips. You can also use frozen or canned artichokes.

I specified baby Yukon gold potatoes because they have a lovely flavor and hold together well. In addition I do not peel these young potatoes, merely scrub them very well. A well flavored alternative, but less easily found, are fingerling potatoes. They are long and odd shaped, but really pack a great taste. Again they should be thoroughly scrubbed, but not peeled.