

# Artichokes, Cozzolino Style

serves 4

This is the way my grandmother taught my mother and my mother taught me. Simple Italian fare with plenty of garlic! When I was a young child (the youngest in the family, the spoiled one), my brother and sister would often give me their artichoke heart, because I loved them so much. I still credit this act with my unusually healthy self-esteem and sense of self. Thanks Ed and Jean!

**4 artichokes, plump and firm**  
**4 T. canola or other mild oil**  
**3 T. paprika**

**4 tsp. granulated garlic**  
**1 T. salt**

Cut the stems off the artichokes, leaving one inch of stem remaining. With a serrated edged knife, cut the top 1/2" off the artichoke. With scissors, snip the very tip of each leaf to remove the thorn. Place the artichokes in a pot just large enough to hold four upright, snugly but not tightly. Drizzle the oil evenly over the tops. Evenly sprinkle with paprika, garlic, and salt. Add water to the pot, being careful not to wash the seasoning off the artichokes, until the water level comes half way up the leaves. Cover the pot and bring to a boil over high heat, then lower heat to low and simmer until tender, about 1—1 1/2 hours. Every 15-20 minutes, fill a baster with the liquid and thoroughly baste each artichoke, squirting the liquid into the center of each one.

Serve in shallow bowls with a little of the cooking liquid in the bottom of each bowl. We put what we call the "garbage bowl" in the middle of the table for the discarded leaves. I guess we should change the name to the "compost bowl" in honor of environmental sustainability! To eat the artichoke, pull a leaf out by the tip and dip in the juice. Squeeze and pull the leaf between your upper and lower teeth, scraping the flesh as you pull. When you get toward the middle of the artichoke, the leaves will be very thin and spiny. I usually eat 3-4 of these at a time. When you get to the spiny center, the choke, scrape/scoop all the fuzzy and spiny leaves off, leaving the heart, the hidden treasure in the center. Cut a little piece of the heart with your fork, dip it in the juice, sprinkle on a little salt, and pop it in your mouth. Close your eyes and savor. When I eat artichokes now, I am immediately transported back 40 or more years. They don't taste quite as good as when my Mom made them, but they're still a bit of heaven!

Serve with pasta, Italian bread and salad. Play Italian music, light some candles, break out the red checkered tablecloth, and feast.