

Searching for the heart in artichokes

Native to the Mediterranean, local artichokes are in season between August and October. The edible part is the fleshy part of the petals and the heart, which is a source of dietary fibre. Like other vegetables, artichokes are low in calories and rich in phytochemicals, which are disease-preventing compounds that may play a role in minimizing the risk of illnesses such as some cancers.

Preparing artichokes is not as simple as preparing other vegetables. The leaves and thorns on the artichokes are not edible and the inedible fuzzy part covering the heart also needs to be removed. However, eating an artichoke is like a treasure hunt, where you peel the edible petals one by one until you reach the scrumptious heart.

Although preparing artichokes is time consuming, they make a good savoury snack or with a meal. Artichokes provide a tangy taste, and can be eaten either hot or cold. The heart of the artichoke is great for a stir-fry and sautéés while the artichoke petals are tasty finger foods that go well with a low-fat dip, such as balsamic vinegar, hummus or a low-fat mayonnaise.

Halibut poached with tomatoes, artichokes and mushrooms

Serves 4

Ingredients

1 tbsp olive oil	Pinch of crushed dried thyme
1½ cups thickly sliced mushrooms	1 lb Pacific halibut fillets
1 clove garlic, minced	14 oz can of artichoke hearts, drained and halved
3 tomatoes, seeded and cut in chunks	¼ tsp or less salt and freshly ground pepper
½ tsp crushed dried basil, or ¼ cup chopped fresh basil	Pinch granulated sugar (optional)

Source: [Heart and Stroke Foundation](#)

1. In heavy saucepan or non-stick skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat.
2. Add mushrooms and garlic; cook, stirring often, until mushrooms are tender.
3. Add tomatoes, basil (if using dried) and thyme; bring to simmer.
4. Add halibut and artichokes; cover and simmer for 3 minutes. Uncover and cook for 2 to 5 minutes longer or until fish is opaque.
5. Sprinkle with fresh basil (if using). Season with salt and pepper.

Do you have questions on nutrition and healthy eating? Contact *EatRight Ontario* at 1-877-510-5102 to speak to a Registered Dietitian.