



# Tucson Community Supported Agriculture

## Newsletter 384 ~ April 15, 2013 ~ Online at [www.TucsonCSA.org](http://www.TucsonCSA.org)

### Spring '13

Harvest list is online

#### The Back Page

Grilled Artichokes  
Moroccan Slaw  
Baked Chicken with Potatoes and Fennel  
Roasted Beet and Fennel Salad

**Many more recipes on our website**

#### Fennel - tips

Only use the bulbs for cooking. Cut the stems right above the bulb and cut the very base of the bulb. Then quarter the bulb vertically, and remove the core (the solid white inner part). You can then either use the quarters as they are or slice them thinly, depending on what the recipe calls for.

We have many fennel recipes on our recipe. Fennel can be eaten raw or cooked. It can be the main feature in a dish or it can be used as an herb or flavor-giver. Many people use fennel as they would celery, for example. Put them in a stock, add them to spaghetti sauce (fennel and tomatoes go very well together). You can also use sliced or chopped fennel as you would onions.

The fronds are edible, but only the thin, lacy parts. They have a more subtle and complex flavor than dill and you can use them as you would dill: raw as a garnish, or cooked as any greens.

The stems aren't really edible because they are often too fibrous, but they do have a lot of flavor. You can cut them into segments and use them to make stock for example, but you would remove them after they are cooked.



### ARTICHOKES



The artichoke season is upon us! Yeah, I hear many say! They came in last week for the first time and we will get them in our shares for the next 6 to 8 weeks. And we will also tell you how to prepare them, in this newsletter and the next few ones. At the beginning they will be fairly small, but they will get bigger as the weeks go by. So for now, try using recipes that call for small artichokes, like the one on the back page (and the

one on last week's back page).

The globe artichoke (*Cynara cardunculus* var. *scolymus*) is a perennial thistle believed to have originated in Southern Europe around the Mediterranean. It is a spectacular plant that grows up to 6 feet tall, with arching, deeply lobed, silvery-green leaves up to 3 feet long. Its purple flowers develop from a large edible bud that measures 3-6 inches in diameter and features numerous fibrous triangular scales ranging from green to purple. The edible portion of the buds consists primarily of the fleshy lower portions of the flower bracts and the base, known as the "heart"; the mass of immature florets in the center of the bud is called the "choke" or beard. These are inedible in older larger flowers.

It seems that the artichoke was mostly developed in Sicily, Italy: there is mention of the plant in Greek and Roman literature as far back as 77 AD. Artichokes were also cultivated by the North African Moors in Spain around 800 AD. The Spanish settlers brought artichokes to California in the 1600's. However, artichokes did not become popular in California until the 1920's. However, Castroville, California, and the artichoke really made it on the map when Marilyn Monroe was crowned Artichoke Queen in 1948. Eighty percent of all artichokes grown commercially in the U.S. are grown in Castroville. Castroville may call itself "the artichoke capital of the world" but Italy is by far the largest producer of artichokes (it produces about 10 times more artichokes than the U.S.).

#### **Prepping artichokes:**

The goal here is to whittle the vegetable down to its completely edible core. Slice off the top third to half of the artichoke with a serrated knife, peel away many layers of outer leaves until you reach the tender pale almost yellow center section; pare away any remaining green bits around the base, quarter them lengthwise, and then scrape out the tiny "choke" or prickly center. If they are young enough, the choke may not have to be removed. Rubbing them with lemon as you work, and/or dropping the finished pieces in lemon water will reduce browning. Prepared as such, then sliced thinly, slowly braised in butter and lemon, topped with a bit of parmesan and run briefly under the broiler, and finally served over toast or grilled bread, they make a delicious special springtime bruschetta.

#### **Some artichoke facts:**

- Artichokes are low in calories and fat (if you leave out all the butter you dip them into), and they are rich source of dietary fiber.
- They have a cholesterol reduction action.
- They are rich in folic acid, B-complex vitamins and vitamin K.
- They are rich in vitamin C, but only when they are fresh (not the canned ones).

## Grilled Artichokes

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

Eating an artichoke takes a bit of work and the inedible leaves and choke produce a fair amount of ‘waste’. For some, this is all part of the fun and to others it is just tedious. If you take a few minutes to prep your artichokes beforehand you can have a fairly simple eating experience, though. If you are working with small artichokes the process is especially easy, if they are a bit larger you will just need to be more aggressive in your paring away of the inedible parts. You can also fry artichokes that are prepped this way. Simply dredge them in milk then toss in seasoned flour and fry until golden brown.

5-7 small to medium artichokes (don’t use large artichokes for this recipe)

1-2 tablespoon citrus juice

1-2 tablespoons olive oil

Pinch dried thyme

Salt and pepper

### Prep artichokes:

The goal here is to whittle the vegetable down to its completely edible core. With this recipe, the easiest way to do this is to cut the veggies in half lengthwise so you can see what you are dealing with. Feel the choke (the part right above the heart in the center of the artichoke); if it is tender and fuzzy you can leave it, if it is prickly you need to take the tip of a spoon to scoop it out. Next, feel the central leaves above the choke: where they become hard and pokey is the line where you need to cut and discard the top of the artichoke. Now begin discarding the outer leaves, you need to get down to leaves that are mostly a very pale green and snap easily when bent in half. You probably need to remove at least 3 layers of leaves, possibly several more, before you get to the tender central leaves. Rub the cut parts of the artichoke with citrus juice and finish prepping the rest of the veggies.

In a large pot of salted water, boil the prepped artichokes for about 8-15 minutes, until almost tender. Drain, then toss with the olive oil, thyme, salt and pepper. Place **cut side down on a hot grill** (or **cut side up under the broiler**) and cook for a few minutes until beginning to brown and crisp in spots, turn over and cook for a few more minutes. Remove from heat and season with a bit more citrus juice and salt and pepper. Serve warm or cold.

## Moroccan Slaw

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

Consider using any combination of mixed grated root vegetables-preferably beets, carrots and turnips or rutabagas.

Mix:

3 cups mixed grated root vegetables

1 orange or grapefruit, peeled and cut crosswise in thin slices

Dress with:

1 pinch ground cumin

1 pinch ground coriander

1/4 cup yogurt

cashews, chopped

Fresh cilantro, chopped

Citrus juice, to taste

Salt and pepper

You can replace the yogurt with oil and apple cider vinegar. Toss all the ingredients together. Refrigerate before serving.

## Baked Chicken with Potatoes and Fennel

marthastewart.com

1 1/2 pounds potatoes, halved and sliced into

1/2-inch-thick half-moons

1 medium fennel bulb, fronds chopped, stalks sliced crosswise

1/2 inch thick, and bulb halved then sliced 1/4 inch thick

lengthwise (tough core removed and discarded)

4 cloves garlic, halved lengthwise

5 teaspoons olive oil

Coarse salt and ground pepper

1 whole chicken, cut into 10 pieces (about 2 1/2 pounds)

1 can (14 1/2 ounces) reduced-sodium chicken broth

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. In a deep 9-by-13-inch baking dish, toss potatoes with fennel (bulb and stalk), garlic, and 4 teaspoons oil. Season generously with salt and pepper. Bake, tossing occasionally, until potato edges are browned, 35 to 45 minutes. Meanwhile, in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat, warm remaining teaspoon oil. Season chicken with salt and pepper; cook, starting with skin side down, until browned on both sides, 6 to 10 minutes. Remove chicken. Wipe skillet with a paper towel; add broth, and bring to a boil. Add chicken and hot broth to potato mixture in baking dish; bake until chicken is no longer pink and an instant-read thermometer registers 165 degrees, 20 to 25 minutes. Garnish with fronds.

## Roasted Beet and Fennel Salad

2 large beets

1 fennel bulb, thinly sliced

1 teaspoon oil

Salt and pepper to taste

Teaspoon cumin

1/4 cup feta cheese

Preheat the oven to 375°F. Cut the stem and tip ends off of the beets. Scrub well and wrap in aluminum foil. Place in the oven and roast for 45 minutes. Remove and let cool. (This may be done in advance and the beets placed in the refrigerator overnight.) Remove the leafy ends from the fennel and any stalk that appear too tough. Slice very thinly. Put the olive oil in a small skillet over medium heat. Add the sliced fennel and cook, stirring occasionally, for about 15 minutes. Remove and let cool. Remove the beets from the aluminum foil. The skins will slip off easily after roasting. After they are skinned, cut into 1/2-inch cubes. Mix together the beets, sautéed fennel, salt, black pepper, ground cumin and crumbled feta. Chill well.