

Artichoke Brandade with Crostini

Serves 10-12

Some stores, such as Whole Foods, sell fresh crostini in the baking department. Both the brandade and the crostini can be made 1-2 days ahead. Wrap both well; keep the crostini at room temperature and refrigerate the brandade then reheat before serving. I turned leftovers into a rich artichoke soup by whisking in broth and milk and reheating it gently in a saucepan.

Active time: 1 hour / **Total time:** 1 hour 40 minutes

The crostini

- 1 sweet French baguette, sliced $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch thick into about 50 slices (day-old bread is fine)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil or to taste

Kosher salt to taste

The brandade

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup extra virgin olive oil
- 4 medium globe artichokes or about 12 baby artichokes, cleaned (see Note)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ onion, finely diced
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 lemon, halved
- 1 pound (about 2 large) Yukon gold potatoes, cooked and roughly mashed with salt and pepper to taste
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup heavy cream

For the crostini: Preheat the oven to 375°.

Place the bread slices in a large bowl and drizzle with a thin stream of the olive oil while tossing with tongs. Season with salt. Place in one layer on 2 baking

sheets and toast in the preheated oven until slices start to become golden, 8 minutes. Flip and finish until crisp and lightly browned, 2-4 minutes. Let cool.

Place about 10 of the crostini in a zip-top bag and crush with a rolling pin or heavy pan until you get coarse crumbs. Set aside.

For the brandade: Lower the oven temperature to 350°. Grease an 8-inch square or a medium oval baking dish with olive oil that you plan to serve the brandade in; alternatively you can cook it in eight 6- to 8-ounce ramekins.

Heat $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of olive oil in a sauté pan over medium heat. Add the artichokes and cook until browned all around, about 5 minutes, then add the onion and garlic and cook until slightly tender, about 5 minutes. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water and $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt and bring to a simmer. Reduce heat, cover and cook until the artichokes are tender when poked through the heart, about 10 minutes.

Place the artichokes and the

contents of the pan in a food processor with juice from the half the lemon, and pulse until you get a chunky puree. Add the mashed potatoes and process while adding the remaining olive oil in a thin stream until fully incorporated, 1-2 minutes. Taste for seasoning and add plenty of salt and pepper, otherwise the brandade will be bland. Add the cream and blend just long enough to lighten the mixture, about 30 seconds.

Pour the brandade into the prepared dish or dishes and sprinkle with the crushed crostini. Bake until bubbly, 20-25 minutes (about 15 minutes for the ramekins).

Serve immediately with the remaining crostini.

Note: To clean artichokes, fill a medium bowl with water and add the juice of half of a lemon. Remove the outer leaves from the artichokes until you get down to the light green inner leaves. Trim off the dark green tops. Next use a knife to trim around the stem and heart, removing any dark green parts. Quarter each artichoke through the heart and remove any choke (this is usually unnecessary in baby artichokes). Place the cleaned artichokes in the acidulated water.

Per serving: 195 calories, 2 g protein, 14 g carbohydrate, 15 g fat (4 g saturated), 14 mg cholesterol, 59 mg sodium, 3 g fiber.