

Artichokes Take a Dip In a Pool of Stock

WHEN the good artichokes start arriving, I try to come up with something new to do with them. This year, I turned to a time-honored technique, just one I'd never applied to artichokes. It will be a permanent addition to my repertory.

I began by cutting off the prickly ends on the tops, then cut the artichokes in half, vertically. Then I used a spoon to dig out the choke, the fuzzy part above the heart. I pulled off the toughest outer leaves, and trimmed the bottom with a paring knife. Do not cut off any more of the bottom than you need to, because in a good artichoke, it's as good as the heart.

As each half was ready, I put it, cut side down, in a large skillet filmed with butter. Oil is fine if you pick one that tastes good. When they were all in, and browned, I added stock (one time I added stock and white wine, which was just as good, and one time wine and water, which was almost as good), covered the pan, and cooked them, turning once.

When the artichokes were done, after about 20 minutes, I removed them from the pan, reduced the liquid, added some lemon and a little more butter, and used this as a sauce. The whole process was not a lot more difficult or time-consuming than steaming, but the results were fabulous.



EVAN SUNG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

BRAISED ARTICHOKE

Time: 45 minutes

4 medium artichokes
4 tablespoons butter (1/2 stick)
1 cup chicken stock, or more as
 needed
 Salt and freshly ground pepper
 Zest and juice of 1 lemon.

stock (it should come about halfway up the sides of the artichokes), bring to a boil, and cover; turn heat to medium-low. Cook for about 20 minutes or until tender, checking every 5 or 10 minutes to make sure there is enough liquid in the pan, adding more stock as necessary. Sprinkle with salt and pepper, and transfer artichokes to serving platter.

3. Raise heat to medium-high and cook, stirring occasionally, until liquid is reduced to a sauce. Stir in lemon zest and juice and remaining tablespoon butter; taste and adjust seasoning. Serve artichokes drizzled with sauce.

Yield: 4 servings.

1. Cut each of the artichokes in half; remove the toughest outer leaves, use a spoon to remove the choke, and trim the bottom.
2. Put 3 tablespoons of the butter in a large, deep skillet over medium-high heat. When it melts and foam subsides, add artichokes, cut side down. Cook until lightly browned, about 5 minutes. Add