



BETWEEN
THE ROWS

WENDY SCHMIDT

Absolutely irresistible (for some): Artichokes

Artichokes are a funny-looking vegetable. They are usually a little expensive in the grocery store, causing second thoughts about whether they are worth the price. They don't provide a whole lot of substance for the amount of work to eat them, but once you develop a taste for them, artichokes become irresistible.

Artichokes and their cousins, Cardoons, inhibit the production of cholesterol. That's a good thing. Inhibiting cholesterol prevents the growth of gallstones. I'm sure that not many people eat as many artichokes as it would take to keep a continuous level of the good chemical in the blood, however. There are other ways to consume artichokes such as pills and tea. True artichoke fans prefer the real vegetable, though.

Select nice, clean-looking artichokes without too many bruised leaves. Lightly rinse them in cold water and cut about a quarter inch off of the stem. Place in a steamer basket. Add water to the steamer bottom and top with a tight lid. Bring to a boil and steam until the artichoke turns olive green, has a nice aroma, and leaves are easy to remove with a very light tug.

Let it cool slightly out of the steamer. Remove the outer leaves, working inward, eating as you go.

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DORY'S DIARY

DOROTHY SWART
FLESHMAN

Celebrating each month — in color

Every season has its color — if you are into that sort of thing.

It just seems naturally that the month of January is blue, white, and silver in that it picks up the color of winter, a calming influence from the red and green activity of December.

The red of February for Valentine's Day will come soon enough to put us back in action, then green for March, a sturdy color.

By April we slow down again with lavender or lilac and brighten somewhat with pink and yellow for May.

In June we become more serious again with calming blue in order to be ready for action with red, white and blue in July.

These colors begin to fade as August appears with tints of tan and light brown beginning to invade the bright colors of summer; a beginning warning that our days of heat and summer activity will begin waning before long and by September's streaks of red among the brown of autumn we begin to draw closer together.

Of course only orange will do for October with Halloween on the agenda once again. And, for November, we are back to an accumulation of all harvest colors with gathering and celebrating our labors.

December stands along red and green again as the two colors become more dominant. Green wreaths appear and tinsel on the tree reminds us of snow to come as it has before — either ready for Christmas as the wonder of when it may appear.

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A Warm, Welcoming Winter Meal



Linda Gassenheimer/TNS

Mac cheese and chicken makes a hearty dinner.

CHEESE & CHICKEN

By Linda Gassenheimer
Tribune News Service

Looking for a warm and welcoming winter meal? This Mac Cheese and Chicken pie will fit the bill. It's an updated version of one of America's favorite meals.

A bubbly, cheesy homemade pie can take too long to make for a busy weeknight. Using frozen chopped onions and green pepper along with cooked chicken slices, you can make this meal in 20 minutes. I have used cheddar cheese mixed with part-skim milk ricotta, which still gives the cheese texture and flavor, but lowers the fat content. Adding chicken rounds out the meal.

I like to keep frozen onion and green peppers on hand to add to many sauces and dishes. Using them cuts preparation time.

Serve a washed, ready-to-eat salad with your favorite low-fat salad dressing on the side.

- Helpful Hints**
- Any type of short-cut pasta can be used.
 - Fresh diced onion and green pepper can be found in the produce section of some markets. They can be used instead of frozen onion and green pepper.
 - If you like a crusty bottom to the pie, cook

it in the skillet a little longer.

- Countdown**
- Place water for pasta on to boil.
 - Make pie.
 - Assemble salad.

- Shopping List**
- To buy: 1 package small elbow macaroni, olive oil spray, 1 package frozen chopped onion, 1 package frozen chopped green bell pepper, 1 small container part skim milk ricotta, 1 package reduced-fat shredded sharp cheddar cheese, 1 package cooked boneless (4 ounces needed), skinless chicken breast slices and 2 medium tomatoes.
- Staples: cayenne pepper, salt and black peppercorns.
- MAC CHEESE AND CHICKEN
- 2 ounces small elbow macaroni (¾ cups)**
Olive oil spray
1 cup frozen chopped onion
1 cup frozen chopped green bell pepper
½ cup part skim milk ricotta cheese
8 ounces reduced-fat shredded sharp cheddar cheese (2 cups), divided use
2 cups fresh tomato cubes

- 4 ounces cooked boneless, skinless chicken breast slices**
1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Place a large pot with 3 to 4 quarts water on to boil. When water boils, add macaroni and boil ten minutes.

Heat a 10-inch nonstick skillet over medium-high heat and spray with olive oil spray. Add the onions and green pepper and saute 2 minutes to defrost. Combine ricotta, half the Cheddar cheese, tomatoes and chicken in a large bowl. Add cayenne pepper and mix in onions and green pepper. Drain macaroni and add to cheese mixture. Add salt and pepper to taste. Return the mixture to skillet and sprinkle remaining cheddar evenly over the top. Cover with a lid and let set on medium heat 10 minutes.

Yield 2 servings.

Per serving: 650 calories (25 percent from fat), 17.8 g fat (8.7 g saturated, 5.7 g monounsaturated), 85 mg cholesterol, 57.6 g protein, 65.1 g carbohydrates, 6.2 g fiber, 1,090 mg sodium.

Quick version of a favorite: Eggplant parmesan

By Linda Gassenheimer
Tribune News Service

When I see large, beautiful eggplants in the market, I think of one of my husband's favorite dishes, Eggplant Parmesan. It usually takes time to prepare. I created this quick version so we could have it more often. Cutting the eggplant into small pieces helps it to cook and absorb the sauce flavor in only 20 minutes.

- Helpful Hints**
- Use a skillet or casserole that can be placed under the broiler for a few minutes.
 - 4 crushed garlic cloves can be used instead of minced garlic.

- Countdown**
- Preheat broiler.



Al Diaz/Miami Herald-TNS

See **Quick** / Page 2B Mac cheese and chicken makes a hearty dinner.

Report casts doubt on food allergy prevalence

By Najja Parker
The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

If you think you have a food allergy, you might be incorrect, according to a new report.

Researchers from Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago and Northwestern University recently conducted a study, published in JAMA Network Open, to determine the prevalence and severity of food allergies among adults in the United States.

To do so, they surveyed more than 40,000 Americans between 2015 and 2016. The subjects had to answer questions about whether they believed they had food allergies and the reactions they experienced when they ate foods they believed contained allergens.

The analysts then produced a list of reactions they said are indicative of an allergic reaction, which included hives, throat tightening, wheezing and vomiting. It did not

include symptoms, such as nausea or general gastrointestinal malaise as those usually suggest food intolerance.

After analyzing the results, they found "while one in 10 adults have food allergy, nearly twice as many adults think that they are allergic to foods," lead author Ruchi Gupta said in a statement.

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