



ITALIAN STUFFED ARTICHOKES

INGREDIENTS

- 4 large artichokes
- 1 cup Italian seasoned Panko bread crumbs
- 1 thick (1 inch) slice day old Italian bread
- 1/2 cup grated cheese (I use 50/50 mix Romano and Parmesan)
- 10 cherry (or grape) tomatoes
- 8 calamata olives, pitted
- 1 tsp capers
- 2 anchovy fillets (optional)
- 2 garlic cloves
- 4 tbsp EVOO (extra virgin olive oil) plus more for drizzling tops
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Fresh parsley (2-3 sprigs)
- 3 cups vegetable (or chicken) broth
- Bowl filled with water and lemon juice

DIRECTIONS

1. Begin by cleaning the artichokes.
2. Remove stems so that artichokes bottoms are flat.
3. Remove 2 or 3 outermost layers of leaves, depending on how fresh they are. The fresher the artichokes, the less the waste.
4. Snip all pointy ends of leaves with kitchen scissors.
5. Holding each artichoke in your hand, try to push leaves apart with your thumb. Make sure artichokes are open enough to be able to be stuffed.
6. Remove the tough middle choke and discard.
7. Place cleaned artichoke, face down, in prepared water and lemon juice bowl to prevent browning.
8. Repeat with all remaining artichokes.
9. While artichokes rest, make the filling.
10. Place the day old bread in a small bowl with water.
11. Soak thoroughly. Remove bread and squeeze all water out.
12. Crumble soaked bread, including crust, into a medium bowl.
13. Add Panko, grated cheese and freshly ground pepper.
14. In a small food processor, place tomatoes, garlic, pitted olives, capers, parsley, anchovies and olive oil and pulse until a paste is formed.
15. Add to the bread bowl and mix well.
16. Check for salt. It may not need any since many of the ingredients have salt in them.
17. If you think you need more, feel free to add a pinch.

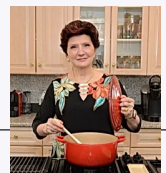
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DIRECTIONS (CONT.)

18. Take artichokes out of the water and dry with paper towels.
19. Stuff each artichoke with 1/4 of the stuffing. Start in the empty middle and move outward making sure to place a little stuffing between each layer of leaves.
20. Repeat with all.
21. Place 3 cups of broth in a sauce pot.
22. Place stuffed artichokes in the pot next to each other, flat side down and stuffing facing up.
23. Add a drizzle of olive oil over each top.
24. Cover and place on medium-low flame, bringing to a boil.
25. Simmer on low for about 30-45 minutes (depending on freshness and size of artichokes), making sure broth does not dry up. If it does, add a little water.
26. At the 30 minute mark, gently remove an outside leaf with a fork.
27. Taste for doneness by scraping the inside of the leaf with your teeth. If the inside is soft, it's done. If not, cook a bit longer.
28. If you like your artichokes crispy on top, you can finish them in the oven.
29. Just remove them from the pot, place them in a casserole dish drizzled with olive oil and broil for a few minutes until light brown.



NONNA'S TIPS

- Save the stems from the artichokes. Trim the ends and peel the sides. Add them to the broth with the stuffed artichokes and let them cook together. They're an extra little treat!
- If you'd like, you can add a couple of peeled and quartered potatoes and two peeled and cut carrots to the broth. But if you do, add extra broth (1 to 2 cups) and some salt. Cook with the artichokes.
- You can add some sliced cheese on top of each artichoke before you finish them in the oven for extra flavor. Broil on low until cheese is melted and golden.