

Cooking with the Club

by Chef Robert Larios



Send Us Your Recipes!

If you would like your recipe published in the next issue of *Alive!*, you may fax your recipes to (213) 620-0398 or e-mail us at talkback@cityemployeesclub.com.

Hot Artichoke and Spinach Dip

DIRECTIONS:



1 Gather all your ingredients. It's always very important to have everything you need for your recipe from the start. Place your frozen spinach in the microwave on high for 2 to 3 minutes or until it is completely thawed.

Here's a versatile recipe that can be used for any occasion, especially if you are having a Super Bowl party. This artichoke and spinach dip is decadent and rich, but it is supposed to be just that – anything less is just not the real McCoy.

If you're like me, though, you've gained a few pounds during the holidays, and you don't want to overdo it with rich foods. So for this recipe, I've substituted several lighter choices -- reduced fat cream cheese, reduced fat pepper jack cheese, reduced fat mozzarella and light mayonnaise. The rich gooey flavors are still present in the dip, and no one will know the difference unless they are counting calories.

Feel free to use your favorite tortilla chip for the dip. This dip is great as a topping to burgers as well, so make some burgers for your Super Bowl party! Enjoy!



2 Place all the ingredients in a large oven-safe bowl. Add first to the bowl the following ingredients: mayonnaise, cream cheese, garlic powder, minced garlic clove and grated Parmesan cheese. Mix until cream cheese is distributed well, and then add the pepper jack cheese, mozzarella cheese, spinach, chopped artichoke hearts, green onions, dashes of Worcestershire and red hot pepper sauces, extra virgin olive oil, and salt and pepper. Remember to dice the artichoke hearts and green onions, and mix all contents softly.



3 Place the oven-safe bowl with mixed ingredients in the oven. Bake for 60 minutes at 375 degrees. Cover with aluminum foil. Once cooked, place on the stovetop to cool for 15 to 20 minutes.

Hot Artichoke and Spinach Dip

INGREDIENTS:

- Dash of Worcestershire sauce
- Dash of red hot pepper sauce
- 1 tablespoon garlic powder
- 1 clove garlic
- 1/4 cup diced green onions
- 1 can (8 oz.) artichoke hearts, chopped or diced
- 1 cup frozen spinach
- 8 oz. light cream cheese
- Sea salt and pepper to taste
- 2 tablespoons reduced fat mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
- 1/4 cup reduced fat pepper jack cheese, grated
- 1 cup reduced fat mozzarella cheese, grated
- 1/4 cup Parmesan cheese

SERVES 8 TO 12

Cooking TIDBIT:

I like to transfer the mixed ingredients to another oven-safe bowl after mixing gently; however, you may leave it in the same bowl and place in the oven. Also, feel free to experiment with other cheeses for this recipe, but it is a good idea to stay with mildly flavored types so that the flavors are not too overpowering.



[A Cook's Dictionary]

Artichoke:

A name shared by three unrelated plants: the globe artichoke, Jerusalem artichoke and the Chinese artichoke. Considered the true artichoke, the globe artichoke is cultivated mainly in California's mid-coastal region. It's the bud of a large plant from the thistle family and has tough, petal-shaped leaves. Once the leaves have been removed, the inedible prickly choke is cut or scraped away and discarded. Then the tender artichoke heart and the meaty bottom can be eaten. Artichokes contain small amounts of potassium and vitamin A.

– From the *The New Food Lover's Companion*, Sharon Tyler Herbst, 1995, Barron's Educational Series.



This is a perfect dip for all occasions but especially for the Super Bowl. Enjoy!



Food Factoid:

“There is nothing better than a friend, unless it is a friend with chocolate.” – Charles Dickens