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## fields of artichokes

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If you have ever caught the ferry from Plymouth to Roscoff, you could not have failed to notice field, after field, full of gorgeous vegetables. There are the famous Roscoff Onions, ~~ISABELLE~~ and Spring Onions Carottes de Sable, Cauliflowers and winter greens, as well as green houses full of bursting with tomatoes and strawberries. But the plant that is most noticeable, most extraordinary is the architectural Artichoke.



Two kinds of artichoke are grown in this area the small, elegant Voilet Artichoke, and the larger, tougher Camus, Globe Artichoke.



I have to express a preference for the Globe Artichoke, and whenever I see them here in Finistere I buy some.

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They are relatively easy to prepare. Sarah Raven has [a super video](#) which I would recommend having a look at, and her Angelica sauce is divine. We tried it for the first time this week and loved it.

I cook artichokes in much the same way, though I remove the stalks before hand. To do this I twist the stem, rather than cut it, the stem then breaks away with a little pressure. I put the artichokes in a large pot of salted, boiling water with slices of lemons (these help to prevent the leaves discolouring). I weight the artichokes down with a plate, it is essential that they are fully submerged to ensure they are completely cooked.

I boil the artichokes for about 30 minutes and leave them to cool for a while (10-15 minutes) in the pot. I then drain them and leave them by the sink upside down until we are ready to eat them. If I'm not serving them with Sarah Raven's delicious sauce I will serve them with a dijon mustard and cider vinaigrette with finely chopped Breton shallots. It is simpler to give each person their own small bowl of vinaigrette for dipping their leaves into.



We pull off the leaves, dipping and eating as we go. Then each person has the challenge of removing the choke. Once we get to the purple leaves, we cut around the plug of leaves and choke, removing it, exposing the heart, this is delicious with the remaining vinaigrette poured over it.



Remember to have a large bowl for all the discarded leaves and chokes!

The artichoke is closely related to both the thistle and the cardoon, and is one plant I wish I could grow. There is plenty of information on growing as well as eating them elsewhere on Sarah Raven's website, just follow the link [here](#).

If you wish to try cooking artichokes and are either not growing them nor visiting Brittany or Italy, then I suggest that you seek them out at a local market. Last September I found Breton artichokes in Kingston market, and they were far cheaper, and better quality, than those sold in the supermarkets.

Thanks for reading,

Jude

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