

# Baby Tastes

by Jon Cohen  
Deep Meadow Farm

Artichokes were cultivated in the Mediterranean climate, so growing them in Vermont can be challenging, and not many people are doing it. At Deep Meadow Farm, we start our seedlings in early March, and with a little luck we later have several 50-degree days to set the plants outside. This tricks the plants, which are on a biennial cycle, into believing it's winter. After a few days, we return them to the greenhouse, where they start to flower in their "second year." In warmer climates, the peak season for harvesting artichokes is spring. For Northerners, this plant from the thistle family sends up its glorious spike sometime in August.

In the center of an artichoke plant is one large bud, the kind we are familiar with from the grocery store. However, the "baby" artichokes that grow around this main artichoke are more numerous, and I think, more tender. These smaller artichokes can be practically used whole, as they have almost none of the fuzzy purple/white choke in the center that many people scoop out of larger artichokes.



When using baby artichokes for cooking, simply peel away some of the tougher outer leaves, cut the tip of the artichoke off, and cut it into quarters. The following recipe is a simple meal to enjoy the flavor of the baby artichoke in the style of a Mediterranean dish.

## Baby Artichokes with Garlic, Olive Oil, and Pasta

¼ cup extra virgin olive oil  
3–4 cloves garlic  
1 large shallot  
juice of ½ a fresh lemon  
8–12 small baby artichokes  
salt and freshly ground pepper to taste  
1 lb. pasta  
optional: capers, black olives, Italian sausage

Mince the garlic and shallot and sauté in olive oil until translucent. Add lemon juice and artichokes. Artichokes should be cleaned and trimmed in advance (see above). If adding meat, cook separately and add at this time. Any other vegetables can be added at this point, too. Cover and cook for an additional 10–12 minutes, stirring occasionally. Serve over pasta and garnish with fresh basil if available.

Feeds 4–6 people.

*Jon Cohen grows vegetables and raises pork at his Deep Meadow Farm in Westminster. In addition to running a CSA, he sells at the Bellows Falls, Chester, and Londonderry farmers' markets. You can find his baby artichokes in August. Contact: deepmeadow@msn.com.*