

CARDOONS

Nutrition Facts:

Cardoons are a great source of:

- Folic acid
- Magnesium
- Potassium
- Calcium
- Phosphorus
- B vitamins
- Fiber
- Antioxidants



Cardoons look like celery and taste like artichoke hearts. Their flavor is somewhat sweet and nutty.

Cardoons are edible only when cooked.

Cardoons are low in calories. One cup has about 30 calories.



Fun Facts!

- Cardoons are native to the Mediterranean. They are especially popular in Italy, Spain, France, and North Africa.
- In the Abruzzi region of Italy, it is traditional to start Christmas lunch with a soup made of cardoons cooked in chicken broth with meatballs.
- Cardoon plants can grow up to 6 feet tall and have beautiful blue or pinkish-purple flowers.
- Cardoons are sometimes called “cardi” or “artichoke thistles.”
- Cardoons are used as a vegetarian source of enzymes for cheese production.



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HOW TO:

STORE: Store up to 1 week in a plastic bag in the refrigerator.

PREPARE: Discard the tough outer stalks. Trim off leaves and any thorns. Peel the stalks with a vegetable peeler or paring knife to remove the fibers. Cardoons turn brown when they are cut, so place cut pieces in cold water with lemon juice so they won't discolor. Cardoons can be braised, sautéed, boiled in soups or stews, or dipped in batter and fried. Cold cooked cardoons can be added to salads.

Prepared by Hopelink Volunteers
References:

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How To Prepare CARDOONS



Cardoons are silvery gray-green in color. Light-colored cardoons are the best — dark green cardoons are likely to be bitter. Stalks should be firm and crisp.

Cardoon stalks can be covered with small, almost invisible spines. These spines can be painful when they get under your skin, so use care when preparing cardoons.

The inside stalks are the most tender.

Cardoon Gratin

Ingredients:

- 1 bunch cardoons
- Juice of ½ lemon
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 tablespoon flour
- 1 cup milk
- Pinch of nutmeg
- ¼ cup parmesan cheese

1. Trim the ends of the cardoons and peel off the stringy fibers. Remove all leaves.
2. Cut cardoons into 2-inch lengths and boil in a large pan of boiling salted water with the lemon juice added. Cook 30-45 minutes until tender.
3. Make sauce by heating butter and flour in a small saucepan. Cook and whisk to remove lumps until smooth. Add milk and whisk vigorously. Add nutmeg and salt to taste.
4. In a greased baking dish, place cardoons in one layer. Top with sauce and sprinkle cheese on top. Bake in a preheated 375-degree oven 10-15 minutes or until bubbly.

Serves 3-4 as a side dish.



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