

Creamy Artichoke Soup with Roasted Hazelnuts

"A great pot of soup will summon friends and family from miles away. This is the soup to do just that! Thick, velvety, yet deliciously flavored. The roasted hazelnuts linger with unexpected savor".

6 servings

INGREDIENTS:

- Cooking spray
- 4 tablespoons hazelnuts
- 4 large fresh artichokes, cleaned, stems cut even with bottom of artichoke. Slice 1/4 inch off top of artichoke
- 3 cups water
- 4 cups fat-free chicken broth
- 4 tablespoon Wondra flour mixed with 1/3 cup water
- 1 cup fat-free half-and-half
- 1 tablespoon cooking sherry
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 2 tablespoon fresh parsley, minced

DIRECTIONS:

- Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Coat a cookie sheet with cooking spray.
- Place hazelnuts on cookies sheet. Toast for 5 minutes or until golden. Crush hazelnuts in food processor until very fine. Set aside.
- Place artichokes snugly, upright, side by side in a large soup pot or Dutch oven. Add water, bring to a quick boil. Cover, reduce heat, and simmer about 30 to 45 minutes or until leaves easily pull apart from artichoke. Using tongs, remove artichokes from pot and cool. Do not discard artichoke water.
- Add chicken broth and toasted hazelnuts to artichoke water and simmer over low-medium heat until you've completed steps 4 and 5.
- While broth is simmering, remove leaves from each artichoke down to the choke and set aside. Using a knife or sharp-edged spoon, remove and discard the prickly, feathery choke to expose the artichoke heart. Place clean hearts in a bowl and set aside.
- Gather artichoke leaves. Hold each leaf by its sharp tip, fresh side up. Scrape out the inner soft pulp, place in the bowl with the artichoke hearts. Repeat process with remaining leaves. Puree the leaf pulp and bottoms in a blender or food processor. (You may need to add 1/2 to 1 cup of reserved liquid from step 3 to help process.)
- Add artichoke puree mixture to reserved liquid from step 3 and stir well. Bring soup to a gentle boil, add flour-water mixture. Stir until thickened. Reduce heat.
- Stir in half-and-half, sherry, salt, and pepper. Garnish with parsley, and serve.