

To keep artichocks all the yeare.

Take your artichocks & put them on the fire, in cold water, let them boyle two walmes, to fifie you much take a quarter of a pound of allome, & a some small wort, & put into it then let it boyle, two walmes more, then take out the artichocks, & let them cole, then put into the licor two handfuls of nettles & boyle them in the licor, then straine it & let it stand till it be cold, then put it to the Artichocks, & in the putting in put a quart of veriuce to it, let them bee two or three dayes gathered afore you doe them & when you spend them, wash them in hot water, before you boyle them.¹

From The Complete Receipt Book of Ladie Elynor Fetiplace, 1604

My Translation:

Take your artichokes & put them on the fire, in cold water, let them boil two *walmes*, to 50 you take a quarter of a pound of alum, & some small wort & put into it then let it boil two *walmes* more, then take out the artichokes & let them cool, then put into the liquid two handfuls of nettles & boil them in the liquid, then strain it & let it stand till it be cold, then put into it the artichokes, & in the putting in put a quart of verjuice to it, let them be two or three days gathered before you do them & when you use them, wash them in hot water, before you boil them.

My Recipe:

Prepare your artichokes (clip off leaves, remove chokes). Place in cold water with a little acid/lemon juice to prevent discoloration. Drain and place in cold water, enough to cover (about 4 cups). Bring to a boil. For 50 small artichokes, add 1 c sea salt and a handful of herbs (thyme & marjoram) and 1 ½ cup verjuice. Taste. Add more verjuice as needed. Bring to a boil. Skim as needed. Place in crock, being sure that there is sufficient liquid to prevent air in the container. Seal container. Wait several days before using. To use, remove them from the crock and rinse before using.

¹ Receipt Book, pages 16-17.

Background on The Complete Receipt Book of Ladie Elynor Fetiplace, 1604

Lady Elynor Fetiplace (c. 1570 - c.1647) married into a branch of minor Elizabethan nobility. She lived at Appleton Manor, Sapperton in Gloucestershire.² Her cousin was Sir Walter Raleigh and she must have been acquainted with the court physician as a couple of the recipes quote him. She collected recipes for all manner of household needs and began a formal compilation in 1604. In 1647 she gave the 225 page Receipt Book to her niece and goddaughter, Mrs. Anne Hornar; wife of Jack Hornar of “Little Jack Horner...” It was added to over during the late 17th and early 18th C.

There are 2 versions of the book in print. The transcription used here was done by John Spurling; who inherited the book.

Background on Artichokes in Tudor and Elizabethan England

Artichokes are native to the Mediterranean region. They were brought to England by the Dutch in the 2nd quarter of the 16th C. They were well known in the Medici households from the mid-15th C. They are known to have been grown in Henry VIII’s garden in 1530. They were also grown and for sale in London markets in the 2nd half of the 16th C. Artichokes are regarded as an aphrodisiac and were considered a great delicacy as noted by several contemporary writers³.

When artichokes are used in recipes, they use only the bottoms/hearts. They were usually parboiled in salted water and, either before or after, the leaves and choke were removed. Two of the contemporary recipes for artichokes are Lady Fetiplace’s Artichokes in Cream Sauce⁴ (1604) and Thomas Dawson’s to Make a Dish of Artichokes (1596)⁵. Some of the other recipes for artichokes are John Murrell’s To Stewe Hartechockes in Cream (1621)⁶ and To Boyle a Rabbet⁷, Robert May’s Forcing for Any Dainty Fowl (1660)⁸.

There are 3 other recipes for preserving artichokes. They are in Sir Hugh Platt’s Delights for Ladies (1609)⁹ – broth of the stalks of artichokes and water, Joseph Cooper’s The Art of Cookery Refin’d and Augmented (1654)¹⁰ – salt water brine, and The Ladies Closet Opened (1639)¹¹ – water vinegar solution. Cooper specifically mentions using them for pies during Christmas and in stews.

² Riley, page 79.

³ Lorin, page 36-37.

⁴ Riley, page 83

⁵ Dawson, Thomas. The Good Housewife’s Jewel. Southover Press, Sussex. 1996 ISBN 1-870962-12-5. Page 111.

⁶ Lorin, pages 35-36.

⁷ Lorin, pages 234-5.

⁸ Lorin, pages 236-7.

⁹ Platt, page 52.

¹⁰ Lorin, page 37.

¹¹ Closet, page 16.

From Translation to Recipe

Ingredients:

- Allume – Alum was commonly used as a mordant for dye. However, it was a crystallized iron or aluminum sulfate and not something I thought should be ingested. The Wikipedia¹² notes that it has a sweetish and astringent taste and is a salt form. It was still being used in brining as recently as 1947.¹³ As sea salt is and was commonly used for brining preservation, I substituted salt for my recipe.
- Worts – Worts is an Anglo Saxon term referring to herbs. While it could refer to St. John's Wort, I chose to interpret it as herbs. Since thyme and marjoram were common kitchen herbs used with vegetables, I choose to use them.
- Nettles – Young nettle leaves were cooked as a vegetable and added to soups, stews, omelets, pudding, beer and wine in medieval times. It was considered a medicinal plant and recommended for various illnesses including gout.¹⁴ Since artichokes were a favorite of Henry VIII who had gout, and since Lady Fettiplace was minor nobility, it is not improbable that she gathered this recipe from some court cook who combined the two ingredients. While nettles can be eaten today according to some sources, it is said to “make the stomach warm” and I was uncomfortable adding them. I chose to not add them to the recipe.
- Verjuice – Verjuice is a sour fruit juice. You can find it in the Middle Eastern markets. As its taste is distinctive I choose to use it. It has an acidity that is a little less than vinegar.

Additional Term:

Walmes – A glossary of Medieval Cooking Terms¹⁵, is maintained by food historian and author Cindy Renfrow. She defines Walm or Walmes as to boil or bubble. In this case it seems redundant and the term appears to be a length of time.

Understanding the Process of Preserving with Salt and Acid:

Pickling or brining is a form of fermentation as well as a method of encapsulating a food item in an atmosphere where air and hence bacteria will not reach it or grow. To make the process work you need the liquid to cover the food, you need an acid with a high enough acidity to kill or slow the growth of bacteria, and you need a salt to enable the necessary bacteria to create the fermentation. Pickling vinegar is 6-8% acetic acid.¹⁶ A brine that will lift an egg “is a solution of 1 cup salt to 5 cups water”¹⁷. A lower salt solution that

¹² <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alum>

¹³ Kander, page 573.

¹⁴ Fournier-Rosset, pg. 29.

¹⁵ <http://www.thousandeggs.com/glossary.html#W>

¹⁶ Kander, page 572.

¹⁷ Ibid.

will still promote fermentation, but will not last more than a few weeks is a solution of 1 cup salt to 9 cups water.¹⁸

| My Recipe: | Reasoning: |
|---|---|
| Prepare your artichokes (clip off leaves, remove chokes). | As noted, usually only the bottoms were used. One recipe uses the meat from the tips of the leaves for the sauce. |
| Place in cold water with a little acid/lemon juice to prevent discoloration. | Artichokes rapidly blacken. Acid help prevents this. The recipe in <u>The Ladies Closet Opened</u> , talks about keeping the pieces from bruising. In addition, display was important, so I felt keeping the pieces from darkening was important. |
| Drain and place in cold water, enough to cover (about 4 cups). Bring to a boil. | Since this is the liquid that will become the brine, having sufficient to cover is an easy way to ensure this happens. Bringing it to a boil before adding the salt helps with the salt dissolving. |
| For 50 small artichokes, add 1 cup sea salt | 1 c. salt will make a strong brine of near to 1:5. Coarse sea salt works better for brining. |
| and a handful of herbs (thyme & marjoram) | Thyme and marjoram were commonly used herbs. |
| and 1 1/2 cup verjuice. Taste. Add more verjuice as needed. Bring to a boil. | The verjuice is fairly acidic. We don't know the acidity of their version. Modern recipes for pickling have 1:1 to 1:12 solutions of vinegar to water. Based on the final total quantity of liquid, 1 1/2cup is approx. 1:4. Boiling the verjuice will also kill any bacteria in it. The original recipe adds it cold. |
| Skim as needed. | You want brine to be clear. Skimming removes the impurities. Also a step noted in Ladies Closet, see above. |
| Place in crock, being sure that there is sufficient liquid to prevent air in the container. Seal container. | The original recipe does "cold canning". "Hot canning" will create a seal on the jar. |
| Wait several days before using. To use, remove them from the crock and rinse before using. | Wait for the fermentation to finish. Washing before using in any next step will remove some of the strong flavor of the brine. |

¹⁸ Ibid.

Bibliography

Delights For Ladies, by Sir Hugh Plat (1609). Edition with Introduction by G. E. Fussell and Kathleen Rosemary Fussell. Published by Crosby Lockwood, London, 1955.

Dining with William Shakespeare, by Madge Lorwin. Published by Atheneum, New York. 1976. ISBN 0-689-10731-5.

Elinor Fettiplace's Receipt Book: Elizabethan Country House Cooking by Hilary Spurling. Published by Salamander Press, London. 1986. ISBN 0-948681-03-9.

From Saint Hildegard's Kitchen: Foods of Health, Foods of Joy, by Jany Fournier-Rosset. Published by Liguouri/Triumph, Liguouri. 1999. ISBN 0-7648-0486-3.

Renaissance Recipes: Painters & Food, by Gillian Riley. Published by Pomegranate Art Books, San Francisco. 1993. ISBN 1-56640-577-7.

The Complete Receipt Book of Ladie Elynor Fetiplace, Vol. 1. Published by Stuart Press, Bristol. 1994 ISBN 1 85804 054 X. Being a transcription of the handwritten receipt book of Lady Elynor Fettiplace.

The Ladies Closet Opened, edited by Stuart Peachey. Stuart Press. 1994. ISBN 1 85804 044 2.

The Settlement Cook Book, 28th Edition, compiled by Mrs. Simon Kander. Published by The Settlement Cook Book Co. Milwaukee, 1947.