

Cardoon Gratin

Cardoons...In Europe, usually a winter vegetable, but are grown here in California year round...

Ingredients:

1/2 medium Lemon
3 lbs. Cardoons
1/2 cup Heavy Cream
1 1/2 cups Mushroom Broth
3 fresh sprigs of Thyme
2 Garlic Cloves, crushed
Kosher Salt, to taste
3/4 cup finely grated Parmesan Cheese
3/4 cup Panko
1/4 tsp. freshly ground Black Pepper
Unsalted Butter

Directions:

Fill a large saucepan with heavily salted water, juice the lemon, and add the juice and the lemon to the pan. Trim the leaves and ends from the cardoon stalks, wash and cut in half. Peel off stringy fibers with a vegetable peeler. Cut cross wise into 1 inch pieces and immediately add to water. Bring cardoons to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat to medium low and cook until fork tender, approximately 40 minutes. Drain and set aside.

Combine the cream, broth, thyme and garlic in a small saucepan. Bring to a simmer over medium heat. Cook about 20 minutes to reduce. Remove and season with salt.

With a rack in the middle of the oven, preheat to 375 degrees.

Put the cardoons in a buttered 2 qt. baking dish. Remove and discard the garlic and thyme from the cream mix and pour over the cardoons. Combine the cheese, panko and pepper and spread evenly over the top. Bake until bubbling, about 20-25 minutes. Cardoons should be easily pierced with a knife and top is a golden brown.

Let cool for 15 minutes and serve. You'll love this recipe!