

Hot Artichoke Cheddar Dip – Comfort du Jour

No matter how elaborate (or not) you intend your holiday get-togethers to be this year, I promise this dip will bring rave reviews. The cream cheese keeps this dip silky, the cheddar gives a little sharpness and the artichoke hearts are satisfying and tart with their lemony zing. This recipe makes about 6 appetizer servings.

INGREDIENTS

8 oz. brick of cream cheese (full fat or Neufchatel)
1/3 cup mayonnaise
1/4 cup sour cream or plain Greek yogurt
A few shakes hot sauce, such as Tabasco or Texas Pete
2 cloves fresh garlic, finely minced
8 oz. brick cheddar cheese (medium or sharp), freshly shredded* (see notes)
Freshly ground black pepper
1 cup marinated artichoke hearts, finely chopped*
1/2 tsp. dried oregano
A pinch of dried thyme
1/4 cup [parm-romano blend](#)*

*NOTES

I know that it's tempting to use pre-shredded cheese from a bag, but it does not melt well. Break out the box grater and shred the cheese yourself. You'll be glad you did!

I use artichoke hearts that are marinated in spices and oil, and I usually scoop them out of the jar with a slotted spoon without draining them. The herbs and oil add a pleasant layer of flavor. If you use artichoke hearts packed in water, drain them thoroughly and also drizzle them with a bit of olive oil before mixing into the dip. If they are plain, consider increasing the dried herbs slightly.

We make our own [parm-romano blend](#), which is easy to do and super convenient, because we love the piquant flavor in so many dishes. If you don't care to do this (or don't have time), substitute a good quality grated parmesan from the supermarket.

INSTRUCTIONS

Using an electric mixer, blend the cream cheese, mayonnaise and sour cream together. Add garlic and hot sauce and mix until smooth. Give it a taste and adjust hot sauce to your liking. Add about 2/3 of the shredded cheddar and mix again. Season with about 15 twists of freshly ground black pepper. Blend in the chopped artichoke hearts until evenly distributed. Add oregano and, in keeping with the original recipe, a pinch of thyme.

Pile the mixture into a deep pie plate or 8 x 8 glass baking dish. Sprinkle on the parm-romano blend. Top with remaining shredded cheddar.

Bake at 375° F for about 25 minutes, until dip is heated through and cheese is bubbly. Serve warm with pita chips, sturdy crackers or crostini.

If you have any left over, put it inside your Sunday morning omelet! 😊