

Smoked Artichoke Pasta with Lemony Vinaigrette

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Servings: 6

Preparation Time: 25 minutes

Cook time: 10 minutes

TWO-ZONE FIRE.

FOR CHARCOAL:: Arrange the coals on one side of the charcoal grate and leave the other side empty to create two heat zones. The empty side is for cooking foods that require indirect heat; you can also move food there when you get flare-ups. To smoke, once the coals are lit, scatter soaked and well-drained wood chips evenly over the charcoal. Wait for smoke to appear before you begin cooking.

FOR GAS: Gas grills are a little different because they require preheating to generate smoke, and wood chips need to be contained. You can either purchase a metal smoker box or make your own by placing wood chips in a small foil pan. Cover the top with aluminum foil, then poke holes in the foil to let the smoke out. Before you light the grill, remove the cooking grates and place the aluminum pan directly on the bars, preferably in a back corner. Replace the cooking grates, light the grill with all the burners on high, and close the lid. If you are using a box, place it on top of the grate directly over a lit burner. When smoke appears, turn one burner completely off, adjust the remainder as directed in the recipe and begin cooking.

1/4 cup fresh lemon juice

1/4 cup Kalamata olives, finely chopped

1 teaspoon fresh thyme leaves, finely chopped

1/3 to 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil

Kosher salt

ground black pepper

3 medium sweet peppers (red, yellow and orange), cut into 1/4-inch strips

2 cans (14 oz each) artichoke hearts (not in marinade) OR 12 frozen artichoke hearts, thawed, drained and quartered

1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil

2 teaspoons garlic, minced

1 to 1 1/2 cups oak or hickory wood chips soaked in water for at least 30 minutes

8 ounces dried penne pasta

8 ounces fresh mozzarella cheese, cut into 1/4-inch cubes

Prepare a gas or charcoal grill for a two-zone fire over medium heat (350 to 450 degrees). Preheat a 12-inch grill pan on the cooking grates.

In a medium nonreactive serving bowl, whisk the lemon juice, olives and thyme. Continue whisking and drizzle the 1/3 to 1/2 cup of oil in a steady stream until the dressing is emulsified. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Set aside.

In a large bowl, toss the peppers and artichokes with the 1/4 cup of olive oil and the garlic.

Drain and add the wood chips to the charcoal or gas grill. Close the lid. When the wood begins to smoke, arrange the peppers and artichokes in a single layer on the grill pan. Cook over direct medium heat, with the lid closed as much as possible, until slightly charred and softened, 10 to 12 minutes, turning occasionally. Wearing insulated barbecue mitts, remove the pan from the grill and set it on a heatproof surface. Transfer the vegetables to the serving bowl with the dressing.

Cook the pasta in a large pot of boiling, salted water according to package directions. Drain the pasta and add to the serving bowl. Add the cheese and toss to combine. Serve warm or at room temperature.