

Globe artichokes, *Cynar scolymus*, been used medicinally for centuries. There are many artichoke concentrates, supplements and teas on the commercial market, but they cannot compare with consuming fresh artichokes. With only 60 calories per artichoke and no fat, it is ideal for weight loss and weight maintenance. The globe artichoke is one of the most nutrient-packed vegetables and provides many health benefits. If artichokes are not on your shopping list, it may be because you are unfamiliar with the nutritional value of this super-food.

High in Antioxidants

Globe artichokes are very high in Phytonutrients, which are nutrients obtained from plant material, necessary for nourishing humans, and our good health depends on them. Nutritional research studies show that Phytonutrients contain protective, disease-preventing compounds. One main class of Phytonutrients is antioxidants. The artichoke is classed the highest vegetable in antioxidant levels.

Antioxidants are vital in the prevention of cellular damage, which is the common pathway for cancer, ageing and a range of diseases. They search for damaging particles in the body known as free radicals, which damage cell membranes, tamper with DNA, and even cause cell death. Antioxidants can neutralize free radicals and may reduce or even help prevent some of the damage they cause. One significant antioxidant is flavonoid. Flavonoids are compounds found in fruits or vegetables, which have potential beneficial effects on human health and help to protect the body from free radicals, preventing many diseases.

An important flavonoid is Luteolin; which has antioxidant, anti-inflammatory and anti-tumour properties. Luteolin is found in leaves, and in high amounts in artichokes. Luteolin has been shown to prevent LDL-cholesterol oxidation and can reduce the chance of arterial disease.

Another important flavonoid found in artichokes is Silymarin which has been identified as a cancer preventative. Silymarin is good for the liver as it helps repair damaged tissue, protects the liver from further damage, boosts good enzymes and lowers bad enzymes.

A flavonoid, Quercetin, also found in artichokes, is a powerful antioxidant. It is a natural antihistamine and anti-inflammatory, can improve cardiovascular health, and decrease cancer risk. Like many other flavonoids, quercetin prevents the oxidation of LDL or bad cholesterol. Quercetin also reduces the release of histamine, which produces allergic reactions, hay fever, and asthma. Quercetin increases the effective of vitamin C in the body, and reduces the inflammatory processes involved in sinusitis, an inflammation of the membrane lining a sinus.

Cynarin is a flavonoid found in concentrated amounts in the leaves (bracts) of the artichokes. It has

strong positive effects on the liver, which can help regenerate liver tissue, protects it from toxins and infections. Cynarin helps digestion by increasing the production of bile and stimulating the gallbladder to secrete this bile into the small intestine. This prevents a build up of sludge and stones in the gallbladder, and helps the body to absorb vitamins. Cynarin is responsible for the sweetness that occurs after eating artichokes. It suppresses the bitter tongue receptors and enhances the sweet ones. Cynarin can also act as a diuretic, reduce blood sugar, can relieve abdominal pain indigestion, nausea and bloating.

High in Dietary Fibre

Artichokes an excellent source of dietary fibre. Dietary fibre is a component of plant material, mainly made up of carbohydrate that your body can't digest or absorb. Eating foods high in dietary fibre helps maintain a healthy digestive system. It can reduce the risk of diabetes and heart disease and improve cholesterol levels. Fibre also keeps the blood-sugar levels stable, which is particularly important for people with diabetes. It can prevent bowel problems such as constipation, haemorrhoids and irritable bowel syndrome. The insoluble fibre makes them a natural form of laxative. High dietary fibre foods can also aid in weight loss, making you feel full.



Free Radicals

Free radicals are molecules with an odd number of electrons. Normally molecules don't split in a way resulting in an odd (unpaired) electron, but if they do, these highly reactive radicals can start a chain reaction.

Free radicals attack the nearest stable molecule, stealing its electron. Once the attacked molecule loses its electron, it becomes a free radical itself. The risk occurs when they react with DNA and other cell structures, resulting in poor functioning or dying cells.

Free radicals are created by environmental factors such as pollution, radiation, cigarette smoking and herbicides.

Although antioxidants neutralise free radicals by donating one of their own electrons, they don't become free radicals themselves.

Antioxidants obtained from a balanced diet, rather than vitamin supplements, are easier for the body to absorb.



Nutrition Facts			
Serving Size (120g)			
1 large artichoke			
Amount per Serving			
Calories	60	Calories from fat	60
		% Daily Value*	
Total Fat	0g		0%
Saturated Fat		0g	0%
Cholesterol		0mg	0%
Sodium		115mg	5%
Total Carbohydrate		13g	4%
Dietary Fibre		6.5g	24%
Sugars		1.2g	
Protein 4g			
Vitamin A	4%	Vitamin C	20%
Calcium	6%	Iron	8%
Potassium	10%		
*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.			
	Calories	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Saturated Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Potassium		3,500mg	3,500mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fibre		25g	30g
Calories per gram:			
Fat 9 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4			



Vitamins and Minerals

Globe artichokes are packed with vitamins and minerals which are essential for our bodies. Artichokes are a source of potassium, which is vital to maintaining normal heart rhythm, regulating fluid balance, and muscle growth and nervous system and brain function. Potassium reduces the risk of a stroke and blunts the effects of salt, reducing the risk of blood pressure and stroke. It can also soothe feelings of anxiety, irritability and stress.

Vitamins & Minerals

Vitamins and minerals are obtained from the food we eat, with the exception of Vitamin D.

Vitamins are chemical compounds which are organic and are produced by plants or animals. They are necessary for growth, vitality and well-being. Vitamin deficiencies may lead to a number of nutritional disorders including digestive and skin disorders, and allergies.

Minerals are chemical elements which come from the soils. If soils are deficient in minerals and trace elements, then the crops will also lack vital nutrients. Minerals deficiencies include anaemia, irregular muscle contractions, bone density loss, blood clotting and improper brain functioning.

Artichokes contains a good source of magnesium which is needed for building bones and keeping them strong, manufacturing protein, nerve function, releasing energy from muscle storage and regulating our body temperature. Magnesium is also important in preventing and managing disorders such as hypertension, cardiovascular disease and diabetes.

Artichokes are an excellent source of vitamin C, or Ascorbic Acid. It is vital for a healthy immune system and for normal growth and development. It is important for forming collagen that gives structure to our bones, cartilage, muscles and blood vessels. It helps heal wounds and form scar tissue. It is necessary for repairing and maintaining cartilage, bones and teeth. Vitamin C aids in iron absorption and is one of many antioxidants. It has been proven to be the agent which can prevent scurvy, which can lead to spots on the skin, spongy gums and bleeding from mucous membranes (the layer of tissue lining an area of the body which comes into contact with air, e.g. respiratory tract). For centuries it has also been a popular helpful remedy for the common cold.

Artichokes are a healthful source of protein. It is recommended in place of animal-based protein as a way to help reduce saturated fat and cholesterol intake. With no fat, cholesterol or trans fat, artichokes are a good source of protein. Protein is needed to build and maintain bones, muscles and skin. It is important to get adequate protein daily, as our bodies cannot store it the way fats or carbohydrates are stored.

Iron is an essential and vital mineral needed by our bodies for many functions including making the proteins haemoglobin (found in red blood cells) and myoglobin (found in muscles), helping to carry and store oxygen in the body. Iron is also an important component of metabolism. Lack of iron can cause physical fatigue and shortness of breath. Artichokes contain significant amount of iron needed in our daily diet.

Calcium is important for the body storing 99% of total body calcium in our bones and teeth, making them strong, and the remainder in the blood, muscle and fluid between the cells. Our bodies need calcium to help muscles and blood vessels contract and expand, to secrete hormones and enzymes and to send messages through the nervous system. Calcium also prevents osteoporosis in older women. Artichokes are a good source of iron and recommended in our diets.

Vitamin A is another antioxidant present in the globe artichoke which is needed by our bodies to maintain good health. Vitamin A is an antioxidant and is important for vision, bone growth, aiding reproduction functions and preventing skin disorders and aging of skin. It helps promote the growth of strong hair, teeth and skin. It assists our immune system and increases resistance to infection.

Artichokes are also an excellent source of folic acid and are important for women during their childbearing years which helps prevent neural-tube birth defects. Folic acid is also good for the blood, and can prevention against becoming anaemic.



Illnesses can be traced to four factors; genetic, lack of exercise, environmental, and poor dietary habits. The main contributing factor is lack of nutritional and healthy foods. The globe artichokes are nutrient rich and low in calories, so an important vegetable to include in our diet for a healthy lifestyle, and for proper growth and development. Of course, there is the added advantage that globe artichokes are so tasty and can be made in many different methods!

This publication is solely for informational purposes and not intended for medial advice. This information does not represent the practice of medicine, and does not replace the advice of your physician or other health care provider. Please seek the advice of your physician or other health care provider before undertaking any course of treatment.

The benefits of globe artichokes have been known for centuries and have been used worldwide as a curative medicinal food. Modern society need to be reintroduced to their powerful nutritional value and health benefits and especially their unique and appealing taste.