DIRECT · EASY

# Vega Baja Artichokes Barbecued on the Kamado, with Garlic and Lemon

*Vega Baja artichokes, halved: first cut-side down at 180 °C so they soften in their own steam, then opened out like a flower at 250 °C and brushed with garlic and lemon oil until the tips crisp.*



| PREP | COOK | SERVINGS | TEMPERATURE |
|---|---|---|---|
| 30 min | 90 min | 4 | 180 °C |

## Ingredients

- **6 ud** medium Vega Baja artichokes (about 1.5 kg)
- **1 l** cold water for the bowl
- **80 ml** extra virgin olive oil
- **0.5 cdta** ground black pepper
- **1 pizca** flaky salt, to serve
- **2 ud** lemons
- **4 ud** garlic cloves
- **1 cdta** coarse salt
- **1 puñado** fresh parsley, chopped

## Method

**1** LIGHT TO 180 °C

Fill the firebox of the BBQ-Toro Haiiro 32 halfway with BlackSellig coconut shell briquettes and light the bed in two spots. Leave the lid open for ten minutes, close it with the bottom vent open a finger's width and the chimney half open, and allow 20-25 minutes to settle at 180 °C on the lid thermometer. Put the grate in from the start so it heats up with the chamber.

**2** LEMON WATER AND TOUGH LEAVES

Prepare a bowl with the litre of cold water and the juice of one lemon; keep the squeezed halves for rubbing. Tear the outer leaves off each artichoke, pulling downwards, until you reach the pale yellow ones that bend without snapping. Slice off the top third in one stroke with the paring knife, peel the stalk down to the white part leaving 3-4 cm, and rub every cut with the lemon as you go.

**3** HALVE AND REMOVE THE CHOKE

Halve each artichoke lengthways, from stalk to tip. In the centre sits the choke, a tuft of fine fibres over the heart: lift it out with the tip of the knife. A narrow paring knife such as the Tojiro DP F-802 takes it out without pulling away good leaf, though any sharp paring knife will do. Rub the heart with lemon and leave the halves in the water while you finish the rest. Drain them well before they go on the kamado.

**4** GARLIC AND LEMON OIL

Crush the four garlic cloves with the coarse salt in a mortar until you have a paste. Add the zest of the second lemon, the juice of one of its halves, the pepper and the 80 ml of oil, and mix. Leave it at room temperature while the artichokes do their first stage: the oil takes on the garlic without cooking it. Save the parsley for the end; over the coals it burns in seconds.

**5** FIRST STAGE: CUT-SIDE DOWN AT 180 °C

Set the halves cut-side down on the grate, four to six per batch in a 32 cm kamado, and close the lid. Leave them at 180 °C for 25 to 35 minutes, opening only once to check. The test is the paring knife: if it slides into the heart without resistance, that half is ready; if it meets fibre, give it five more minutes. Move them to a tray, cover with a tea towel and repeat with the second batch.

**6** CLIMB TO 250 °C ON THE VENTS

With the second batch out, open the bottom vent and the chimney fully and keep the lid closed: the bed of briquettes gets air and the chamber climbs towards 250 °C. Do not add charcoal or stir the coals. When the thermometer reads 250 °C, bring the chimney back to half open and the bottom vent to two fingers so it stops climbing, then burp the lid: lift it five centimetres, wait about five seconds and then open it fully, as the temperature guide explains.

**7** OPEN LIKE A FLOWER AND BRUSH

Return the first-batch halves to the grate, now cut-side up, and with the Weber Precision tongs ease the leaves outwards until each half opens like a flower. Brush heart and leaves with the garlic and lemon oil using the Weber silicone brush, without soaking them. Close the lid and leave for 4-8 minutes at 250 °C, until the tips crisp and the cut face browns. Repeat with the second batch.

**8** SERVE

Move the halves to a platter, brush again with whatever oil is left in the bowl, scatter the parsley and a few flakes of salt, and squeeze the rest of the lemon over the top. Eat from the outside in: the toasted leaves with your fingers, the heart with a fork. Serve hot or warm; cold, they lose their crispness. They go alongside a barbecued fish or on their own as a starter.

## Editor's tips

- Choose artichokes that are tight, heavy for their size and with closed leaves; if they squeak when you squeeze them, they are fresh. Ones with open, dry tips were cut days ago and the heart will come out fibrous however much steam you give them.
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Do not try to fit all twelve halves at once into a 32 cm kamado: the ones sitting over the edge get uneven heat and loose leaves drop onto the coals. Two batches of six, or three of four if they are large, take little longer and come out the same.

- The peeled stalks cook just like the halves: split them lengthways, rub with lemon and slot them into the gaps between the halves or give them a short batch of their own. They are an extension of the heart and usually end up in the bin.
- If the garlic in the oil darkens over the coals, the kamado went past 250 °C or the mix had too much juice. Close the chimney a little further, take the halves out a couple of minutes early and finish brushing on the platter.

## Gear for this recipe

### BBQ-Toro Haiiro 32 cm

*This recipe needs neither two charcoal zones nor a deflector, just a closed chamber that holds moisture and a ceramic body that climbs from 180 to 250 °C when the vents open. The BBQ-Toro Haiiro 32 does exactly that in an entry-level format: 32 cm across, enough to set four to six artichoke halves per batch cut-side down on the grate. For a seasonal vegetable bought at the market round the corner it makes sense to start here rather than with a 46 cm kamado. The limit is the number of halves per batch; the technique is the same as on any large kamado.*

mikamado.es/en/kamados/bbq-toro-haiiro-32

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### BlackSellig XXL Pure Coconut Charcoal Briquettes 10 kg

*An artichoke has almost no fat to drip and no time to take on smoke, so the fuel has to deliver clean heat and nothing else. BlackSellig coconut shell briquettes are pressed, uniform charcoal that burns with little flame, and that steady bed is what lets you hold 180 °C with the lid closed for two batches and then climb to 250 °C on air alone. In the firebox of a 32 cm kamado, half a load should cover both phases without topping up. As it is not resinous wood, the artichoke's flavour stays garlic, lemon and coals.*

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/blacksellig-coconut-shell-10kg

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### Tojiro DP F-802 – 15 cm Japanese Petty (Utility Knife) in VG-10

*Peeling six artichokes down to the tender leaf means dozens of small, precise cuts: trimming tips, peeling stalks, scooping the choke out of the heart without taking flesh with it. A narrow, very sharp 15 cm paring knife such as the Tojiro DP F-802, with a VG-10 steel blade, cuts the fibre rather than crushing it, and clean-cut fibre discolours less and takes the lemon better. It is an expensive tool for the kamado it partners in this recipe, and it is not essential: any well-sharpened paring knife does the job. But for anyone who cooks a lot of vegetables and wants a serious small knife, it is a reasonable candidate.*

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/tojiro-dp-petty-15-f-802

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### Weber Precision Tongs 46 cm (6760)

*Turning a hot artichoke half and spreading its leaves at 250 °C with the lid just opened is precision work close to the coals. The Weber Precision 46 cm tongs reach the back of the grate in a 32 cm kamado without putting your hand inside the chamber, and the tips grip a leaf or a stalk without breaking them. In a small kamado the opening sits close to the fire bed; the extra length is what keeps your hand away from the heat. They also help set the halves cut-side down, snug together, in the first phase, without burning your fingers or shifting the others.*

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/weber-pinza-precision-46

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### Weber Silicone Barbecue Basting Brush 40 cm

*The garlic and lemon oil goes on with the half already opened on the grate, at 250 °C, and it has to get between the leaves without soaking them. The Weber 40 cm silicone brush has a long handle for working inside the hot chamber and silicone bristles that neither singe nor stick to the artichoke, which natural-fibre brushes do over direct heat. It cleans up without garlic lodging between the bristles. For this recipe two passes per half are enough: one when it opens on the grate and another on the platter, before the parsley and flaky salt.*

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/weber-brocha-silicona-40

Full recipe at: mikamado.es/en/recetas/alcachofas-brasa-vega-baja-kamado

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