



# THE WAY THE COOKIE CRUMBLES

A FOOD BLOG

## Spinach Artichoke Pizza

Makes 2 12-inch pizzas or about 6 servings

You can use frozen artichokes (they're not available in my town) instead of canned, although I've never been sure if those need pre-cooking before they're added to pizza.

Of course you can make pizza without a pizza stone. Just use a baking sheet (possibly preheated). However, if you make pizza or rustic breads often, a pizza stone is a small investment for a large increase in perfectly crisp crusts.

2 tablespoons butter  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
½ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes  
2 tablespoons flour  
1½ cup milk (any fat content)  
½ teaspoon salt  
½ ounce (¼ cup) parmesan plus 1 ounce (½ cup)  
7 ounces fresh spinach, washed and roughly chopped  
½ recipe (whole wheat, if you want) pizza dough or 1 pound of your favorite pizza dough  
6 ounces (1½ cup) shredded mozzarella (skim works great)  
1 (14-ounce) can artichokes, drained, rinsed and dried, quartered

1. Place a pizza stone on the bottom rack of the oven and preheat the oven to 525°C.
2. In a medium heavy-bottomed saucepan, melt the butter over medium heat. When the foaming subsides, add the garlic and red pepper flakes; cook, stirring constantly, until fragrant, 30 to 60 seconds. Add the flour; continue cooking and stirring for 2 minutes. Gradually whisk in the milk. Bring the mixture to a simmer over medium-high heat, stirring frequently, then reduce the heat to medium-low. Continue to simmer, stirring occasionally, for about 5 minutes. Stir in the salt and ¼ cup (½ ounce) of the parmesan.
3. Meanwhile, add the spinach (if the spinach isn't damp from being washed, also add a couple tablespoons of water) to a medium skillet set over medium-high heat. Cook and stir until the spinach begins to wilt, about 1 minute. Remove the spinach from the pan and place it in a clean kitchen towel. Squeeze the spinach as dry as possible, then add it to the béchamel from step 1.
4. Divide the dough into two portions and shape each portion into a ball. Let the balls of dough relax for 10 to 30 minutes. Work with one ball of dough at a time on a lightly floured surface. Flatten the dough, then pick it up and gently stretch it out, trying to keep it as circular as possible. Curl your fingers and let the dough hang on your knuckles, moving and rotating the dough so it stretches evenly. If it tears, just piece it together. If the dough stretches too much, put it down and gently tug on the thick spots.
5. Dust a pizza peel (or the back of a large baking sheet) generously with cornmeal and transfer a round of dough to the peel. Rearrange the dough to something reasonably circular; stab it several times with a fork. Spread ½ of the spinach mixture over the dough, then top with half of the mozzarella, half the artichokes, and half of the remaining parmesan.
6. Transfer the pizza to the hot baking stone, and bake for about 6 to 10 minutes, until the cheese is bubbling and the crust is spotty brown. Let the pizza cool on the peel for about 5 minutes before slicing and serving. Repeat with the remaining ingredients.