**Creamy Artichoke Soup**

**Makes:** 4 Servings

Modified from FoodNetwork

**INGREDIENTS**

* 2 Tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
* 3 Leeks, white part only, washed and chopped
* 1 clove garlic, minced
* 1 small potato, peeled and chopped
* 1 (8 ounce) can artichoke hearts
* 2 cups low sodium chicken or vegetable stock
* ½ teaspoon salt
* ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
* 2 tablespoons plus ⅓ cup mascarpone cheese (substitute with silken tofu for non-dairy alternative)

**DIRECTIONS**

1. Heat olive oil in a heavy, large pot over medium heat. Add the leeks and the garlic and stir. Add the potatoes and cook for 5 minutes, stirring often. Add the artichokes, stock, salt, and pepper and cook until the vegetables are tender, about 20 minutes
2. Using a handheld immersion blender, or in a blender in batches, puree the soup. Add the 2 tablespoons of mascarpone or alternate and blend again to combine. In a small bowl, stir the remaining ⅓ cup of mascarpone or alternate to soften.
3. Ladle the soup into serving bowls. Dollop the top of each of the soups with a spoonful of the softened mascarpone cheese or alternate and top the cheese with chives.
4. When blending hot liquids, remove the liquid from heat and allow it to cool for at least five minutes before blending. Fill the blender no more than halfway with the hot liquid, preventing the vacuum effect that creates heat explosions. Place a towel over the top of the machine, pulse a few times then process on high speed until smooth.

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| **LOW PREP/DORM RECIPE TIP:**  If you do not have access to a cooktop, heat a low sodium creamy mushroom or butternut squash soup in a microwave safe bowl. Serve with canned artichoke hearts, whole grain crackers, and a dollop of Greek yogurt, ricotta, or mascarpone. |