



One-Skillet Chicken with Creamy Spinach and Artichoke Sauce

Time: 30 mins

Serves 4

1 thick leek (or 2 thin ones)

2 fat cloves peeled garlic (or more if you like it super garlicky)

2 tablespoons capers

1/2 lemon

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil

1 ½ pounds thin-cut boneless, skinless chicken breasts (6 to 8 cutlets)

1 tablespoon unsalted butter

10 ounces (two 5-ounce boxes) baby spinach

1 tablespoon all-purpose flour (regular or gluten-free)

One 14-ounce can quartered artichokes, drained

½ cup crème fraîche

Prep the leek, garlic, and capers

Trim off the root ends of the leeks. Thinly slice the leeks starting at root end. As you reach the darker green tops, start removing the outer layers and continue slicing the lighter green inner parts of the leek. Save the leek tops for stock.

Put the sliced leeks in a bowl of water and swish to help the slices release any grit.

Lightly smash, then thinly slice or roughly chop the garlic.

Run your knife across the capers to roughly chop them.

Prep and cook the chicken

Pat the chicken dry with paper towels, then squeeze some of the juice from the lemon half over both sides of the chicken. Season the meat generously with salt and lightly with pepper.

In a large, heavy skillet, heat the oil over medium-high heat until shimmering. Add half the chicken and cook until it turns an appetizing golden brown on the bottom, 3 to 4 minutes. Flip and cook until starting to brown, and the chicken is barely cooked through, about 2 minutes longer. Transfer to a plate. Cook the remaining chicken, turning down the heat as necessary to prevent the pan drippings from burning. (The chicken will fully cook as it rests, and it will get warmed again with the sauce.)

Make the sauce

Reduce the heat to medium. Lift the leeks out of the water, and standing slightly back from the stove, carefully add them to the skillet. (There will be some spattering.)

Season the leeks with salt and cook, stirring and scraping up any browned bits from the bottom of the pan, until most of the liquid has evaporated and the leeks are wilted, 1 to 2 minutes. Add the butter and the garlic and cook, stirring, until the leeks and garlic are both softened, about 3 minutes.

Add the spinach and 2 tablespoons water and cook until wilted. Sprinkle the flour over the vegetables and stir it in.

Add the artichokes and capers, and cook until heated through, about 1 minute.

Add the crème fraîche and cook until it melts and forms a creamy sauce.

Taste the sauce and season with salt. Add a little more lemon juice from the lemon half, if you like, too.

Nestle the chicken back into the pan and pour any juices from the plate into the skillet.

Spoon the vegetables and sauce over the chicken, cooking until it thickens, about 1 minute. Remove from the heat and serve.

The short version

- Thinly slice and wash the leek. Thinly slice or roughly chop the garlic. Roughly chop the capers.
- Zest the lemon, then some of the squeeze juice from half the lemon over the chicken. Season the chicken generously with salt and lightly with pepper. Cook the chicken in the olive oil in a heavy skillet until golden brown and just barely cooked through. Transfer to a plate.
- Add the leeks and cook, scraping up any browned bits from the bottom of the skillet. Add the butter and garlic, and cook until softened. Add the spinach and 2 tablespoons water and cook, stirring, until the spinach is wilted. Sprinkle over the flour and stir it in. Stir in the artichokes and capers and cook until heated through. Add the crème fraîche and season with salt. Nestle the chicken in the sauce, pouring over any accumulated juices. Cook until thickened and serve.

Swaps

- Instead of leeks, use shallots or sliced spring onions. (You'll want to add a little water when you add them to help sweep up the juices from the bottom of the pan.)
- Instead of crème fraîche, use sour cream or heavy cream.
- Instead of garlic, use ½ teaspoon garlic powder.
- Instead of spinach, use baby arugula.
- If you don't like artichokes, skip them! You could try adding a can of white beans instead to bulk out the meal, but you might need to tweak the amount of liquid and seasoning.

Bonus points

- Grate Parmigiano cheese over the skillet. For a browned top, pop it under the broiler. (Make sure your skillet is oven-safe.)
- Serve with orzo, rice, or smashed white beans on the side, if you like.