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Artichoke Dip Grilled Cheese

Makes 4 sandwiches

As the recipe title suggests, this sandwich is based on the popular artichoke dip, an hors d'oeuvre that seems to go even faster at a party than a wheel of Brie. Putting the cheesy dip into sandwich form seemed like a no-brainer, and doing so with olive oil-spiked focaccia adds a fun and tasty twist. To make the filling properly, be sure to drain the artichokes well. Otherwise, your mixture will be watery and your sandwich will be a mess.

2 (6-ounce) jars marinated artichokes, drained and coarsely chopped
2 tablespoons mayonnaise
1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
1/2 teaspoon hot sauce, or to your taste
1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
4 scallions (white and tender green parts), finely chopped
2 ounces Pecorino Romano cheese, coarsely crumbled (or use Parmigiano-Reggiano)
4 (4-inch-square) pieces focaccia, split horizontally (or use 8 slices sourdough or Italian bread)
8 ounces fontina cheese, coarsely grated (or use Monterey Jack or Havarti)

In a medium bowl, mix together the artichokes, mayonnaise, Worcestershire sauce, hot sauce, garlic powder, scallions, and Pecorino Romano.

To assemble: Place 4 slices of focaccia on your work surface, cut side up. (If your focaccia is especially thick – more than 3 inches – pinch out a small amount of the soft centers to create a better bread-to-filling ratio). Spread the artichoke mixture on the bread. Distribute the fontina and top with the remaining focaccia slices, cut side down.

For stovetop method: Heat a large nonstick skillet over medium heat for 2 minutes. Put the sandwiches into the pan, cover, and cook for 3 to 4 minutes, until the undersides are golden brown. (Watch carefully, because the high oil content in focaccia can make the bread turn from golden to blackened quickly). Turn the sandwiches, pressing each one firmly with a spatula to compress the filling slightly. Cover and cook for 3 to 4 minutes, until the undersides are well browned. Remove the cover, turn the sandwiches once more, and press firmly with the spatula once again. Cook for 1 minute, or until the cheese has melted completely. (You might need to peek inside to make sure). Remove from the pan and let cool for 5 minutes. Cut in half and serve.

For sandwich maker method: Preheat the sandwich maker. Follow directions for assembly above. Cook according to manufacturer's instructions.