

Savory Summer Tarragon Chicken Salad

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Sweet chicken salads have their place, but it's not at my dinner table. I don't care for cranberries or apples or candied pecans in my "dinner" food. I prefer a savory chicken salad with a burst of tarragon flavor. So, I combined parts of two really good, savory chicken salad recipes to make one superb salad. The key to this chicken salad is two-fold: Gently and patiently poached chicken breasts and fresh tarragon. Don't rush the cooking of your chicken, or your chicken will make you pay for that with a rubbery, dry texture. Read the notes before you get started so there are no surprises, and your tarragon chicken salad is the sheer perfection it's meant to be. And remember, so much of cooking is tasting as you go. Don't be afraid to taste. If you're "doing cooking right," you'll be out of spoons by the time your recipe is complete!

Ingredients:

1.5 pounds poached chicken breast, shredded
½ cup mayonnaise
½ sour cream
½ tsp. onion powder
½ tsp. garlic powder
½ tsp. salt
4-5 tbs. fresh tarragon
½ cup sliced almonds

Directions:

1. Poach the chicken breasts: Place the chicken in a large pot with 4 cups of cold water and 3 teaspoons of salt. Turn the heat to medium and bring water to *barely boiling*, reduce heat to low, and simmer for ten minutes or until internal temperature has reached 165 degrees. Remove and let the chicken cool before shredding.
2. Combine the mayonnaise, sour cream, onion powder, garlic powder, salt, and fresh tarragon in a medium bowl and whisk together.
3. Add the shredded chicken and sliced almonds to the mayo mixture and gently combine.
4. Serve on a bed of mixed greens, with a croissant for a sandwich, or with buttery club crackers.

Notes:

- For more flavor, you can poach your chicken breasts in chicken broth or add lemon juice, garlic, or both to the water.
- Barely boiling means you are just beginning to see bubbles. Do not let it get to a full, rolling boil.
- Another way to poach chicken is to remove it from the heat and let it sit for up to 45 minutes or until the internal temperature has reached 165 degrees. This method is a bit more challenging, in my opinion, especially considering the size of your chicken breast, but it does produce a very moist and juicy chicken. Either way, my main concern is that your chicken is cooked to a healthy temperature.
- If you must use dried tarragon (it will work), use ½ tsp. for every tablespoon of fresh.
- Make this at least 4 hours ahead of time. It must sit with itself to marinate and ruminate in and about the tarragon. The longer, the better.
- Taste your dressing and adjust it to your liking! Add more salt if needed. Sparingly add more tarragon or garlic...unlike baking, this is not a science. It's about making your tastebuds happy!