

Seasonal Bing Cherry and Chicken Dinner Salad

The short season for fresh, sweet cherries has arrived and they're not to be missed. Sweet Cherries are a welcome addition to any dinner table and tonight they'll play a feature role in a dinner salad production. Supporting roles will be filled by plant-based Chik'n, toasted pecans and the usual ensemble of fresh harvest favorites. If cherries aren't available, use fresh strawberries. Dinner promises to offer a dazzling presentation. Bravi!

Preparation time: 30 minutes - Servings: 2

Organize Your Ingredients!

Notes on Organizing

Prep and organize your ingredients before you start. This meal is all about the prep and assembly. There's only a little actual cooking involved.

Plant-based Choice or Chicken Option

Plant-based Choice:

1 tsp. olive oil
15-20 pieces Morningstar Chick'n Strips
1/4 C. white wine

Chicken Option:

1 tsp. olive oil
1 boneless, skinless chicken breast
1/2 C. white wine
salt and pepper to taste

Creamy Basil Dressing

15-20 fresh basil leaves (washed and dried)
1 large garlic clove (peeled)
3 T. sweet onion (finely chopped)
1 T. extra-virgin olive oil
2 T. rice wine vinegar
1 tsp. prepared mustard
1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. fresh-ground black pepper
3/4 C. plain, nonfat yogurt

Dinner Salad

1-1/2 C. Bing or similar sweet cherries (pitted, halved)
(Use strawberries if no cherries are available.)
10-12 leaves red or green leaf lettuce
(washed and dried)

2/3 C. red bell pepper (cut into thin slices)
2/3 C. yellow bell pepper (cut into thin slices)
12-16 thick cucumber slices (peeled and coarsely chopped)
1/4 C. sweet onion (thin-sliced, quartered)
2 Roma tomatoes (coarsely chopped)
- or -
10 cherry tomatoes (halved)

Additional Items/Garnish

Artisan rolls or baguette of choice

Garnish:

9 pecan halves (toasted and broken into pieces)

2 tsp. crumbled gorgonzola cheese

Let's Prepare, Cook, and Plate This!

Basic Assembly Instructions

Most of your time will be taken with the simple task of pitting and halving the cherries. It's totally worth the little bit of extra time it takes.

Cook the plant-based choice (or optional chicken) and make the dressing before you start assembling the salads.

Plant-based Choice or Chicken Option

Plant-based Choice:

Brown Chik'n Strips in oil. Add 1/4 C. white wine and cover. Cook about 1 minute or until wine cooks away. Remove from heat. Allow to cool enough to handle and thin-slice lengthwise before adding to the salads.

Chicken Option:

Brown chicken breast on all sides in oil. Add 1/2 C. white wine to pan, cover, reduce heat to medium-low and cook 5 minutes per side. Season with salt and pepper. Allow to cool and slice before adding to the salad.

Creamy Basil Dressing/Rolls

Blend all dressing ingredients in food processor until smooth and creamy.

Wrap rolls or bread in foil and place in a 200° oven.

Dinner Salad Assembly, Garnish and Serve

Assemble:

Arrange broken lettuce pieces on two dinner plates. Arrange sliced and chopped vegetables over lettuce. Divide pitted cherries and plant-based strips (or optional chicken) over salads.

Garnish:

Divide and distribute broken toasted pecans over salads.

Sprinkle salads with crumbled Gorgonzola cheese

Serve:

Pour dressing into a small serving pitcher so diners can serve themselves.

Serve warm bread on the side.

What I've Learned from this Recipe

It's possible you'll have cherries left over after making salads today. Save a cup for tomorrow's "Berry Fine Feast". Cherries are also great snacking material.

Let us know what you think, and ask any questions you may have! chezdon@plate6.com