

Chicken Salad With Nectarines and Goat Cheese

By Ali Slagle

Total Time 15 minutes

Rating ★★★★★ (647)



Linda Xiao for The New York Times. Food Stylist: Monica Pierini.

Crunchy and creamy, sweet and tangy, this main dish salad is a new take on the goat cheese, spinach and fruit salads of the 1980s. Lemon-kissed nectarines and shallots are tossed with chicken, pita chips and greens. A mature green like spinach adds heft, but any salad green works. Goat cheese cream hidden beneath the salad is a delightful surprise; you get a bit of the tangy cream every few bites. Make it vegetarian by nixing the chicken and adding white beans to the nectarines in Step 1. Embellish freely with thinly sliced beets, sunflower seeds, sliced jalapeños or soft herbs, or swap in another stone fruit like apricots or cherries.

INGREDIENTS

Yield: 4 to 6 servings

1½ to 2 pounds ripe but firm nectarines, pitted and sliced (4 to 6 nectarines)

1 large shallot, thinly sliced

6 tablespoons lemon juice, plus more to taste (from 2 lemons)

Salt and black pepper

1 cup buttermilk, plus more as needed

8 ounces goat cheese, preferably herbed, at room temperature

1 tablespoon lemon zest

3 to 4 cups shredded cooked chicken (from about 1 rotisserie chicken)

1 to 2 cups lightly crushed pita

PREPARATION

Step 1

In a large bowl, stir together the nectarines, shallot and lemon juice. Season to taste with salt and pepper. In a medium bowl, mash together the buttermilk, goat cheese and lemon zest. Season to taste with salt and pepper, and thin with more buttermilk until it's the consistency of a dip. (Both mixtures can be made up to an hour ahead and refrigerated. Bring to room temperature before eating.)

Step 2

When you're ready to eat, add the chicken, pita chips and olive oil to the nectarines, and stir to combine. Add the greens, season them with salt and pepper, and stir once more. Taste and adjust salt, pepper, lemon juice and oil until flavors are bright and punchy.

Step 3

Spread the goat cheese cream on plates, then top with the salad (or dot the salad with the goat cheese cream). Serve immediately.

chips

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup extra-virgin olive oil, plus
more to taste

8 to 10 ounces salad greens, such
as mature spinach, arugula or
watercress