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Chicken, Avocado and Spinach Salad



Summer calls for light food that makes the perfect healthy lunch or alfresco dinner. Chef Jane Coxwell's salad is incredibly tasty and full of goodness, guaranteed to become a seasonal staple. She says, "The key is to use the cooking juices and olive oil from the chicken to make a really beautiful dressing. It's such a wonderful way to carry the flavor over into your salad. The dish is very simple and low maintenance — just make sure to put the chicken into the oven an hour before you want to eat."

Ingredients

Serves 2

For the chicken (use organic ingredients when possible):

- 1 organic, free range chicken breast
- 1 lemon
- 2 sprigs of thyme
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 Thai chili, sliced (use less if you don't like heat)
- 1 clove of garlic, minced
- Maldon salt (or other sea salt)
- Freshly ground black pepper

For the salad (use organic ingredients when possible):

1 avocado, roughly chopped

- ½ cucumber, roughly chopped
- A large handful of baby spinach leaves
- A handful of cilantro, roughly chopped
- A handful of dill, roughly chopped
- 3 tablespoons plain yogurt
- ½ teaspoon of agave nectar
- A squeeze of lemon
- Sea salt
- Freshly ground black pepper

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Directions**For the chicken:**

1. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees.
2. Put the chicken breasts in small baking tray and add the zest of 1 lemon, thyme sprigs, garlic, chili, extra virgin olive oil, a generous amount of salt and black pepper. Using clean hands, rub this mixture all over the chicken, then cover the tray tightly with foil and place in the oven for 25-30 minutes.

NOTE: *It's important not to overcook the chicken. Check the internal temperature — it should read 165 degrees. Remember it will continue to cook for a bit when you take it out of the oven, so don't leave it in too long beyond the specified time.*

3. Remove the tray from the oven, and transfer the chicken to a plate to stop the cooking and allow it to cool down to room temperature (about 30 minutes). When it's cool, shred the chicken into manageable pieces.

4. Pour all the juices and oil from the chicken baking dish into a bowl. Make sure you don't leave anything behind! All those left over bits from the chicken, lemon zest, garlic, and chili will help give such an amazing flavor to the dressing.

To make the salad:

5. In a large bowl, combine the avocado, cucumber, spinach, cilantro, and dill. Add the juice of half a lemon, some sea salt, and black pepper.

To make the dressing:

6. Add the plain yogurt, lemon juice, and agave nectar to the bowl with the chicken juices and whisk together. Check the seasoning and adjust to taste.
7. Add the cooked chicken and the dressing to the salad ingredients. Toss well. Check the seasoning again and enjoy!

~ [Chef Jane Coxwell](#)

[Chef Jane Coxwell](#) believes the best meals come from thinking and caring about who will be eating them. Starting with a beautiful, approachable recipe means you can enjoy the process, which will make your food taste better. The result is food that is colorful, vibrant and balanced without being fussy or demanding. Jane completed her culinary training in her native South Africa. She then traveled to France to begin work in the yachting industry, where she saw the opportunity to be involved in every aspect of a meal: buying the food, cooking it, plating it, and having direct contact with who she cooked for. She served as Executive Chef at Hall Wines in the Napa Valley, run by former US Ambassador to Austria Kathryn Hall and her husband Craig Hall. After cooking on their yacht, Jane was asked to cook for Clinton fundraisers and other events at the Napa winery. In 2009, Jane joined Eos, Barry Diller and Diane von Furstenberg's sailing yacht.

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