

# TikTok's Chicken Salad

Prep: 20 mins

Cook: 22 mins

Total: 42 mins

Servings: 4 servings

Yield: 4 servings

TikTok's latest trend is serving up the chicken salad of your dreams alongside a heartwarming story of a local Cleveland deli achieving stardom overnight. The viral video starts off with Cleveland native Tanisha Godfrey, saying "It's a chicken salad," but it's so much more than that. This salad is the epitome of intuitive cooking—except without the cooking part. It takes the term "kitchen sink" to a new level, utilizing produce, condiments, and pantry staples you may already have.

The story begins when owner Wael Herbawi took to TikTok along with Godfrey, a childhood friend, in an effort to increase his social media presence and promote the store. Well, mission accomplished. Though the ingredients may seem simple they play off each other in culinary harmony, hitting all the right notes.

The base of the salad consists of a spring mix, including various lettuces, spinach, and kale. It's piled high with grilled chicken, cucumbers, cherry tomatoes, banana peppers, bell peppers, jalapeños, croutons, and a mix of cheeses. But, according to Herbawi, it's the sauce that takes this salad over top. Tapping into his roots, he uses an Arabic spice grown in Palestine in his top-secret dressing that his mom taught him.

Want to try making this salad at home? I tried my hand at recreating this lunch-worthy dish. While there was no way I was going to crack mom's code, I did achieve a bright dressing with za'atar, sumac, and lemon. With the addition of homemade croutons, this salad satisfies every craving.

# Ingredients

## For the Dressing:

- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 2 teaspoons finely grated lemon zest
- 1/2 cup freshly squeezed lemon juice (from about 2 large lemons)
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tablespoon sumac
- 1 tablespoon za'atar
- 1 teaspoon fine salt
- 2 teaspoons honey, more to taste

## For the Salad:

- 1/2 loaf baguette, or Italian bread
- 3 tablespoons olive oil, divided
- 1/2 teaspoon fine salt
- Fresh ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 pound boneless, skinless chicken thighs
- 5 ounces spring mix
- 1 pint cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1 large cucumber, halved lengthwise and sliced crosswise into half moons
- 1 medium bell pepper, diced
- 1/2 medium red onion, sliced
- 1/4 cup pickled sliced banana peppers
- 1/4 cup pickled sliced jalapeños
- 8 ounces fresh mozzarella, torn or shredded
- 1 cup (4 ounces) shredded cheddar cheese
- 2 large hard boiled eggs, thinly sliced crosswise

# Steps to Make It

## Make the Dressing

1. Gather the ingredients.
2. Combine the olive oil, lemon zest and juice, garlic, sumac, za'atar, salt, and honey in a mason jar, then screw on the top and shake to combine. Taste and adjust seasoning, as desired.

## Make the Salad

1. Gather the ingredients.
2. Cut or tear the baguette into bite-sized pieces, about 1/2-inch. Toss with 2 tablespoons of the olive oil and salt on a rimmed baking sheet. Spread in a single layer. Bake until golden brown, 6 to 8 minutes. Set the croutons aside.
3. Pat the chicken dry. Season generously with salt and pepper.
4. Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the remaining 1 tablespoon oil and swirl to coat the skillet. When the oil is hot, add the chicken. Cook, flipping once half way through cooking time, until the chicken is brown all over and the internal temperature reaches 170 F, about 12 minutes total. Transfer the chicken to a plate to rest for 5 minutes.
5. Toss the croutons, spring mix, tomatoes, cucumber, bell pepper, onion, banana peppers, pickled jalapeños, mozzarella, and cheddar with two-thirds of the dressing. Place on a serving platter or in a large bowl.
6. Slice the chicken into strips. Top the salad with the chicken along with the slices of hard boiled egg. Drizzle remaining dressing over top or serve on the side with the salad.

## Tip

- Make ahead: Prepare the dressing and salad ingredients and store them separately in separate, airtight containers. The dressing can be stored for up to 1 week and the prepped salad ingredients can be stored for up to 2 days.

## Storage

- Storage: Any leftover of the fully made salad can be stored in an airtight container for a day. The salad greens will become wilted easily, so it will not last long.