**PECAN CRUSTED HOT CHICKEN SALAD**

One bite of this entrée salad covers a lot of bases in terms of texture and flavors. Go on, just try to keep your fork out of it. There’s a lot going on here, but it’s still weeknight plausible. The citrus-honey mustard dressing just takes minutes to make, though you can also make it ahead and keep it chilled. The pecan breading comes together quickly in a food processor. And it‘s easy enough to hard-boil a few eggs and fry the bacon a day or two in advance.

Serves 4

**INGREDIENTS:**

FOR DRESSING: WHISK

1. 2/3 cups fresh orange juice
2. 1/3 cup fresh lemon juice
3. ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
4. 2 Tbs. honey
5. 1 Tbs. Dijon mustard
6. Salt to taste

FOR THE CHICKEN & SALAD: PULSE

1. 1-1/2 cups fresh bread crumbs
2. ¾ cup pecan halves
3. 2 Tbs. each lemon and orange Zests
4. 1 Tsp. kosher salt
5. ½ Tsp. cayenne pepper
6. 1-1/4 lb. boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut into strips
7. ½ cup all-purpose flour

WHISK:

1. 3 eggs
2. ¼ cup milk or water

HEAT:

1. 2 cups vegetable oil

COOK:

1. 4 ounces thick-sliced bacon, diced

TOSS:

1. 1 bag fresh spinach (9 oz.)
2. ½ cup slivered red onions
3. 4 hard-cooked eggs, cut into wedges

FOR THE DRESSING: Whisk together orange juice, olive oil, honey, and Dijon; season with salt.

FOR THE CHICKEN AND SALAD, PULSE: bread crumbs, pecans, zests, 1 Tsp. salt, and cayenne in a food processor until coarsely chopped. Dredge chicken strips in flour.

WHISK: eggs and milk together in a shallow dish. Dip floured chicken strips in the egg mixture, allowing excess to drip off, then roll in bread crumb mixture to coat. Crust all the chicken strips before frying.

HEAT: oil in a large skillet to 350 degrees F. Fry chicken strips in batches until golden, 2-3 minutes per side; drain on a paper towel-lined plate.

COOK: bacon in a nonstick skillet until crisp; drain on a paper towel-lined plate.

TOSS: spinach and onion in a large bowl with the dressing to coat. Top salad with the chicken strips, bacon, and eggs.

(\*) FOR THE CRISPIEST STRIPS, DREDGE THEM IN FLOUR, THEN IN THE BEATEN EGG MIXTURE, AND LAST IN THE NUT MIXTURE.