

The Ultimate Crispy Chicken Salad: Better Than Any Restaurant!

2 boneless, skinless breasts, sliced into strips or bite-sized nuggets.



OVEN
400°F

TIME
4 min

TEMP
165°F

METHOD
Air fryer

INGREDIENTS

For the Crispy Chicken:

Chicken Breasts: 2 boneless, skinless breasts, sliced into strips or bite-sized nuggets.

Breadcrumbs or Panko: 1 cup (Panko provides the ultimate crunch).

All-Purpose Flour: 1/2 cup for the initial dredge.

Egg: 1 large egg, beaten (this acts as the glue).

Seasonings: Salt, black pepper, 1/2 tsp paprika, and 1/2 tsp garlic powder.

Oil: For frying (vegetable or canola) or cooking spray for the air fryer.

For the Salad Base:

Romaine Lettuce: 2 cups, chopped fresh.

Cherry Tomatoes: 1/2 cup, halved for a burst of sweetness.

Red Onion: 1/4 cup, thinly sliced (pro tip: soak them in cold water first to take the "bite" out).

Cucumber: 1/2 cucumber, sliced into rounds or quarters.

Avocado: 1 diced avocado for creamy texture.

For the Honey Mustard Dressing:

2 tbsp Dijon mustard

2 tbsp honey

1 tbsp olive oil

1 tbsp lemon juice

Salt & pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

1. Prepare the Chicken: Start by setting up your breading station. Place the flour in one bowl, the beaten egg in a second, and the breadcrumbs mixed with salt, pepper, paprika, and garlic powder in a third.
2. Dredge each chicken slice in the flour, shaking off the excess. Dip it into the egg wash, then press it firmly into the seasoned breadcrumbs until fully coated.
3. Cook to Golden Perfection: Skillet Method: Heat about 1/2 inch of oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Fry the chicken for 3-4 minutes per side until the internal temperature reaches 165°F and the outside is deep golden brown.
4. Air Fryer Method: Lightly spray the basket with oil. Place chicken in a single layer (don't overcrowd!). Air fry at 400°F (200°C) for about 15 minutes, flipping halfway through.
5. Mix the Dressing: In a small jar or bowl, whisk together the Dijon mustard, honey, olive oil, lemon juice, salt, and pepper. Adjust the honey if you prefer a sweeter dressing.
6. Assemble the Salad: In a large mixing bowl, toss the chopped romaine, cherry tomatoes, red onion, and cucumber. Place the diced avocado on top. Slice your warm crispy chicken and lay it over the greens. Drizzle with the dressing and serve immediately to ensure the chicken stays crunchy!

SWAPS & NOTES

This breading method works great with shrimp or even firm tofu.

If you are in a rush and need a different quick meal, check out this 3-ingredient egg wrap for another high-protein option.

The Greens: While Romaine is the standard, a mix of spinach and arugula adds a nice peppery kick.

Gluten-Free: Swap the flour for almond flour and use gluten-free panko or crushed pork rinds for the coating.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Don't Crowd the Pan: Whether frying or air frying, give the chicken space.

If the pieces touch, they will steam instead of crisp.

Dry the Chicken: Pat the chicken dry with paper towels before dredging.

Chill the Dressing: If you have time, make the dressing 30 minutes early and keep it in the fridge to let the flavors marry.

More recipes: [ChefManiac.com](https://chefmaniac.com)

Original recipe: <https://chefmaniac.com/the-ultimate-crispy-chicken-salad-better-than-any-restaurant/>