

Marinated Chicken & Pear Salad

with Fiery Walnuts and Gorgonzola Croutons

Submitted by: Julie DeMatteo, Clementon, NJ



4 to 6 Servings

4 **Pilgrim's Pride** boneless skinless split chicken breasts

Marinade:

2 tablespoons white wine vinegar
3 tablespoons olive oil, divided
1 teaspoon dried thyme leaves
Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

Walnuts:

1 tablespoon olive oil
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
1 cup walnut halves

Croutons:

6 ounces crumbled Gorgonzola cheese
4 teaspoons olive oil
16-18 slices French baguette bread (1 1/2 to 2 inches in diameter, sliced 1/2-inch thick)

Salad Dressing:

1/4 cup white wine vinegar
1 teaspoon dried thyme
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon sugar
1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
6 cups packaged Italian salad greens (romaine and radicchio)
1 large bunch watercress, large stems removed
3 pears, unpeeled and cored
1 teaspoon coarsely ground pepper

Preheat oven to 350° F. Place chicken in non-metallic dish or large resealable plastic bag. To make marinade, place vinegar, 2 tablespoons oil, thyme, salt, and pepper in small bowl. Stir to blend and pour over chicken, turning to coat. Cover and place in refrigerator to marinate 30 minutes.

To prepare walnuts, place olive oil in small bowl. Stir in salt and cayenne. Place walnuts in pie pan and drizzle with oil mixture, tossing to coat well. Bake in preheated oven, stirring often, about 15 minutes or until lightly toasted. Remove from oven and set aside.

To make croutons, place cheese in small bowl. Add oil and stir to blend. Spread on bread slices. Place on baking sheet and bake in preheated oven about 15 minutes or until edges are golden. Remove and set aside.

Place remaining tablespoon olive oil in large non-stick skillet and heat. Remove chicken from marinade with slotted spoon. Discard marinade. Place chicken in skillet and sauté about 4 to 5 minutes per side or until juices run clear when pierced with fork and meat is no longer pink inside. Remove chicken to cutting board. Cool slightly then cut diagonally into 1/2-inch slices. Set aside.

To make dressing, place vinegar in 2-cup measuring cup. Add thyme, salt and sugar and stir. Whisk in oil, gradually, until blended. Set aside.

Place salad greens and watercress in a large bowl. Toss with enough dressing to coat. Place remaining dressing in small serving bowl and set aside.

To serve, divide salad greens among 4 dinner plates. Divide chicken among plates, arranging in fan design on one side. Cut pears lengthwise into slices and arrange in fan design below chicken. Sprinkle pears with pepper. Divide walnuts among plates, placing below pears. Arrange 3 to 4 croutons on each plate. Pass remaining dressing.