Cooks-n-Books

Restaurant Copycats

March 27, 2025

**Arby’s Chicken Salad Sandwich**

This recipe for Arby’s chicken salad sandwich combines juicy chicken, crunchy pecans, and fresh grapes in a delightful mix. It’s a homemade twist on a beloved classic, perfect for a snack or a simple dinner.

Ingredients

* 1 cup of diced red apple
* 1 Tbsp of lemon juice (or juice from one small lemon)
* 3 1/2 cups poached chicken breast, cubed
* 1 cup of grapes
* 1 cup of chopped celery
* 1 cup of chopped pecans
* 1 cup of mayonnaise
* salt and pepper to your liking
* lettuce leaves
* 16 pieces of thick-sliced honey wheat bread

Instructions

Prepping Your Chicken:

* Start with your cooked chicken. You can either slice it into neat 1/2-inch cubes or pull it apart using two forks if you’re feeling a bit adventurous.

Mixing the Main Ingredients:

* Toss your diced chicken, apple chunks, grapes, sliced celery, and crunchy pecans in a big salad bowl. Give it a gentle mix to combine nicely.

Dressing Time:

* In a separate bowl, make the dressing by combining the mayonnaise, a splash of lemon juice, and a pinch of salt and pepper. Once it’s smooth, pour it over your chicken and fruit mixture. Mix slowly, ensuring every component gets a taste of that creamy excellence.

Patience Pays (Optional):

* Sure, you can eat it now, but the flavors blend beautifully if you let it sit for a while. Seal your salad bowl with cling film and let it refrigerate. Give it 30 minutes to an hour, or if you can resist, let it marinate overnight.

If you liked Nancy’s presentation with the cheese and apple slice you can find it here:

<https://www.chelseasmessyapron.com/chicken-salad-with-apples/> scroll to the bottom.

**Cheddars Santa Fe Spinach Dip**

Ingredients

* 10 ounces frozen spinach thawed and drained
* 1//2 cup finely diced white onion
* 8 ounces cream cheese
* 1/2 cup shredded white Cheddar cheese
* 1/2 cup shredded Monterey Jack cheese
* 1/2 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
* 2 teaspoons minced garlic
* 2 teaspoons finely minced jalapeno pepper
* 1/2 teaspoon seasoned salt

For Serving

* 1/2 cup sour cream
* 1/2 cup salsa
* 4 ounces corn tortilla chips

Instructions

* Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.
* In a medium bowl, combine the spinach, onions, cream cheese, Cheddar cheese, Monterey Jack cheese, mozzarella cheese, garlic, jalapeno pepper, and seasoned salt.
* Stir until well blended. Spread into a 1-quart casserole dish and bake for approximately 30 minutes or until the top is nice and bubbly.
* Serve with sour cream, salsa, and warmed tortilla chips.

**Cracker Barrel Carrot Cake**

Ingredients

Cake ingredients

* 3/4 cup finely chopped English walnuts
* 2 cups finely shredded carrots
* 8 ounces crushed pineapple do not drain
* 1/2 cup finely shredded coconut
* 1/2 cup raisins that have been soaked in water until plump and then drained
* 1 1/4 cup vegetable oil
* 1 1/2 cup sugar
* 1/2 cup brown sugar
* 3 eggs
* 3 cups all-purpose flour
* 2 teaspoons baking powder
* 2 teaspoons baking soda
* 2 teaspoons vanilla
* 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
* 1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
* 1/2 teaspoon ground cloves
* 1/2 teaspoon salt

Cream Cheese Frosting

* 8 ounces cream cheese
* 4 ounces butter at room temperature
* 1 teaspoon vanilla
* 2 cups powdered sugar
* 1/2 cup chopped pecans for garnish

Instructions

For the Cake

* Mix together flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, cinnamon, nutmeg, and cloves. Set aside. In a large bowl, mix the vegetable oil, sugars, vanilla and eggs until smooth and fluffy. Add pineapple, walnuts, coconut, carrots, and raisins and blend well. Gradually add flour mixture half at a time until blended through.
* Pour batter into a greased and floured 9×13 inch pan and bake at 350 degrees for about 40-50 minutes. Test with a toothpick for doneness. When cool, frost with cream cheese frosting.

For the Cream Cheese Frosting

* Blend cream cheese and butter until light and fluffy. Add vanilla and a little of the powdered sugar at a time until all has been blended well. Turn mixer on high and beat until frosting is light and fluffy. Spread frosting over the cooled cake and sprinkle with pecans.

Notes

* Do not drain the pineapple juice from the crushed pineapple.  The juice keeps the cake nice and moist.
* When preparing the raisins, make sure you soak in water until plump.  You DO want to drain the water out of the raisins before adding to the mixture.
* After spreading the cream cheese frosting on top, add some crushed pecans for an added crunch.

**Impossible Cheeseburger Pie**

Ingredients:

* 1 lb. ground beef
* 1 cup [diced onion](https://www.target.com/p/yellow-onion-each/-/A-13474244?aflt=cse)
* ½ teaspoon [salt](https://www.amazon.com/365-Everyday-Value-Salt-Fine/dp/B074J7X1DW?&linkCode=ll1&tag=theseamom-plt-20&linkId=43448ecff995dafc407027a327765f10&language=en_US&ref_=as_li_ss_tl)
* 1 teaspoon [Worcestershire sauce](https://amzn.to/3HqMccq)
* ¼ cup [ketchup](https://www.walmart.com/ip/Heinz-Tomato-Ketchup-32-oz-Bottle/15529427?aflt=cse)
* 1 cup [shredded cheddar cheese](https://www.walmart.com/ip/Kraft-Mild-Cheddar-Finely-Shredded-Cheese-8-oz-Bag/47088920?aflt=cse)
* ¾ cup [Bisquick baking mix](https://www.amazon.com/Bisquick-Pancake-Baking-Mix-20/dp/B003ZZ8E7I?&linkCode=ll1&tag=theseamom-at-cse-ingli-20&linkId=b5eaba00f04e80055e318ed8fb541fbd&language=en_US&ref_=as_li_ss_tl" \t "_blank)
* 1 cup [milk](https://www.amazon.com/365-Everyday-Value-Whole-Milk/dp/B074V3XKVV?&linkCode=ll1&tag=theseamom-at-cse-ingli-20&linkId=53e1727eee579b588b919ea0dc612222&language=en_US&ref_=as_li_ss_tl)
* 2 large [eggs](https://www.amazon.com/Vital-Farms-Organic-Pasture-Raised/dp/B097FTJC3F?&linkCode=ll1&tag=theseamom-plt-20&linkId=c352ad18a828ff114184a5b01f7cee52&language=en_US&ref_=as_li_ss_tl)

Instructions

* Preheat oven to 400°F. Grease a 9-inch pie plate (or a deep 8-inch square baking dish) with nonstick cooking spray; set aside.
* In a large skillet, brown ground beef and onion over medium heat until beef is no longer pink (about 8-10 minutes). Drain off fat.
* Stir in salt, Worcestershire sauce, ketchup, and cheese. Transfer beef mixture to the prepared pie dish.
* In a separate bowl, whisk together Bisquick, milk, and eggs, just until combined (it’s fine if you still have some lumps in the batter – do not overmix).
* Pour batter on top of beef.
* Bake for 25-30 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.

Notes

* Don’t overmix the Bisquick batter**.** Some lumps in the batter are fine! Over-mixing will activate the gluten in the flour, which results in tough, dense baked goods.
* Garnish the top of each slice with your favorite cheeseburger toppings. Good options include sliced green onions, chopped pickles or pickle relish, sour cream, lettuce, and diced tomatoes. You might even like a drizzle of ketchup or mustard.

**Max and Erma’s Tortilla Soup**

Ingredients

* 2 (10 1/2 ounce) cans cream of mushroom soup
* 2 (10 1/2 ounce) cans cream of chicken soup
* 2 (10 1/2 ounce) cans cream of celery soup
* 2 (10 1/2 ounce) cans cheddar cheese soup
* 2 (15 ounce) cans [chicken broth](https://www.food.com/about/broth-154)
* 1 (15 ounce) can [diced tomatoes](https://www.food.com/about/tomato-151)
* 1 cup [salsa](https://www.food.com/about/salsa-835) (chunky)
* 1 (4 1/2 ounce) can [diced green chilies](https://www.food.com/about/chile-pepper-323)
* 1 [onion](https://www.food.com/about/onion-148), chopped
* 1⁄4cup [fresh cilantro](https://www.food.com/about/cilantro-16), chopped
* 4 [garlic cloves](https://www.food.com/about/garlic-165), minced
* 1teaspoon [red chili powder](https://www.food.com/about/red-chile-powder-640)
* [salt](https://www.food.com/about/salt-359), to taste
* [pepper](https://www.food.com/about/pepper-337), to taste
* 4 [chicken breasts](https://www.food.com/about/chicken-221), cooked and chopped

Directions:

1. Add all to large pot. Bring to a boil and simmer 1 hour.
2. Can be topped with flour tortilla chips, cut into strips and fried.
3. or shredded cheese.
4. You can cut the recipe in half, (what we had Thursday was ½ the recipe)

**Nothing Bundt Cake**

Ingredients:

* 1 package devil's food cake mix (regular size)
* 1 package (3.9 ounces) instant chocolate pudding mix
* 1 cup sour cream
* 1/2 cup canola oil
* 1/2 cup water
* 4 large eggs, room temperature
* 3 teaspoons vanilla extract
* 1 cup semisweet chocolate chips

Frosting:

* 1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, softened
* 1/4 cup butter, softened
* 1-1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract
* 3 cups confectioners' sugar

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Grease and flour a 10-in. fluted tube pan.
2. In a large bowl, combine first 7 ingredients; beat on low speed 30 seconds. Beat on medium 2 minutes. Stir in chocolate chips. Transfer to prepared pan. Bake until a toothpick inserted in center comes out clean, 35-40 minutes. Cool in pan 10 minutes before removing to a wire rack to cool completely.
3. In a large bowl, beat cream cheese, butter and vanilla until smooth. Gradually beat in confectioners' sugar. Pipe or spread over top of cake.

**Panda Express Sweet Fire Chicken**

Ingredients

* 1 tablespoon [olive oil](https://www.amazon.com/California-Olive-Ranch-Everyday-Virgin/dp/B0099Q87JM?th=1&linkCode=ll1&tag=damndelicio02-20&linkId=ebadf4048e6e4a1491d0215da1978e32&language=en_US&ref_=as_li_ss_tl)
* 1 red bell pepper, *chopped*
* 1 ½ cups diced pineapple, *fresh or canned*
* ½ cup Thai sweet chili sauce, *or more, to taste*
* 2 green onions, *thinly sliced*

For the chicken or just buy a bag of chicken nuggets, chunks, etc.

* ½ cup vegetable oil
* 1 pound boneless, *skinless chicken breasts, cut into*
* 1- inch chunks
* 1 cup all-purpose flour
* 2 large eggs, *beaten*

Instructions

* Heat vegetable oil in a large skillet over medium high heat.
* Working one at a time, dredge chicken in flour, dip into eggs, then dredge in flour again, pressing to coat.
* Working in batches, add chicken to the skillet, 3 or 4 at a time, and cook until evenly golden and crispy, about 2 minutes on each side. Transfer to a paper towel-lined plate.
* Heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium high heat. Add bell pepper and pineapple and cook, stirring occasionally, until tender, about 3-4 minutes. Stir in chicken and Thai sweet chili sauce until well combined, about 1-2 minutes.
* Serve immediately, garnished with green onions.

**Panera’s copycat broccoli cheddar soup made vegan!**

Boil until soft: approx. 15 minutes. Then strain.

2 large russet potatoes, cubed and peeled if desired

½ cup raw cashews

1 tablespoon salt

1 teaspoon black pepper

Combine in blender with:

2 cups vegetable broth

2 cups unsweetened plant-based milk (I used soy)

4-6 garlic cloves, minced

1/3 cup nutritional yeast

1 teaspoon paprika

1 teaspoon Dijon mustard

Set aside.

In large pot, on medium heat, melt:

4 tablespoons vegan butter

Add and cook until starting to turn golden:

1 large onion, diced

½ teaspoon salt

Add and cook 2 minutes:

4 garlic cloves, minced

Whisk in until combined well:

1/3 cup flour

Add liquid from blender. May need to add another cup of broth or milk to thin to desired texture

Optional steps: Mix in 1 teaspoon of turmeric for color. And add 2-3 teaspoons of miso paste, thinned with warm water before adding to prevent clumping.

Bring to gentle simmer and add:

20 oz frozen broccoli, allow to slightly thaw, then cut into bite-sized pieces

1 cup julienned carrots

Stir until hot.

Add salt and pepper to taste! (I added about ¾ teaspoon each)