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Bing Cherry Chicken Salad with Toasted Pecans

by Marjorie Druker

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I am partial to chicken salads that contain some fruit. With each bite, you get the savory taste of the chicken with a burst of juicy, cool fruit. Toasted nuts add crunch as well as a savory punch.

Makes 4 to 6 servings

Poached Chicken:

1 ¼ pounds skinless, boneless chicken breasts
1 rib celery, cut in half
½ onion, peeled
1 slice lemon
1 bay leaf
1 teaspoon kosher salt

Place the chicken in a 4 to 6-quart pot. Add enough cold water to cover the chicken by 1 inch. Add the celery, onion, lemon slice, bay leaf, and salt. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce the heat to medium and simmer for 20 to 25 minutes, or until the chicken is cooked through. Using tongs or a slotted spoon, remove chicken from the pot. Cool completely and chop before making the salad.

Salad:

1 cup pecan halves, toasted
Poached chicken (from recipe) cut into bite-size pieces
½ cup diced Vidalia onion
1 rib celery, diced small
½ pound fresh cherries, pitted
¾ cup mayonnaise
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Line a baking sheet with foil or parchment paper. Place the pecans in a single layer on the baking sheet. Bake for 5 to 7 minutes, removing once to stir, until fragrant and toasted. Watch carefully to avoid burning.

In a medium mixing bowl place the chicken, onion, celery, cherries, and pecans. Add mayonnaise and gently stir so that all contents are lightly covered in mayonnaise. Season with salt and pepper. Refrigerate for at least 1 hour before serving.

Permission line: Recipe reprinted from *New England Soup Factory Cookbook: More Than 100 Recipes from the Nation's Best Purveyor of Fine Soup*
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