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Chicken Caesar Salad



Ingredients

4 thick slices of day old ciabatta
Sunflower oil or olive oil
Salt
2 chicken breasts
Crisp lettuce leaves, preferably Cos or Romaine
1 fat clove of garlic
2 anchovy fillets, canned in oil
Parmesan cheese
Freshly ground black pepper
5 tablespoons of mayonnaise
1 lemon

Preparation

1. 1. First prepare the croutons. Drizzle the ciabatta slices with a little oil and grind on some salt, rubbing them in. Then pull the bread into rough bite sized pieces and place on a baking tray. Bake in a preheated oven at 200 degrees or 180 degrees fan oven for about 10 minutes, until crunchy and brown at the edges.
2. 2. Next cook the chicken. You can use a non-stick frying pan, but I prefer to use a griddle pan to mark the chicken breasts. Remove any skin from the chicken
3. if the fillets are really fat, you might want to slice them into two lengthways before cooking. Place the chicken in a lightly oiled hot griddle pan and fry for 4-5 minutes on each side, or until cooked right through. Leave to rest for a couple of minutes.
4. 3. Meanwhile, prepare the sauce. Put the crushed garlic and the anchovies, chopped up very small, into a bowl and mash them together well. Grind in some black pepper, sprinkle in a good handful of grated parmesan cheese and mix them in too. Spoon in the mayonnaise and stir well. Squeeze the lemon, and drizzle in lemon juice just a little at a time until the sauce is to your taste
5. I used about 2 tablespoons of juice.
6. 4. Then put all of the components together. Wash, pat dry and tear the lettuce leaves roughly and divide most of them between the two serving dishes, or in a single dish to share if you prefer. Add most of the croutons, but not all, then spoon on the sauce and lightly toss the salad. Add the remaining lettuce and croutons on top and sprinkle on some more grated parmesan. Make a few cuts diagonally through the chicken and arrange in the centre on top of the salad.
7. Variations:
8. - Some recipes omit the anchovy from the sauce, and instead lay whole pieces of the little fish in the salad.

9 - Anchovies are not to everyone's taste. As in the original recipe, you can get the savoury flavour by using Worcester sauce instead of anchovies.

10 - For those looking for a lower fat alternative, try replacing the mayonnaise with thick Greek yoghurt, or just plain yoghurt. Or some people prefer to have the sauce served in a small jug on the side rather than mixed in, so that they can limit their calorie intake.

11 - You can spice up the dish by cooking the chicken with your favourite spice, Cajun spices for example.

12 - Some recipes include chopped avocado as one of the ingredients, or add more vegetables by mixing in chopped spring onions or halved cherry tomatoes.

13 - Try replacing the chicken with a salmon steak or tuna, or you could even try adding hard boiled eggs instead to provide protein.

14 - Caesar salad is an ideal starter to a meal, but also makes a great main course for lunch or supper. For those with a more robust appetite, you could serve a dish of buttered baby new potatoes on the side.

Cooks Note

Serves: 2

So many versions of this fresh and tasty rustic dish can be found on menus now, many of them omitting the raw egg, and using mayonnaise instead to give the sauce its creamy texture. Anchovies, so often an essential part of the dish now, were not present initially, the salty taste being provided instead by a dash of Worcester sauce. You can, of course, buy many bottled Caesar sauces in supermarkets now, but nothing beats the taste of freshly prepared food, and it isn't difficult at all to make.