

Chicken and Bacon Pasta Salad

This is a simple, tasty and filling salad that's perfect to take to school during summer.

Ingredients (Makes 4-5 servings):

1 chicken breast (approximately 200g)
10 rashers of bacon
Around 400g of pasta
1 cucumber
1 bell pepper
½ to 1 iceberg lettuce
1 stick of celery
1 small can of sweetcorn
150ml of sesame seed (*goma* ごま) dressing
50ml of mayonnaise
2-3 tablespoons of oil



Method:

1. Prep the chicken by removing any skin, place in a ziploc bag with any seasonings (fresh chopped rosemary and thyme, dried oregano, garlic powder, salt and pepper are good options), and add some oil.
2. Poach the chicken in a pan of water, over a low heat for 30 minutes.
3. Let the chicken cool in the bag before slicing into small cubes. (Steps 1-3 can be avoided if you use pre-prepared, vacuum packed 'salad chicken,' which can be used as an easy alternative).
4. Place the bacon in a dry frying pan and cook over a low/medium heat for 10-15 minutes until crispy.
5. Let the bacon cool on kitchen paper and coarsely chop into small pieces.
6. Chop the cucumber by removing the tips, slicing lengthways into quarters, then slicing into quartered discs, about 5mm thick.
7. Remove the core, seeds and white pith from the pepper; slice into strips, then into small pieces.
8. Remove the end and leaves from the celery stalk; chop into strips, then into small pieces.
9. Drain and rinse the sweetcorn.
10. Cook the pasta in salted boiling water for the time specified on the pack. When cooked, drain and immediately rinse with cold water until cold.
11. Combine all the ingredients in a large bowl, and store the pasta salad in an airtight container for up to 3 days.
12. Remove any wilted leaves from the lettuce and cut out the hard core. Shred the lettuce and store separately from the pasta.
13. For the dressing, simply combine 150ml of sesame seed dressing and 50ml of mayonnaise and mix until combined.
14. Serve the pasta salad on a bed of lettuce and top with the dressing. If you're taking this out for lunch, store the dressing in a separate container and add to the salad just before eating.

By Joni Longden