

## Grilled Summer Salad

Grilled lemon-Herb chicken with peppers, zucchini, romaine & radicchio

Serves: 4

Before getting into the recipe, a short discussion about grilling is important. I enjoy grilled foods but do so in moderation and take steps to reduce some of the health harming chemicals produced from the coals/gas and an increase of consuming advanced glycation end products (AGEs).



AGEs are harmful compounds that form inside your body or the foods you eat. They are present in uncooked foods and in foods cooked at high temperatures, especially meats, fats, sugary and highly processed foods (vegetables, grains, legumes, fish are low in AGEs). The body can eliminate them; however, consuming too many AGEs can cause oxidative stress, inflammation, and development of chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease. AGEs is a huge topic and I'll consider a separate post just on this alone in the future.

When it comes to cooking meats, high temperature, high fat, and sugar-based marinades and sauces are problematic due to the chemicals that are released from the heat source (charcoal, gas) and those formed in the foods.

To enjoy the summer grilling season, grill occasionally, and keep these tips in mind:

### The Food:

- Use vinegar or lemon/lime-juice low/no sugar marinades on meats for at least 1 hour. Rosemary is also effective. These acids reduce the chemical reaction that causes AGEs to form.
- Choose lean meats, trim excess fat and/or remove skin prior to grilling.
- Partially cook meat (steam, poach) prior to grilling.
- Cook over low-medium heat and/or indirect heat; avoid high heat.
- Flip meat frequently.
- Cook thoroughly to appropriate temperature but avoid overcooking.

### The Grill:

- Clean the grill before and after cooking to remove bits of material from the grates. When the grill is cold, use water and baking soda to clean grates.
- Regularly clean bottom of grill to eliminate build-up.
- Gas grills are more efficient and produce fewer pollutants than charcoal.
- Charcoal grilling: use natural briquettes or lump charcoal free of binders and chemicals with a chimney and paper instead of lighter fluid.

### Grilled Summer Salad Ingredients:

- Marinated chicken (see below)
- 2 sweet bell peppers (red, orange, and/or yellow), cut into quarters.
- 2 small summer squash (zucchini, yellow, green) cut in half or quarters lengthwise.
- 2 heads romaine lettuce halved lengthwise leaving root intact.
- 2 small heads radicchio, halved, leave root intact.
- Fresh/dried herbs of choice such as parsley, basil, oregano, rosemary, thyme.
- Salt and pepper
- Optional: olives, parmesan cheese, anchovy fillets

### Chicken Marinade Ingredients:

- 1-1 ½ lbs. skinless, boneless chicken thighs (or 2-2/12 lbs. bone-in) or breasts
- ¼ cup freshly squeezed lemon juice
- ¼ cup avocado oil
- 1 tsp. dried oregano
- 1 tsp. dried basil
- 1 tsp. dried parsley
- ½ tsp. sea salt
- ½ tsp. garlic granules
- ½ tsp. onion granules

Combine chicken and marinade in a glass dish.  
Cover and marinate for at least 4 hours and up to 24 hours.

### Salad Dressing:

- 2 tbsp. freshly squeeze lemon juice or apple cider vinegar
- ¼ cup avocado or olive oil
- ½ tsp. Dijon mustard
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 2 tsp. mayonnaise (I like [Primal Kitchen avocado mayo](#))

Whisk ingredients together or shake in a salad dressing cruet.

### Preparation:

Step 1: Marinate chicken for 6-24 hours.

Step 2: Prep vegetables and make dressing.

Step 3: Preheat gas grill or prepare a coal grill.

Step 4: Remove chicken from marinade and place on medium-hot grill along with peppers and squash. Note: avoid high heat and dark, crispy chicken and vegetables.

Step 5: Remove peppers, squash, and chicken from grill as they finish cooking. I prefer my vegetables to be slightly crunchy. Transfer to a platter and keep warm.

Step 6: Brush lettuce and radicchio with a little olive or avocado oil and add to the grill. Cook about 60 seconds, turn, and cook another 60 seconds or so. Lettuce will be slightly browned and softened.

Step 7: Sprinkle vegetables with a little salt, pepper, herbs, and drizzle with dressing.

Optional toppings: anchovy fillets, parmesan cheese, olives.

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