

Copycat Chicken Salad Chick

If you have ever visited the South, you know that the Copycat Chicken Salad Chick experience is something of a culinary religion. Their “Classic Carol” scoop is famous for its simplicity, creamy texture, and perfect balance of savory flavors. This recipe allows you to recreate that beloved deli-style chicken salad right in your own kitchen. Unlike other versions that rely on heavy mix-ins like nuts or fruit, this Copycat Chicken Salad Chick recipe stays true to the original by focusing on the technique: ultra-fine celery, tender poached chicken, and a specific brand of mayonnaise. It is a high-protein, low-carb lunch option that tastes even better the next day. Whether you are prepping lunch for the week or hosting a bridal shower, this authentic-tasting recipe brings the restaurant favorite straight to your table.

Why You’ll Love This Recipe

Perfect for Meal Prep

The beauty of this Copycat Chicken Salad Chick recipe is how well it holds up in the refrigerator. In fact, the flavor improves significantly after sitting for a few hours, allowing the seasonings to meld with the creamy dressing. It serves as an excellent high-protein staple for your weekly meal prep. You can portion it out into small containers for grab-and-go lunches, scoop it onto a bed of greens, or use it to make quick sandwiches throughout the week without the mixture becoming watery or separated.

Simple Ingredient Highlights

This recipe proves that you do not need a long list of fancy ingredients to make something delicious. The star here is the chicken itself, supported by a few pantry staples. The “secret” flavor profile comes from the combination of onion powder, garlic powder, and celery salt (or fresh celery), mixed with a high-quality mayonnaise. There are no complicated steps or obscure spices involved, making this Copycat Chicken Salad Chick recipe accessible to any home cook who wants a reliable, crowd-pleasing dish.

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Copycat Chicken Salad Chick (Classic Carol)



Aaron recipes

A spot-on copycat recipe for the famous ‘Classic Carol’ chicken salad. Features finely shredded chicken, crisp celery, and a creamy savory dressing.

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Prep Time 15 minutes mins

Cook Time 15 minutes mins

Total Time 30 minutes mins

Course Lunch, Salad
Cuisine American

Servings 4 servings
Calories 320 kcal

Equipment

- Stand Mixer or Food Processor
- Saucepan

Ingredients

- 1 lb chicken tenderloins
- 1/2 cup Duke's mayonnaise
- 1 stalk celery, very finely minced
- 1/2 tsp onion powder
- 1/2 tsp garlic powder
- 1/4 tsp celery salt
- 1 pinch black pepper
- 4 cups chicken broth (for poaching)

Instructions

1. Place chicken tenderloins in a pot and cover with chicken broth. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer for 10-12 minutes until cooked (165°F).
2. Remove chicken and let cool slightly. Finely mince the celery stalk.
3. Place warm chicken in a stand mixer with a paddle attachment (or use a food processor) and shred until very fine.
4. In a large bowl, combine shredded chicken, mayonnaise, minced celery, onion powder, garlic powder, celery salt, and pepper. Mix well.
5. Cover and refrigerate for at least 2 hours to allow flavors to develop before serving.

Notes

Best if chilled for at least 2 hours before serving to let flavors meld.

Keyword Chicken Salad Recipe, Copycat Chicken Salad Chick, Keto Lunch

Ingredient Highlights & Substitutions

Essential Ingredients

To get the authentic texture, use chicken tenderloins rather than large breasts; they tend to be more tender and shred easier. The mayonnaise choice matters immensely here; for the true Southern style, Duke's Mayonnaise is the gold standard because it is sugar-free and has a tangy richness that binds the salad perfectly. Finely minced celery is crucial—not big chunks, but a very fine dice that provides crunch without overwhelming the bite. A pinch of celery salt, along with garlic and onion powder, rounds out the savory profile that defines the brand's signature taste.

Smart Substitutions

If you cannot find Duke's mayonnaise, any high-quality full-fat mayonnaise will work, though you might want to add a tiny squeeze of lemon juice to mimic the tang. For a lighter version, you can swap half the mayonnaise for plain Greek yogurt, although this will change the flavor profile slightly from the original copycat. If you are in a rush, a store-bought rotisserie chicken works wonders; just be sure to remove the skin and shred the meat finely while it is still warm to absorb the dressing better.

Step-by-Step Instructions

Prep Phase

The most critical step in this recipe is the preparation of the chicken and celery. If you are poaching your own chicken, place the tenderloins in a pot of water or chicken broth, bring to a boil, and then reduce to a simmer until they reach an internal temperature of 165°F. While the chicken cooks, take your celery stalks and mince them as finely as possible. You want the celery to be almost invisible in the final salad, providing texture and flavor without being the main event. Pat the celery dry with a paper towel to prevent your salad from getting watery.

Cooking Phase

Once your chicken is cooked and slightly cooled, you need to shred it. The Chicken Salad Chick style is very fine, almost like a coarse pâté, rather than big chunks. You can achieve this by using a stand mixer with a paddle attachment to shred the warm chicken effectively in seconds. In a large mixing bowl, combine the finely shredded chicken, the minced celery, mayonnaise, and your dry seasonings. Mix thoroughly until every strand of chicken is coated. Taste and adjust the salt and pepper. Cover the bowl and refrigerate for at least two hours before serving to let the flavors marry.

Pro Tips for Perfect Results

Technique Secrets

The texture is the biggest differentiator between a homemade salad and the restaurant version. Using a stand mixer or a food processor to shred the chicken creates that uniform, spreadable consistency that makes the original so addictive. Do not chop the chicken with a knife; shredding it tears the fibers, allowing the mayonnaise dressing to permeate the meat more effectively. Also, ensure your chicken is completely dry before mixing; excess water from poaching will dilute your creamy dressing and result in a lackluster flavor.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

One common mistake is eating the salad immediately after mixing. While it is safe to eat, the flavor profile of a true Copycat Chicken Salad Chick recipe depends on the resting period. The onion and garlic powders need time to hydrate and distribute their flavors throughout the mayonnaise base. Another mistake is using “light” or “whip” style dressing. These products often contain sweeteners and different spices that will clash with the savory simplicity of this recipe. Stick to real, full-fat mayonnaise for the best results.

Serving Ideas & Pairings

Presentation & Plating

Serve this chicken salad in the traditional “scoop” shape on top of a crisp leaf of butter lettuce or romaine. It looks elegant when presented on a platter with a variety of crackers, from simple water crackers to buttery clubs. For a true deli experience, serve it as a sandwich on a flaky croissant or toasted wheat bread. You can also hollow out a tomato or an avocado half and stuff it with a generous portion of the salad for a low-carb, visually appealing lunch.

Pairing Suggestions

Since the chicken salad is rich and creamy, pair it with sides that offer a crunch or a palate cleanser. A cup of [Creamy Chicken Lasagna Soup](#) makes for a fantastic “soup and sandwich” combo that feels like a restaurant lunch special. Fresh fruit, like grape clusters or melon slices, also complements the savory chicken beautifully. For a beverage, a tall glass of sweet tea is the classic Southern accompaniment that ties the whole meal together.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I freeze this chicken salad?

It is generally not recommended to freeze chicken salad made with mayonnaise. The emulsion in the mayonnaise tends to break when frozen and thawed, causing the oil and egg to separate. This results in a watery, greasy texture that is unappealing. It is best to make a fresh batch and consume it within 3 to 5 days.

How can I make the spicy “Kickin’ Kay Lynne” version?

To transform this base “Classic Carol” recipe into the spicy version, simply add buffalo sauce, ranch dressing (powder or liquid), bacon bits, shredded cheddar cheese, and sliced jalapeños. The base recipe is a blank canvas, so you can easily adapt it to match any of the other famous variations by adding the appropriate mix-ins like cranberries and almonds.

Why is my chicken salad watery?

Watery chicken salad usually happens for two reasons: the chicken wasn't dried enough after poaching, or the celery released too much water. Make sure to drain and pat dry your chicken. Additionally, after mincing the celery, you can pat it dry with a paper towel. Also, avoid adding salt strictly to the veggies before mixing, as salt draws out moisture.

Conclusion

This Copycat Chicken Salad Chick recipe allows you to enjoy the fresh, savory taste of your favorite deli salad without leaving the house. It is economical, easy to make, and incredibly versatile. By paying attention to the texture of the chicken and the quality of the mayonnaise, you can achieve that signature spreadable consistency that fans love. Whether you keep it simple or use it as a base for other flavor variations, this recipe is sure to become a staple in your lunch rotation.

[Best Chicken Salad](#)

Ingredient Variations Table

Variation	Mix-ins to Add	Flavor Profile
Fancy Nancy	Apples, grapes, pecans	Sweet, crunchy, fruity
Sassy Scotty	Cheddar, bacon, ranch	Savory, smoky, zesty
Buffalo Barclay	Buffalo sauce, celery	Spicy, tangy, bold
Jalapeño Holly	Diced jalapeños	Spicy heat, crisp