

2026 Heritage Cooking Contest

For the past 50 years the Women's Leadership Division of the Alabama Farmers Federation has spotlighted Alabama commodities and agricultural products through the Annual Heritage Cooking Contest.

This year the event was hosted on Thursday, Sept. 10 at the Alabama Farmers Federation home office in Montgomery. The category of "chicken salad" proved to be a fan favorite with 28 of the most talented cooks from across Alabama coming together with creative and individual recipes. The recipes from the Heritage Cooking Contest have been compiled in this booklet for your pleasure and convenience.

We hope you enjoy trying all of them as much as the judges and all attendees did. Happy Cooking!

Kim Earwood

*Women's Leadership Division Director
Alabama Farmers Federation*

Chicken Salad

Sherry Brumbeloe, Blount County

1-pound cooked chicken
1/2 cup chopped apples
1/2 cup seedless red grapes
1/2 cup chopped nuts
1/2 cup chopped celery
1/2 cup cranberries
1/2 cup raisins
1/2 cup mayonnaise

Shred chicken and place in a large bowl. Cut grapes in half and add to chicken. Add nuts, cranberries and raisins, apples and celery to mixture. Add the mayonnaise and mix until well combined. Serve with crackers or on bread.

Cranberry Pecan Chicken Salad

Sylvia Peterson, Butler County

12 ounces shredded chicken
1 cup dried cranberries
1/2 cup finely chopped apple
1/2 cup chopped pecans
1 cup mayonnaise
Kinder's Big Bold Chicken Seasoning, to taste
2 tablespoons Greek yogurt

Mix all ingredients together until well combined. Chill before serving.

Cranberry Pecan Chicken Salad

Linda Loveless, Calhoun County

2 1/2 cups chopped chicken
1/2 cup dried cranberries
1/3 cup chopped pecans
1/3 cup diced celery
1/4 cup chopped green onions
3/4 cup mayonnaise
4 teaspoons lemon juice
1 tablespoon honey
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
1/8 teaspoon pepper

In a large bowl, combine chicken, pecans, cranberries, celery and green onions. In a separate small bowl, whisk together the mayonnaise, lemon juice, honey, salt, garlic powder, and pepper until well combined. Pour dressing over chicken mixture and stir until evenly coated.

Jalapeño Bacon Chicken Salad

Elli Zorn, Chambers County

3 whole chicken breasts, cooked and shredded
6 slices bacon, cooked and crumbled
8 ounces cream cheese, softened
1/4 cup mayonnaise
¼ to 1/3 cup chopped pickled jalapeños
1 to 2 tablespoons jalapeño juice
1 teaspoon garlic powder
1 teaspoon onion powder
Salt and pepper, to taste

In a large bowl, combine cream cheese, mayonnaise, jalapeños, jalapeño juice and seasonings. Stir in chicken and bacon. Adjust salt and pepper as needed.

Southern Classic Chicken Salad

Shirley Lumsden, Cherokee County

1/2 cup light or regular mayonnaise
1/2 cup light or regular sour cream
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon pepper
2 pounds skinned, boned chicken breasts, cooked and chopped
3 cups red and white seedless grapes, halved
1/2 cup red apple, chopped
1/2 cup celery, chopped (optional)
1 cup toasted pecans, chopped
Lettuce leaves (optional)

In a large bowl, stir together mayonnaise, sour cream, lemon juice, salt and pepper. Add chopped chicken and grapes, tossing gently to coat. Cover and chill for at least 1 hour. Stir in pecans and apples just before serving. Serve on lettuce leaves and garnish with fruit, celery sticks or crackers.

Rotisserie Chicken Salad

Nyla Nealey, Choctaw County

1 rotisserie chicken, diced (about 5 cups)
1/2 cup diced celery
1/2 cup diced onion
3/4 cup mayonnaise
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1/2 teaspoon poultry seasoning
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 cup grapes, halved
1/2 cup slivered almonds

In a large bowl, combine all ingredients and stir until well combined.

Mary's Italian Chicken Salad Recipe

Natalie Noles, Clay County

3 pounds chicken tenderloins
1 bottle zesty Italian dressing
1 to 2 cups mayonnaise
2 tablespoons dill relish
2 tablespoons sweet relish
2 tablespoons dried Italian seasoning
1 tablespoon seasoned salt

Heat oven to 375 F. Place chicken tenderloins in a 13-inch-by-9-inch glass baking dish. Pour entire bottle of zesty Italian dressing over chicken. Bake 40 minutes, or until the chicken is done and dressing has formed a glaze. Flip chicken a couple of times throughout baking process. Remove chicken from the pan. reserve the remaining dressing and shred by hand or with a mixer. Mix in mayonnaise and some of the reserved dressing until desired consistency is reached. Add additional mayonnaise if the mixture is too dry. Stir in the dill relish, sweet relish, dried Italian seasoning and seasoned salt until well combined.

Classic Chicken Salad

Donna Brown, Coosa County

2\3 cups mayonnaise
2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
1 teaspoon sugar
2 teaspoons dried dill weed
Salt and pepper, to taste
4 cups rotisserie chicken, diced
1\2 cup celery, diced
1\4 cup green onions, diced
1\2 cup red seedless grapes, chopped

Season whole chicken with Old Bay Season, garlic powder and paprika. Place in rotisserie oven and cook until internal temp is 160 degrees. While chicken is cooking, add mayo, Dijon mustard, sugar, dill, salt and pepper in mixing bowl. Stir until completely combined. When the chicken is done, remove the chicken from bone. Place chopped chicken into bowl with mayo mixture, add celery, onions and grapes. Combine all ingredients well. Serve with crackers or bread.

Chicken Salad Roll-Ups

Linda Daniels, Crenshaw County

3 1/2 cups chopped cooked chicken
3/4 cup mayonnaise
3 tablespoons honey mustard
1 cup sweet pepper & apple relish
1 cup chopped grapes
1 cup roasted pecans, chopped
Salt and pepper, to taste
Flour tortillas

Mix all ingredients together. Spoon onto flour tortillas and serve.

Fruity Nutty Chicken Salad

Terri Gilley, Cullman County

1 pound cooked chicken breast, chopped and cooled
1 Gala apple, chopped
1 cup sliced or slivered almonds
1 cup chopped toasted pecans
1 cup red grapes, sliced
1 cup green grapes, sliced
1 1/2 cups Hellmann's Real Mayonnaise
1 tablespoon butter

Heat oven to 350 F. Toast pecans in butter for 10 minutes. Let cool, then chop. Combine chicken, apple, almonds, toasted pecans, grapes and dried cranberries in a large bowl. Fold in the mayonnaise until evenly coated. Chill before serving.

Summer Chicken Salad

Stephanie Stevens, Dale County

1 package chicken tenders (1.4 pounds)
1 cup purple grapes, quartered
Salt and pepper, to taste
2 tablespoons sweet relish
4 hard-boiled eggs
1/2 cup mayonnaise

Season chicken to taste. Cook in a slow cooker until chicken is cooked through. Shred chicken to desired consistency. Boil eggs until yolk is firm. Shred cooked chicken until desired consistency. Chop boiled eggs and add to chicken. Add mayonnaise, salt pepper, grapes and sweet relish. Chill in refrigerator for one hour. Place in serving dish and keep stored in refrigerator.

Blueberry Chicken Salad

Donna Matthews, Elmore County

1/2 cup mayonnaise
1/3 cup chopped celery
2 tablespoons finely chopped shallot
2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
3 cups shredded cooked chicken
2/3 cup fresh blueberries
1/4 cup chopped fresh basil

In a medium bowl, whisk together mayonnaise, celery, shallot, red wine vinegar, salt and pepper. Fold in chicken and blueberries until evenly coated. Cover and refrigerate 30 minutes. Stir in basil just before serving.

Optional Serving Suggestions

Garnish with additional fresh blueberries. Serve in mini pastry cups. Serve on croissants, lettuce wraps, or toasted sourdough bread.

Maloy's Filipino Chicken Salad

Kasey Gross, Etowah County

4 bone-in, skin-on chicken breasts
2 cups dry elbow macaroni noodles
1 1/2 (20-ounce) cans pineapple tidbits, well drained
1 medium green bell pepper, diced
1/2 medium sweet white onion, diced
4 stalks celery, chopped
1 1/2 cups grated Parmesan cheese
2 cups mayonnaise
1 cup sweet salad cubes (diced pickles), well drained
1 cup sugar
1 teaspoon white pepper, or more to taste
Salt to taste, about 1 teaspoon

Boil chicken breasts with salt, if desired, until chicken reaches an internal temperature of 165 F. Let cool. Remove skin and bones, then dice chicken. Cook macaroni in reserved chicken broth according to package directions. Drain well. Drain pineapple tidbits and sweet salad cubes in a colander, discarding the liquid. Chop bell pepper, onion and celery by hand or in a food processor. In a large bowl, combine chicken, macaroni, chopped vegetables, drained pineapple, drained sweet salad cubes, Parmesan cheese, mayonnaise, sugar, white pepper and salt. Mix well. Refrigerate until chilled and the salad has thickened. This salad can be made a day ahead. Refrigerate and stir well before serving. Serve on large or small romaine lettuce leaves, with crackers or toast, or enjoy as a side dish.

Chicken Salad with Chick-fil-A Sauce

Debbie Roberts, Fayette County

2 cups cooked chicken breast, chopped or shredded
1/3 cup Chick-fil-A Sauce
1/4 cup Craisins (dried cranberries)
1/2 cup sweet apple
2 tablespoons chopped pecans or walnuts (optional)
Salt and black pepper, to taste

Place cooked chicken breast in mixing bowl. Toss in the Craisins and diced apples. Pour in Chick-fil-A Sauce and stir until everything is evenly coated. Add a pinch of salt and pepper, then let sit in the fridge for 15 minutes so the flavors blend.

Ranch Chicken Salad

Shannon Murray, Franklin County

1 cup mayonnaise
1 1/2 tablespoons ranch dressing mix
2 teaspoons dried parsley flakes
1 teaspoon garlic powder
1/2 teaspoon black pepper
3 cups cooked chicken, diced
2 ribs celery, chopped
1/2 cup cooked bacon, chopped

In a large bowl, mix mayonnaise, ranch dressing mix, parsley flakes, garlic powder, and black pepper until well combined. Add chicken, celery and bacon. Stir until everything is well blended. Cover and refrigerate for at least 2 hours, or until ready to serve.

Basic Chicken Salad

Elizabeth Usery, Geneva County

2 pounds chicken tenders, cooked and shredded (about 4 cups)

1 cup sweet pickle relish

1/2 cup mayonnaise

1 cup Miracle Whip Salad Dressing

Combine all ingredients and add anything else you choose, such as grapes, nuts or boiled eggs. Serve with crackers or on bread.

Elizabeth's Chicken Salad

Elizabeth Fletcher, Houston County

1 pound chicken, diced or shredded

1 1/4 to 1 1/2 cups mayonnaise

2 tablespoons dill pickle relish

1/2 tablespoon onion powder

1/2 tablespoon garlic powder

Salt and pepper, to taste

4 hard-boiled eggs, shredded

Cajun seasonings, to taste

Place all ingredients in a large bowl and mix until well combined. Sprinkle Cajun seasoning over the top before serving.

Classic Chicken Salad

Carole Clements, Lee County

4 bone-in chicken thighs, skin removed
1 cup hand-chopped sweet pickles
1 cup chopped celery
1/2 cup chopped parsley
1 teaspoon ground Greek spices
1 package dry ranch dressing mix
1 cup mayonnaise

Boil chicken thighs in until tender. Remove from broth, cool, debone and shred. Add the remaining six ingredients and mix well. Refrigerate. Serve as needed.

Mama K's Chicken Salad

Beth Kornegay, Jefferson County

3 pounds boneless, skinless chicken breasts
4 cups chicken bone broth
1 tablespoon garlic powder
1 tablespoon onion powder
1 teaspoon celery seeds
2 tablespoons poultry seasoning
6 hard-boiled eggs, chopped
1 1/2 cups Hellmann's mayonnaise
1/2 cup yellow mustard
1 1/2 cups sweet salad cubes
1 cup dried cranberries (optional)

Place chicken breasts, bone broth, garlic powder, onion powder, celery seeds and poultry seasoning in an Instant Pot, making sure the chicken is completely covered. Secure lid and pressure cook 30 minutes. Allow a natural pressure release for 10 minutes. Remove chicken and place it on a rack until it is cool enough to handle. Shred or chop the chicken or use the meat grinder attachment for a KitchenAid mixer. Place ground chicken in a large mixing bowl. Add chopped hard-boiled eggs, mayonnaise, yellow mustard, sweet salad cubes, and dried cranberries, if desired. Thoroughly mix all ingredients. If the chicken salad seems dry, add a small amount of the cooking broth until the desired consistency is reached.

Honey Pecan Chicken Salad

Amanda Driskell, Mobile County

1 cup mayonnaise
1/2 cup sweet relish
2 tablespoons minced onions
1 1/2 tablespoons sugar
1 tablespoon honey
1/4 teaspoon white pepper
1 teaspoon salt
3/4 cup toasted pecans, chopped
3/4 cup celery, finely chopped
1 1/2 pounds cooked chicken, shredded (about 4 cups)

In a large bowl, combine mayonnaise, relish, onion, sugar, honey, pepper and salt. Mix well. Stir in toasted pecans, celery and chicken. Cover and chill in the refrigerator. Serve on a bed of lettuce, in croissants or on crackers.

Chicken Salad Ala Plain

Rita Misso, Monroe County

5 cups chicken, finely chopped
2 cups mayonnaise
3/4 cup sweet relish
1 cups apple, chopped fine
1 1/2 teaspoons onion powder
Pepper to taste

Mix mayonnaise, sweet relish, apple and onion in a large bowl. Add chicken and mix well. Pepper may be added if desired.

Kickin' Chicken Salad

Katie Hicks, Montgomery County

1 pound boneless, skinless chicken breasts
3/4 cup Duke's mayonnaise
1 celery rib, finely minced
2 tablespoons pickled jalapeños, finely diced
1 tablespoon sriracha
2 tablespoons buffalo sauce or hot sauce (Texas Pete)
1/2 cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese
4 bacon strips, cooked and crumbled
1 tablespoon ranch seasoning
1/2 teaspoon onion powder
1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon black pepper

Bring a medium pot of water to a boil. Add chicken and cook for about 8 minutes, or until the internal temperature reaches 165 F. Remove chicken from water and let cool until easy to handle. Place cooked chicken in a food processor and pulse until finely shredded, being careful not to overmix. Chicken may also be shredded by hand. In a large mixing bowl, combine chicken, mayonnaise, bacon, celery, ranch seasoning, onion powder, garlic powder, salt, black pepper, shredded cheddar cheese, diced jalapeños, buffalo sauce and sriracha. Mix until everything is well combined. Refrigerate before serving.

The Fancy Nancy Chicken Salad Chick Copycat

Barbara Norred, Randolph County

1 whole rotisserie chicken, meat removed and shredded (about 4 cups)
2 cups Fuji apple, chopped
1 cup seedless red grapes, quartered
1/2 cup celery, finely minced
1/3 cup chopped pecans
1 cup mayonnaise
2 teaspoons ranch seasoning
Salt and pepper, to taste

In a large bowl, combine chicken, chopped apples, grapes, celery and pecans. Add mayonnaise, ranch seasoning, and salt and pepper to taste. Serve on croissants, rolls, or bread.

Southern Chicken Salad

Becky Martin, Russell County

4 to 6 cups roasted chicken, white or dark meat)
1 cup dried cranberries
1 1/2 to 2 cups mayonnaise
1 cup toasted pecans
1 cup Honeycrisp or Granny Smith apples, diced
1/2 cup celery, diced
Salt and pepper to taste

Roast chicken at 350 F until it reaches an internal temperature of 180 F. Remove chicken from bones and shred. Mix chicken, cranberries, pecans, apples, celery and mayonnaise in a medium bowl. Add salt and pepper to taste. Serve on crackers, bread or croissants.

Yaya's Chicken Salad

Pam Ayers, St. Clair County

3 cups shredded rotisserie chicken
1/2 cup Craisins, chopped
1/4 cup slivered almonds
1/4 cup garlic chives, coarsely chopped
1 cup Duke's mayonnaise
1/2 teaspoon dry mustard
1/2 teaspoon smoked paprika
Salt to taste

In a large bowl, combine chicken, Craisins, almonds and chives. Add mayonnaise, mustard, paprika, and salt, then mix well. Serve with crackers or on a fresh croissant. Recipe makes 6 to 8 servings. Preparation time is 10 minutes. For best results, refrigerate for at least 2 hours before serving.

Southwest Chicken Salad

Mindy Luker, Talladega County

4 cooked chicken breasts seasoned with taco seasoning mix
1 1/2 cups of diced fresh pineapple
1 red bell pepper, chopped
1/2 cup chopped red onion
1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro
1 medium jalapeno, seeds and ribs removed, finely chopped
2 ears of charred corn
1/2 cup black beans
1 cup shredded Mexican cheese (optional)

Dressing

1/2 cup sour cream or plain Greek yogurt
1/2 cup mayonnaise
3/4 tsp cumin
3/4 tsp chili powder
1/2 tsp salt or to taste
1/4 tsp pepper
1/4 tsp red pepper
1/2 tsp smoked paprika
1 tbsp lime juice

In a food processor chopped chicken then transfer to a large mixing bowl. Combine the next 8 ingredients. Mix all the dressing ingredients in a separate bowl and slowly toss to chicken salad mixture. Season to taste with additional lime for zing and/or salt for more overall flavor. For best flavor, chill for at least 4 hours. Serves 6.

Lucy's Chicken Salad

Lucy Lawrence, Tallapoosa County

Chicken & Broth

3 pounds chicken breasts, skin and bones attached

Kosher salt, for rubbing the chicken

4 cups chicken bone broth

5–6 whole baby carrots

1 large rib celery, broken into thirds

1 yellow onion, chopped

1 large clove garlic, pressed

1 teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon black pepper

Dash of dried parsley flakes

Dash of dried thyme

Salad

1 cup mayonnaise

1 cup tender celery, chopped

1 cup roasted pecans, chopped

1/2 cup dried cranberries

1 cup sweet white or red grapes, halved

Salt and pepper, to taste

Cherry tomatoes, quartered and lightly salted, for garnish

Rinse chicken breasts and pat dry. Rub kosher salt over chicken. Cover and let chicken rest until it reaches room temperature. In a large stockpot, combine chicken bone broth, carrots, celery, onion, garlic, salt, pepper, parsley flakes and thyme. Simmer over medium heat for about 20 minutes, or until the vegetables are just tender. Reduce the heat to low. Rinse salted chicken, pat dry and place into the broth. Cook on low for about 30 minutes, or until fully cooked. Remove pot from heat and allow chicken and broth to cool completely. Remove chicken from the broth. Discard skin and bones, then chop the chicken into small cubes or bite-sized pieces. Place in a sealed container and refrigerate until chilled. In a large bowl, combine mayonnaise, chopped celery, roasted pecans, dried cranberries and halved grapes. Season with salt and pepper to taste and stir until well combined. Add the chilled chicken and gently stir until all the ingredients are evenly coated. Spoon chicken salad into serving dish. Garnish with quartered, lightly salted cherry

tomatoes before serving. Leftovers can be stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 3 days.

Bacon Ranch Chicken Delight

Lisa Ford, Tuscaloosa County

2½ cups cooked, chopped chicken (approximately one rotisserie chicken)

4 strips fried bacon, crumbled

1 teaspoon finely chopped fresh dill

2 teaspoons chopped parsley

2 sliced green onions

½ cup ranch dressing (adjust to taste)

½ cup avocado mayonnaise

½ teaspoon Yellow or Dijon mustard

1 teaspoon seasoned salt*

1 can flaky biscuits (optional)

Mix all ingredients together and chill in the refrigerator. Serve with crackers or optional biscuits.

Seasoned Salt Recipe

2 tablespoons salt

1 teaspoon black pepper

½ teaspoon cayenne pepper

A pinch of sugar

Optional: Separate each biscuit into two sections and press down along the inside cut bottom of a muffin tin. Bake according to package directions.