



Your Commissary... It's Worth the Trip!

THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

Speedy Chicken Gyros and "Salsa"

Most of Americans' diets and grocery carts should be vegetables and fruits, whole grains, lean meats and legumes, and nonfat dairy products. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends these foods because they are full of nutrients and are usually low in sodium, fats, and added sugars. However, many times, a "healthy" diet never really gets off the ground or is maintained because the "healthy" diet becomes mundane and these "foods are bland and taste like cardboard."

Using fresh and dried herbs and spices instead of salt and sugar can be a low sodium, calorie free way to make foods taste good and increase the variety of foods and the flavors in your diet. It is amazing on how the "blah factor" of plain steamed cabbage is changed to the "WOW factor" with just a few sprinkles of garlic powder, black pepper and curry sautéed with just a bit of heart healthy olive oil. Rosemary and garlic (fresh or dried) are great seasonings for boiled potatoes and most meats. Paprika and onion powder sprinkled on boneless skinless chicken breasts, and then baked, is a crowd pleaser when topped with fresh cilantro.

Studies even show that some herbs and spices can assist with weight loss while others have great health benefits. Search the internet with this phrase, "Chart for herbs and spices" to get you started with ideas. Aim to try a new spice or herb in your cooking at least once a month.

This meal spices up some plain yogurt and cooked chicken, which then quickly results in a tasty, low fat, whole grain meal. For this meal, you will need dried Italian herb blend, cumin, fresh mint, parsley, and garlic. See the "Notes" below for suggestions on how to use some of these herbs and spices in other dishes.



Directions: Serves 4

1. Peel and remove the seeds from one 1 large or two small cucumber(s). Discard the seeds.
2. Grate $\frac{1}{2}$ of the cucumber and then squeeze it with your hands to remove excess water. Add the cucumber to 6 oz. of Greek nonfat yogurt and then stir in $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon lemon juice, 2 finely minced garlic cloves and a dash of pepper and cumin—to taste.
3. For the salsa, cut the remaining cucumber into small pieces and stir together with 1 pint of halved grape tomatoes, a thinly sliced small red onion, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup fresh, chopped mint, $\frac{1}{3}$ cup of fresh chopped parsley, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon lemon juice, and a dash of salt and pepper to taste.
4. In a small saucepan, gently simmer 2 tbsp. of oil with 2 tsp. of Italian herb blend and 2 minced cloves of garlic. Stir constantly for about one minute—the garlic should NOT brown.
5. Pour the oil over 12 oz. cooked chicken that has been diced or shredded and mix well.

6. Place 4 whole wheat pitas in the microwave with a damp paper towel covering them and warm for about 30 seconds.
7. For each pita, spread $\frac{1}{4}$ of the cucumber sauce on the pita and then add $\frac{1}{4}$ of the warmed chicken. Top each with the desired amount of salsa.
8. Serve this chicken gyro with your favorite fresh fruit. Mangos or clementines pair well with the gyro.

Notes:

- Use the Italian herb blend and parsley along with a couple minced garlic cloves to make your own marina.
- Add some cumin to your next pot of chili or use it instead of taco seasoning.

DISCLAIMER: You may use any like products of any brand in making this healthy choice meal. The pictures here are not an endorsement of these products.

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