

Curried Chicken Salad

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Recipe by Ann Johnson; Brine recipe from [Steven Raichlen](#) via [Epicurious](#)

INGREDIENTS:

For Brine:

- ¼ cup kosher salt
- ¼ cup firmly packed brown sugar
- 12 whole black peppercorns
- ½ teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 cup hot water
- 3 cups cold water
- 1 lemon, lime or orange, thinly sliced
- 1 small onion, thinly sliced
- 2 cloves of garlic, peeled and smashed OR 2 teaspoons minced garlic

For Chicken Salad:

- 4 skinless, boneless chicken breast halves
- ½ finely chopped celery
- 4 scallions, white and light green parts only, thinly sliced
- 1 cup red or black seedless grapes, halved
- 1/3 cup golden raisins
- ½ cup mayonnaise
- ¼ cup ranch-style salad dressing
- 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- 2 tablespoons curry powder
- 2 teaspoons turmeric
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper



- ½ cup cashews, almonds, or hazelnuts, toasted and chopped

DIRECTIONS:

- Make the Brine: Place the salt, brown sugar, peppercorns, red chili flakes, and bay leaves in a large bowl or covered pot. Add hot water and whisk until the salt and sugar dissolve. Add the cold water and stir.
- When the brine cools to room temperature, add the chicken, citrus slices, onion and garlic. Cover with the pot lid or plastic wrap on the bowl, and refrigerate for 2 hours.
- After 2 hours, remove the chicken from the brine, rinse in cool water, and pat dry. At this point, you may either cook the chicken right away or refrigerate for a little while longer.
- Cook the Chicken: The chicken breasts may be grilled, baked, or my preferred method when making chicken salad – poached.
- Place 5 cups of liquid into a large saucepan – mostly water but a little wine or juice may be added for flavor. Bring to a boil, add the chicken breasts, then immediately reduce the heat to a simmer.
- Cook the chicken at a gentle simmer until chicken is just cooked through, approximately 20 minutes. Remove chicken from the cooking liquid and pat dry.
- Assemble the Salad: Cut the chicken into small dice, place in a large mixing bowl.
- Add the celery, scallions, grapes, and golden raisins to the chicken. Mix together.
- In a separate small bowl, mix together the mayonnaise, ranch dressing, Dijon mustard, curry powder, and turmeric. Taste and add salt and pepper as needed. If desired, you may add more of the above ingredients to suit your taste.
- Add a few large spoonfuls of the dressing to the chicken mixture. Stir to coat the chicken, fruit and veggies with the dressing. Add extra dressing as needed. The final product should not be “gloppy” with dressing, but nicely coated throughout.
- Cover the salad and refrigerate for at least an hour to let the flavors combine.
- Before serving, sprinkle the toasted nuts on top.