



Za'atar Chicken with Tomato-Peach Salad

Serves 4

The tomato-peach salad is literally just that, with a little bit of basil, olive oil, and salt. There are a zillion ways to zhuzh it up (and you'll find them in the bonus points section), but I also think it tastes complete this way. In fact, my husband said, "I wouldn't add anything else when the ingredients are so good. It would be distracting."

If you want to use a good quality olive oil for the salad (one you wouldn't cook with), it will be all the better.

4 teaspoons za'atar
Fine sea salt
8 boneless-skinless chicken thighs

From Mission: Dinner by Kristin Donnelly

3 medium ripe but sliceable peaches
2 large or 3 medium tomatoes
3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, for drizzling
Flaky sea salt
One small handful basil leaves
Freshly ground black pepper

Season the chicken

Check your za'atar blend to see if it includes salt. If it does, taste it to see how salty it seems. (If you don't want to taste it straight, you could dip a piece of bread or cucumber into it.)

In a small bowl, toss the za'atar with salt so it tastes well-seasoned. (With the NY Shuk za'atar, I like 1 to 1 ¼ teaspoons salt for this recipe.)

In a large bowl, toss the chicken with the seasoning blend and let hang out while you make the salad.

Start the salad

Cut the tomato and peaches into even-sized wedges or chunks. Put them in a bowl together and ever so gently stir them with 2 tablespoons olive oil.

Cook the chicken

In a large, heavy skillet (such as cast iron), heat 1 tablespoon olive oil over medium-high heat, making sure to coat the bottom of the skillet with the oil.

Add half the chicken and cook until nicely golden brown on the bottom, about 4 minutes. Flip and cook until the chicken is browned on the other side and cooked through on the inside (it will be lightly tan instead of pink), about 4 minutes longer. (Reduce the heat at any time to medium if the sesame seeds threaten to burn.)

Transfer the chicken to a plate and repeat with the remaining chicken.

Finish the salad and serve

Sprinkle a few pinches of flaky salt over the tomatoes and peaches. Add the basil leaves, tearing up any large ones. Season with a little black pepper if desired, and serve right away with the chicken.

The short version

- Season your za'atar blend with salt, then rub all over the chicken.
- Cut the tomatoes and peaches how you like and gently toss them together with 2 tablespoons olive oil.
- Cook the chicken in 1 tablespoon olive oil until golden and cooked through, about 8 minutes.
- Add a few pinches of flaky salt and basil to the tomatoes and peaches and serve with the chicken.

Fun for kids

- Mix together the salt and za'atar.
- Use a kid-friendly knife to cut peaches and tomatoes.
- Mix together the peaches and tomatoes.
- Tear the basil leaves and sprinkle with flaky salt.

Swaps

- Instead of basil, use mint, cilantro, or chives.
- Instead of boneless chicken thighs, you can use thin-cut boneless (skinless or skin-on) chicken breasts, but I find the flavor of the za'atar with the richer dark meat more satisfying. (Also, you might need to adjust the cooking time.)
- Instead of cooking the chicken in a pan, you can grill it. Use medium to medium-high heat and the cooking time will be about the same.

Bonus points

- For some crunch, add chopped cucumbers or roughly chopped nuts, like pistachios, to the salad.
- Add a salty cheese, like feta, to the salad.
- Add a tiny bit of rice vinegar, white balsamic vinegar, or lemon juice in the salad if you want to punch up the acidity.
- To bulk this all out, serve with couscous, orzo, or brown rice, tossed with herbs and olive oil.