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Warm Caribbean Rice Salad with Chicken and Almonds

Created by Graham Kerr, for the Almond Board of California

Makes 4 servings

What you need:

- 1/2 cup (125 mL) slivered almonds
- 1 1/2 teaspoons (7 mL) extra light olive oil, divided
- 2 6-ounce chicken breasts, boneless, skin on
- 4 cups (1000 mL) spinach, washed and stems removed
- 1 cup (240 mL) orange segments
- 1/4 cup (50 mL) chopped cilantro

Dressing

- 1/2 cup (125 mL) finely chopped sweet onions
- 1 Caribbean or jalapeno chili, seeds removed and finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon (5 mL) jerk seasoning
- 1 1/4 cups (310 mL) orange juice (divided into 1 cup and 1/4 cup)
- 1 teaspoon (5 mL) arrowroot
- 1/4 teaspoon (1 mL) salt
- 1/2 teaspoon (2 mL) grated orange zest
- Yellow Rice with Cilantro (recipe below)

How you prepare:

Heat a large skillet on medium high. Add almonds and cook, stirring, until they turn gold. Tip into a bowl and set aside. Heat half of the oil in a skillet and cook the chicken breasts, turning several times, until almost cooked through, about 15 minutes. Remove to a hot plate and cover to finish cooking. While the chicken is cooking, make the yellow rice (instructions below) and dressing.

To make the dressing: Heat the remaining oil in a saucepan. Add the onions, chile, and jerk seasoning and cook, stirring, until wilted and translucent but not brown, 5 minutes. Pour in 1 cup of the orange juice and boil to reduce about 5 minutes. Combine the arrowroot and remaining orange juice and stir into the sauce to thicken. Add the salt and orange zest. Remove the skin from the chicken breasts and cut chicken into bite-size pieces. Toss the chicken, orange segments, half of the toasted almonds, cilantro and spinach together. Add the hot rice and dressing, and toss again to mix thoroughly. Serve topped with the remaining toasted almonds.



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Yellow Rice with Cilantro :

2/3 cup (150 mL) long grain white rice

1 1/3 cups (320 mL) water

1/4 teaspoon (1 mL) saffron threads or a pinch of powdered saffron

1/4 teaspoon (1 mL) salt

1/4 cup (50 mL) chopped cilantro

Combine the rice, water, saffron and salt. Cover and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to very low and cook 10 minutes or until the rice is tender and the liquid is gone.

Set aside with the lid on for 5 minutes. Fluff with a fork and stir in the cilantro.

Tips: Roasted whole or slivered almonds give a whole different kind of crunch to green salads. They combine perfectly with broccoli salad, salads with pears and any kind of spinach salad.

Salsa idea: Combine 1 cup orange segments, 1/4 cup roasted, slivered almonds and 1/4 cup chopped cilantro. Scatter over broiled white fish, pork chops or chicken breasts. If you're serving the yellow rice separately – it's terrific served with grilled chicken, fish and pork – just add 1/4 cup of roasted, slivered almonds for flavor, texture and extra vitamin E.

Nutritional Analysis: per serving

Calories: 388	Fibre: 5 g
Fat: 12 g	Cholesterol: 48 mg
Sat Fat: 1.6 g	Sodium: 218 mg
Mono Fat: 6.6 g	Calcium: 112 mg
Poly Fat: 2.6 g	Magnesium: 105 mg
Protein: 25 g	Potassium: 726 mg
Carb: 47 g	Vitamin E: 4.8 mg*

* total alpha-tocopherol equivalents

Recipe used with permission from the Almond Board of California. Visit www.almondboard.com for more great recipes.

Andrea Holwegner, known as the Chocoholic Dietitian, is founder and president of Health Stand Nutrition Consulting Inc., a member of the Canadian Association of Professional Speakers and a media expert for the Dietitians of Canada. For nutrition counselling information and to sign up for a free monthly newsletter loaded with nutrition tips, recipes and more visit www.healthstandnutrition.com. Twitter @chocoholicRD.

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