

Thinking Outside the Box!



Canned Chicken Salad Sandwich--Yes Way!

A pantry stocked with at-the-ready items can really help when life gets hectic and there isn't time to cook a full dinner and/or there just doesn't seem to be anything on hand to pull together a meal. Pantry staples tend to have a longer shelf life than fresh items and can either be pulled upon in a pinch and/or combined with fresh ingredients to make a nutritious, tasty meal while keeping your diet goals on track.

Using canned and boxed items or other consumer packaged goods is not forbidden in building a healthy eating pattern. Frankly, the Dietary Guidelines for Americans does not exclude them. The key is to choose items that have undergone the least amount of processing and assess the Nutrition Facts Label and list of ingredients. For example, when selecting grain products such as rice, pastas, and breads, choose whole grain or whole wheat items. Check the ingredients and be sure "whole" appears as one of the first. For canned goods aim for items that are low in sodium, have no added salt or sugars. It's okay for items to have some sugar or carbohydrates listed, as sugar (especially with fruits and dairy products) occur naturally in such foods, and they are not "bad" for you. Look for "added sugars" on the Nutrition Facts Label.

Canned meats such as chicken and fish, can be a great, economical source of lean protein in your diet. Oftentimes, sodium is used to preserve such items and this does not mean they are off limits. Look for products that are lower in sodium and qualify as heart healthy. Many such items have earned the heart healthy seal, which is not a marketing ploy, but a health claim that must meet federal regulations. By law, to list these terms, "low sodium" or an icon that has "heart healthy", on their packaging they have to meet specific nutrition standards for each nutrition claim.

Along with looking for the dietitian approved tag in your commissary, begin looking at the statements and/or icons on your packaged goods. Key ones to look for are "No Added Sugar," "Heart Healthy," "Low Sodium" and/or "whole grain." Use the Dietitian Approved Tagging system along with taking time to look at these packages and become more knowledgeable about what you are putting in your basket.

This meal features canned chicken as a base in building the meal for a hearty sandwich. The next time you are in the commissary, look for this item with the "heart healthy" icon and/or a dietitian approved tag next to it. If there is not one, then choose one with the lowest amount of sodium.



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| Nutrients per serving: | Carbs: 32.21 g |
| Calories: 355 | Fiber: 6.26 g |
| Protein: 26.48 g | Sodium: 755.59 mg |
| Fat: 13.46 g | Sat. Fat: 2.61 g |

Ingredients: 4 servings

- 10 oz. canned chicken, drained
- 1 medium celery stalk, thinly sliced
- 1 small dill pickle, chopped
- 3 tbsp. nonfat Greek yogurt
- 1 tsp. balsamic vinegar
- ½ small avocado, mashed
- 2 tbsp. sliced almonds
- 1 tbsp. golden raisins (optional)
- 1 tbsp. red onion thinly sliced
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 8 slices whole wheat bread
- Lettuce and tomato to top (optional)

Directions: (No Cooking! 10 - minute prep)

1. Using the mixing bowl, add all the ingredients, less the sliced bread. Gently toss until well blended. If the salad is a bit too thick, add a little more Greek yogurt.
 2. Serve immediately by placing ¼ of the mixture on one slice of bread, top with desired vegetable toppings such as lettuce, tomato, or sprouts. Top with another slice of bread.
 3. To complete the meal, serve the sandwich alongside a piece of fresh fruit or a tossed leafy green salad
- Make this in advance and let it set in the fridge for a few hours for the flavors to blend.
 - Consider using the salad to top a bed of leafy greens drizzled with Italian dressing.
 - Rather than use bread, consider serving this in a pita and adding cucumber.
 - Once made, keep the salad in the fridge for a quick after school snack, served alongside a few whole wheat/grain crackers and provolone cheese. The chicken salad will keep 2-3 days if covered and stored in the fridge.

Tips

- Toasting the bread before assembling adds another texture to this meal that can make it even more enjoyable.

DISCLAIMER:

THIS RECIPE DOES NOT CONSTITUTE AN ENDORSEMENT BY DOD OF ANY INDIVIDUAL VENDOR. ANY PRODUCT OF SIMILAR SPECIFICATION MAY BE USED TO MAKE THIS HEALTHY CHOICE MEAL.

FOR ADDITIONAL MEAL SOLUTIONS, PLEASE [CLICK HERE](https://www.commissaries.com/healthy-living/healthy-eats) [COMMISSARIES.COM/HEALTHY-LIVING/HEALTHY-EATS](https://www.commissaries.com/healthy-living/healthy-eats)