

Chicken with haricots and creamy basil dressing by Diana Henry

30 Minutes

Serves 4

Ingredients

For the dressing

50g basil leaves

½ small garlic clove, crushed

¼ tbsp. white balsamic vinegar

Salt and pepper

6 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil (fruity, not bitter)

6 tbsp. double cream

1 ½ tbsp. lemon juice, or to taste

For the chicken

3 tbsp. olive oil

4 chicken breasts, skin on or off, as you like

150g green beans, topped but not tailed

2 shallots, finely sliced

400g can of haricot beans, drained and rinsed

150g cherry tomatoes, halved

½ tbsp. lemon juice

2 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil

Method

Best lukewarm rather than hot, so it's good for summer. You can poach the chicken rather than sautéing (though remove the skin before serving if you poach it). Make the dressing just before you start the dish, as it discolours if it sits for long. Don't get whacking great chicken breasts, medium-sized are better here.

Make the dressing: put the basil into a food processor with the garlic, vinegar, seasoning and extra virgin olive oil. Whizz until blended. Scrape into a bowl and stir in the cream and lemon juice. The mixture will thicken, so you may want to add a little water to let it down again. (Not too much, though. I like this spoonable rather than pourable.) Check the seasoning.

Now on to the chicken. Heat the regular olive oil in a large frying pan, season the chicken and fry it, (skin side down if it's skin on), for four or five minutes, over a medium-high heat to get a good colour, then reduce the heat. Turn and cook for another four or five minutes. Cut into the chicken on the underside to check for doneness; the juices should be clear with no trace of pink. Set aside.

Boil or steam the green beans until tender but still al dente. Put these, the shallots, haricot beans and tomatoes in a bowl and season well. Stir in the lemon juice and extra virgin olive oil. Divide between four plates and put a chicken breast on each. Spoon over the basil dressing.