

Pan Seared Jalapeño Lime Chicken Breast

Two of my favorite flavors to use with my Ava Jane's Kitchen Avocado Oil are jalapeños and lime. Not only do they pair perfectly with each other, they go great with the floral, exotic flavor of the avocado oil. So it seems only fitting that a nicely browned chicken breast cooked in lime juice with jalapenos and onions would be delicious, right? Right.

Getting a perfectly browned chicken breast that is golden and flavorful on the outside and tender and juicy on the inside is a mystery to a lot of people, and rightfully so. Chicken breast doesn't have a lot of fat, which makes it great for dieting, but that also makes it easy to overcook. Not to mention, if you don't do it right, it can also stick to the pan.

The key to this technique is seasoning your chicken with salt and refrigerating it for a few hours. I'm going to be honest, I don't know exactly why this works, but it does. I've cooked a lot of chicken breasts, and this method yields juicy, browned chicken every time.

Now normally, I would recommend using Colima Sea Salt, but I don't recommend that here. You want the salt to penetrate the chicken breast, and the coarse texture of the Colima Sea Salt won't do that. You can, however, crush it in a mortar and pestle or spice grinder if you like, but I like to add it at the end for finishing.

After you've removed your chicken from the fridge, cooking it is pretty easy, but there are a few things to take note of. First, use a heavy stainless steel or cast iron pan. Non-stick pans are great if all you want is for your chicken to slide out of your pan (and it will) but it won't be browned, which is what we're going for here. You're going to heat your pan first, let it get hot, and then add your oil. When it shimmers, you're going to cook your veggies first, remove them, add your chicken, and then — and this is the important part — leave it alone. Don't flip, move, or touch it for several minutes. When you first try to flip it, if it resists at all, leave it longer. It will release when it's ready, and you'll see a perfectly cooked, browned crust. Then continue cooking for a few more minutes, until it's about 160 degrees on a thermometer. If you don't have an instant read thermometer, it's really a lifesaver for things like this.

When it's done, it will be juicy and flavorful, and have a kick of heat from the jalapeños and a slight tang from the lime juice. You can eat this with your favorite vegetable (corn on the cob would be delicious) or slice it up and add it to a salad. And the best part is that you can use this method with whatever seasonings and flavors you want.

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Serves 2

Prep time: 25 minutes, plus chilling

Ingredients:

2 boneless, skinless chicken breasts

1 teaspoon fine sea salt or kosher salt
3 tablespoons Ava Jane's Kitchen Avocado Oil
1 small onion, sliced
1 jalapeño pepper, seeded and sliced
1 clove garlic, minced
Juice of 1 lime
Colima Sea Salt
Chopped green onions or cilantro

Directions:

Season the chicken breasts with the salt and lay on a sheet pan or plate. Refrigerate for at least an hour, but up to 8 hours. Remove from the fridge before ready to cook and pat dry with paper towels.

Heat a stainless steel or cast iron skillet over medium high heat and add the onions and peppers. Cook until softened and add the garlic. Continue cooking for about 30 seconds and add the lime juice. Remove the vegetables with a slotted spoon or spatula, leaving as much of the oil in the pan as possible. Make sure not to leave any garlic pieces in the pan.

Add the chicken to the pan and let cook until it releases easily with a spatula. Flip, and continue cooking until chicken registers a temperature of 160 degrees F at the thickest part of the breast. Let rest for 5-10 minutes.

Serve with the onions and peppers, and your favorite side dishes. Sprinkle with fresh herbs and Colima Sea Salt.