



Sweetness, crunch and acidity combine in this ancho-spiked melon salad.

Mexico City's Fruit Salad

*Salt, chili powder and a splash of lime add depth, complexity to a **melon-cucumber salad***

Chili-Lime Melon Salad

Start to finish: 30 minutes (15 minutes active) | Servings: 4

CUCUMBER GAVE THIS SALAD nice color and crunch, but 2 cups cubed honeydew can be substituted. We liked the subtle flavor of light agave in the dressing; a mild honey, such as clover honey, also works. If queso fresco is not available, use feta but omit the $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt used to season the cheese. The dressing can be made and the melons and cucumber prepped a few hours in advance, but don't toss the salad more than 30 minutes before serving. This recipe is easily doubled.

Don't use regular chili powder.

It's typically a blend that includes chilies, cumin, oregano and garlic, and won't taste right in this dish.

—ELIZABETH GERMAIN

1 tablespoon ancho chili powder

1 teaspoon lime zest, plus $\frac{1}{4}$ cup
lime juice (4 limes)

3 tablespoons light agave syrup

Kosher salt

2 cups cubed seedless red
watermelon (about 8 ounces),
cold

2 cups cubed cantaloupe
(about 8 ounces), cold

$\frac{1}{2}$ English cucumber, halved
lengthwise, seeded, cut into
bite-size pieces

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup finely chopped fresh mint
(optional)

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup crumbled queso fresco

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground black pepper

■ **In a small, dry skillet** over medium, toast the chili powder, stirring, until fragrant, 1 to 2 minutes. Transfer to a large bowl and let cool completely.

■ **Whisk in the lime zest** and juice, agave and $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon of salt. Add the watermelon, cantaloupe, cucumber and mint, then toss to coat. Cover and refrigerate for at least 15 minutes or up to 30 minutes.

Meanwhile, in a small bowl, toss the queso fresco with $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt and the pepper.

■ **Using a slotted spoon**, transfer the salad to a serving bowl and top with the queso fresco. ♦