

Take it Outside

10 Chicken Recipes Worth Repeating All Summer Long



getjoyfull



BY EMILY MARDELL, REGISTERED DIETITIAN
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ALBERTA CHICKEN PRODUCERS

*Salads
& Bowls*

*Bakes
& Boats*

*Wraps
& Tacos*

*From
the Grill*

A NOTE FROM EMILY

Summer belongs outside.

So does the food.

There is something about an Alberta summer that changes the way we eat. We stop looking for sit-down dinners and start reaching for food that travels — to the ballpark, the lake, the sideline, the tailgate. Food that holds up in a cooler, tastes great and can be eaten standing up without anyone complaining.

That is exactly what this collection is. Ten chicken recipes I come back to every single summer — not because they are fancy, but because they work. They fuel practices and road trips and lazy Sunday afternoons in equal measure. Most take under 30 minutes. All of them are genuinely delicious the next day.

Fresh Alberta chicken is the star throughout. Versatile, protein-rich, and equally at home in a sesame bowl, a grilled sandwich, a taco platter, or straight off a skewer. When you choose Alberta chicken, you are supporting the family farms in your own community — and that means something to me.

I hope these recipes find their way into your coolers, your backpacks, and your after-practice spreads. Into the meals your family asks for again and again. That is the highest compliment a recipe can ever receive.



Emily Mardell

Registered Dietitian · Mama of Three · @GetJoyfull

FROM THE DIETITIAN

Why chicken?

Beyond being delicious and easy to cook, fresh Alberta chicken is one of the most nourishing proteins you can put on your family's table.

31g

Protein per 100g serving of chicken breast. Protein builds and repairs muscle, supports skin and hair, helps fight infection, and keeps energy stable all day long.

15

Essential nutrients in every serving. Chicken is one of the most nutrient-dense proteins going — packing far more than just protein into every bite.

ESSENTIAL NUTRIENTS

With essential minerals like iron, zinc and selenium, chicken can help support a healthy immune system and metabolism, contributing to your overall well-being.

VITAL ELECTROLYTES

Skinless breast provides 12% of your daily potassium per serving — supporting bone health, kidney function, and healthy muscles all summer long.

HEME IRON

Thighs and legs contain roughly double the iron and zinc of breast — a key nutrient to support immune function, energy, and growth in active kids and women.

COMPLETE PROTEIN

Chicken contains all nine essential amino acids your body cannot make on its own — the building blocks your muscles, tissues, and immune system depend on daily.

"When you choose fresh Alberta chicken, you are supporting family farms right here in your community. That is food with real roots."

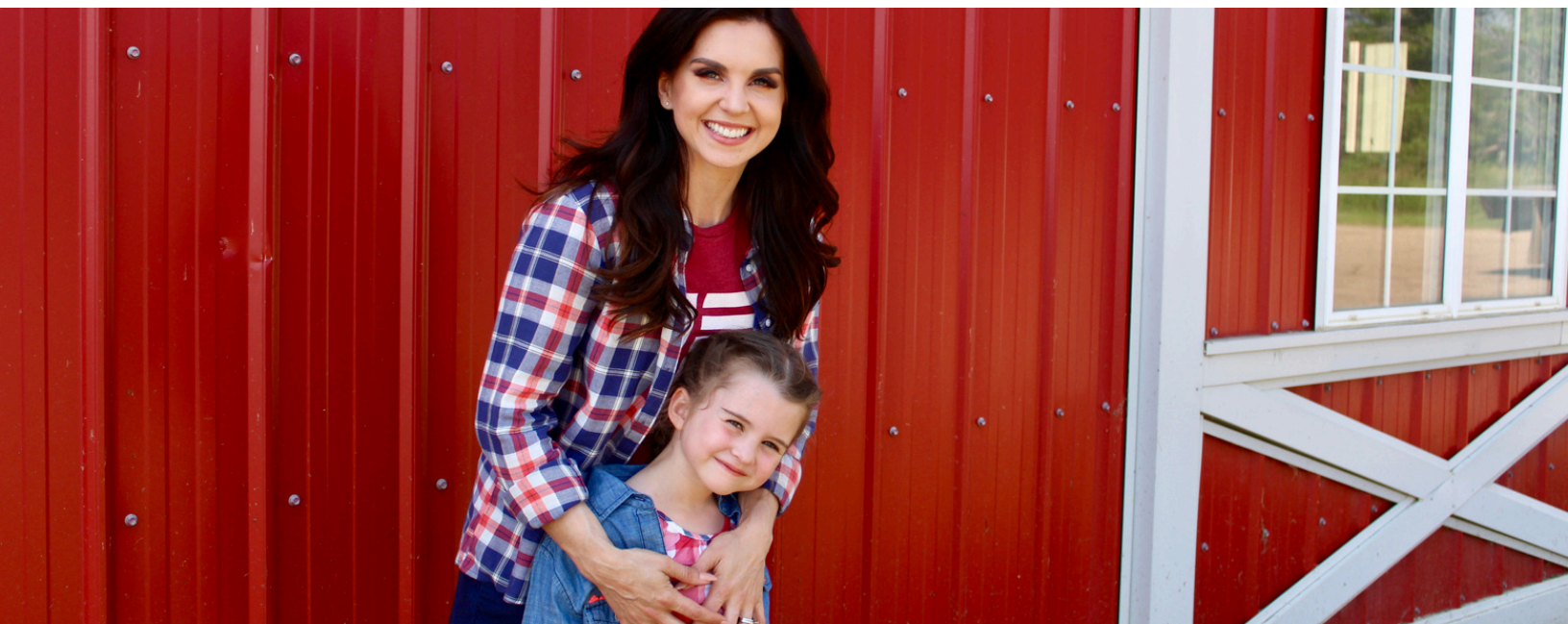
EMILY MARDELL, RD

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Emily Mardell, RD

Emily Mardell is a Registered Dietitian, busy mama of three, and proud Alberta foodie. She is passionate about quality ingredients and creating delicious, nourishing recipes that bring families together. Follow her on social media for nutrition advice and tips to grow food joy and fill up on family time.

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Partnership with Purpose

Special thanks to Alberta Chicken Producers for their ongoing collaboration and support of Food Banks Alberta and community food security all year long. From this Dietitian Mama, and local food banks province-wide — thank you, farmers.

Alberta Chicken Producers supports family chicken farms across Alberta. Learn more at chicken.ab.ca

"Good food brings people together. That has always been the heart of GetJoyfull — and it is exactly why this partnership with Alberta Chicken means so much to me."

EMILY MARDELL, RD

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The Crunch Salad

Mandarin Orange Chicken & Greens

Bright mandarin oranges, crunchy snap peas, toasted almonds, tender chicken, and a savoury sesame-tamari dressing. Inspired by a restaurant salad Emily's mom used to order in Corner Brook — and just as good the next day.

4	30 min	GF with tamari
SERVES	TOTAL	OPTION



SALAD

- 3 cups napa cabbage, sliced
- 1 cup red cabbage, sliced
- 1 cup shredded carrots
- 1 cup sugar snap peas, sliced
- 4 green onions, sliced
- 2½ cups cooked chicken, shredded
- 1 cup mandarin orange segments
- 1 cup fresh parsley
- ½ cup sliced almonds, toasted

DRESSING

- ¼ cup rice vinegar
- 2 tbsp toasted sesame oil
- 2 tbsp canola oil
- 2 tbsp tamari
- 1 tbsp Alberta honey
- 1 tsp ginger, grated
- 1 garlic clove

- 1 Build the salad. In a large bowl combine cabbages, carrots, snap peas, green onions, and chicken.
- 2 Make the dressing. Shake all dressing ingredients in a jar until smooth.
- 3 Toss & finish. Pour dressing over salad and toss well. Gently fold in mandarin oranges, parsley, and almonds.
- 4 Serve. Top with sesame seeds if desired. Pack dressing separately for on-the-go.



NUTRITION PER SERVING

380 cal 30g protein 22g carbs 18g fat 5g fibre

EMILY'S DIETITIAN TIPS

- Pack dressing in a small jar and toss on-site — keeps everything crunchy in transit.
- Rotisserie chicken makes this a 10-minute assembly — a complete protein shortcut.
- Swap almonds for sunflower seeds for a nut-free, school-safe version.
- Add edamame for extra plant protein — great for post-sport recovery.

The Lunchbox Bowl

Ginger Chicken Egg Roll in a Bowl

All the savoury sesame-ginger goodness of an eggroll — no wrapper required. One pan, 25 minutes, and it packs beautifully into a thermos the next day. Dinner tonight, take it outside tomorrow.

4 **25 min** **One pan**
SERVES TOTAL CLEAN-UP



INGREDIENTS

- ½ cup tamari or soy sauce
- 2 tbsp toasted sesame oil
- 2 tbsp rice vinegar
- 5 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tbsp fresh ginger, grated
- ½ tsp Chinese 5-spice powder
- 2 tsp canola oil
- 8 green onions (whites & greens separate)
- 1 lb extra-lean ground Alberta chicken
- 2 bags (12 oz) broccoli slaw or coleslaw mix

OPTIONAL GARNISHES

- Black sesame seeds
- Sriracha
- Avocado
- Cilantro

- 1 Make the sauce. Whisk tamari, sesame oil, rice vinegar, garlic, ginger, and 5-spice. Set aside.
- 2 Sauté. Heat canola oil over medium. Add white onion pieces, cook 2–3 min until softened.
- 3 Cook the chicken. Add ground chicken and cook through, 5–6 min, breaking it up as it goes.
- 4 Add slaw & sauce. Stir in broccoli slaw and sauce. Cook until crisp-tender, 6–7 min.
- 5 Finish. Fold in green onion tops. Divide between bowls and garnish as desired.



NUTRITION PER SERVING

340 cal 34g protein 14g carbs 16g fat 5g fibre

EMILY'S DIETITIAN TIPS

- Preheat your thermos with boiling water 10 min before filling — stays warm for hours at the park or sideline.
- Pack garnishes in small silicone cups so texture holds in transit.
- Freeze double-batch portions in Souper Cubes — reheat, pour, and go.
- Chinese 5-spice is the secret depth here — don't skip it.

The Power Bowl

Grilled Sesame Chicken & Tahini Rice Bowl

Grilled sesame chicken thighs over rice with edamame, purple cabbage, and a rich tahini dressing. Colourful, energizing, and exactly the kind of meal that fuels a full summer day.

4 **40 min** **Iron-rich thighs**
SERVES TOTAL ADVANTAGE



CHICKEN & MARINADE

- 6 boneless skinless chicken thighs
- ¼ cup tamari
- 1 tbsp honey
- 1 tbsp sesame oil
- 1 tbsp rice vinegar
- 1 tbsp ginger, grated
- chilli flakes

TAHINI DRESSING

- 2 tbsp sesame oil
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tbsp soy sauce
- 2 tbsp rice vinegar
- 1½ tbsp maple syrup
- 2 tbsp tahini
- 2 garlic cloves
- 1 tbsp ginger

- 1 Marinate. Combine marinade ingredients, add chicken, refrigerate 30 min to 3 hours.
- 2 Grill. Cook on medium-high grill or 400°F air fryer 8–10 min until golden and cooked through. Rest 5 min then slice.
- 3 Dressing. Whisk all dressing ingredients until smooth and creamy.
- 4 Build & dress. Divide rice between bowls, arrange veg, top with chicken. Drizzle with tahini dressing, garnish with spring onions and sesame seeds.

BOWL

- 2 cups cooked rice
- 2 cups purple cabbage, shredded 2 carrots, thinly sliced
- 1 cup edamame, shelled & cooked
- 1 red pepper, thinly sliced
- 4 spring onions, sliced



NUTRITION PER SERVING

480 cal 36g protein 34g carbs 20g fat 7g fibre

EMILY'S DIETITIAN TIPS

- Chicken thighs have ~double the iron and zinc of breast — a real mineral win for active kids and women.
- Batch-grill chicken Sunday and build bowls all week. Tahini dressing keeps 5 days in the fridge.
- Edamame adds plant protein and fibre — a great double-duty ingredient for growing athletes.

The Sweet Potato Boat

BBQ Chicken & Apple-Dijon Slaw

Tender sweet potato, tangy BBQ chicken, and creamy Apple-Dijon coleslaw all in one. A Mardell household staple — great warm from the oven, and just as good packed cold the next day.

4 **70 min** **Make-ahead**
SERVES TOTAL FRIENDLY



POTATOES

- 4 small sweet potatoes
- 1 tbsp canola oil
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- Salt & pepper

APPLE-DIJON SLAW

- 1½ cups red cabbage, shredded
- 1½ cups green cabbage, shredded
- 1 medium carrot, shredded
- ¾ cup Greek yogurt
- ¼ cup mayonnaise
- 2 tbsp Dijon mustard
- 2 tbsp honey
- ¼ cup apple cider vinegar

- 1 Bake. Preheat oven to 375°F. Poke, oil, and season potatoes. Bake 45–60 min until fork-tender.
- 2 Make slaw. Whisk dressing ingredients until creamy. Toss with shredded cabbage and carrot.
- 3 Load. Mix chicken with BBQ sauce. Halve potatoes, scoop out centre, fill with BBQ chicken. Bake 10 min more.
- 4 Finish. Top hot boats with creamy slaw. Garnish with pumpkin seeds, green onion, and hot sauce.

BBQ CHICKEN

- 2 cups cooked chicken, shredded
- ½ cup BBQ sauce

GARNISH

- ¼ cup pumpkin seeds
- 2 green onions
- hot sauce (optional)



NUTRITION PER SERVING

320 cal 24g protein 45g carbs 12g fat 5g fibre

EMILY'S DIETITIAN TIPS

- Short on time? Swap homemade slaw for 4 cups of store-bought cabbage mix.
- Reserve the scooped-out potato for a frittata or soup — nothing wasted.
- Greek yogurt in the dressing adds protein without changing the flavour.
- Pumpkin seeds add magnesium and zinc — a crunchy nutritional bonus on every bite.

The Caprese

Pesto Chicken with Fresh Mozzarella & Balsamic

Pan-seared chicken topped with basil pesto, bubbling fresh mozzarella, grape tomatoes, and balsamic glaze. Restaurant-worthy and ready in 25 minutes. Serve warm with greens — or slice cold in to a wrap the next day.

4-6	25 min	38g protein
SERVES	TOTAL	PER SERVING



INGREDIENTS

- 4 boneless skinless chicken breasts
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- salt & pepper
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- ½ cup basil pesto
- 8 slices fresh mozzarella
- 2 cups grape tomatoes, quartered
- 12 fresh basil leaves, chopped
- ¼ cup balsamic glaze
- 6-8 cups fresh mixed greens

- 1 Sear. Heat oiled oven-proof pan to medium-high. Season chicken and cook 6-8 min per side until cooked through.
- 2 Broil. Top each breast with 2 tbsp pesto and 2 mozzarella slices. Broil 2-3 min until cheese is bubbly and golden.
- 3 Topper. Combine tomatoes, salt, pepper, and half the basil in a small bowl.
- 4 Plate & serve. Spoon tomatoes over chicken. Drizzle with balsamic glaze and garnish with remaining basil. Serve with mixed greens.



NUTRITION PER SERVING

380 cal 38g protein 10g carbs 14g fat 3g fibre

EMILY'S DIETITIAN TIPS

- Slice cooked Caprese chicken and add to a fresh pita with extra arugula and pesto – one of the best next-day lunches going.
- Chicken breast delivers over 30g protein per 100g cooked — a delicious way to tackle hunger and post-workout muscle-building and repair.

The Platter

Greek Chicken Tacos with Tzatziki & Hummus

Put the food in the middle and let everyone take it from there. This build-your-own spread works on a backyard table, a picnic blanket, or a tailgate. Kids eat more when they serve themselves — and this one makes that very easy.

4-6 **20 min** **Build-your-own**
SERVES TOTAL FORMAT



YOU'LL NEED

- 2 cups cooked chicken, shredded 8-10 small whole-grain tortillas, warmed
- Shredded lettuce
- Sliced cucumber
- Cherry tomatoes, quartered
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup tzatziki
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup hummus
- 1 ripe avocado, sliced
- Small handful pumpkin seeds
- Lemon wedges
- Dried oregano

- 1 Warm the tortillas. Wrap in a damp paper towel and microwave 30 sec, or warm in a dry pan until pliable.
- 2 Set the spread. Pile tortillas at one end of a large board. Heap chicken in the centre. Nestle small bowls or a muffin tin of veg, dips, and extras all around.
- 3 Let everyone build. Model your own combo — 'I'm adding pumpkin seeds for crunch!' — and watch curiosity spark.
- 4 Pack leftovers. Store chicken and toppings separately. Toss into a pita or scatter over quinoa for tomorrow.



NUTRITION PER SERVING 420 cal 28g protein 38g carbs 16g fat 6g fibre

EMILY'S DIETITIAN TIPS

- Research shows kids eat more produce when they self-serve from a shared platter — let them lead.
- A muffin tin makes a perfect portable topping tray for picnics and tailgates.
- Most kids need 15+ calm, no-pressure exposures before a new food feels familiar — keep offering.

The Quesadilla

Chicken, Black Bean & Corn Salsa

Crispy, cheesy, and ready in under 20 minutes. Lean chicken, fibre-rich black beans, and a bright corn salsa — the kind of weeknight meal that doubles as tomorrow's cold lunch without any effort at all.

4 **20 min** **Crowd-pleaser**
SERVES TOTAL EVERY TIME



QUESADILLAS

- 2 cups cooked chicken, shredded
- 1 cup black beans, rinsed & drained
- 1 cup grated cheese
- ½ red pepper, diced
- 2 green onions, chopped
- 4 whole grain tortillas
- 1–2 tsp canola oil

BLACK BEAN & CORN SALSA

- ½ cup black beans
- ½ cup corn
- 1 tomato, diced
- 2 tbsp red onion, finely chopped
- Small handful cilantro, chopped
- Juice of ½ lime
- 1 tsp canola oil ½ avocado, diced (optional)

- 1 Make the salsa. Combine all ingredients, fold in avocado if using. Set aside.
- 2 Fill. Mix chicken, black beans, red pepper, and green onion. Add filling to one half of each tortilla, top with cheese, fold over.
- 3 Cook. Heat a little oil in a skillet over medium. Cook 2–3 min per side until golden and cheese is melted.
- 4 Slice & serve. Cut into wedges and serve with fresh salsa.



NUTRITION PER SERVING

500 cal 34g protein 42g carbs 22g fat 11g fibre

EMILY'S DIETITIAN TIPS

- Black beans and chicken together deliver a complete protein-and-fibre combination that helps keep energy steady for hours.
- Swap sour cream for Greek yogurt — same richness, extra protein.
- Cold quesadilla wedges pack brilliantly for the cooler or next-day lunch.

The Pickle

Dill Pickle Chicken Salad Pockets

Tangy, creamy, and impossible to stop eating. Loaded with crunchy veg and that salty dill pickle bite everyone craves. No cooking required — just mix, chill, and go.

4 **15 min** **No-cook**
SERVES TOTAL ZERO HEAT



INGREDIENTS

- 3 cups cooked chicken breast, diced
- 1 cup light mayo (or half Greek yogurt)
- 1 tbsp Dijon mustard
- ½ cup chopped dill pickles
- 3 tbsp pickle juice
- ½ cup celery, finely diced
- ¼ cup red onion, finely diced
- ½ cup cucumber, diced
- ½ cup red bell pepper, diced
- 3 tbsp fresh dill, chopped
- ¼ tsp garlic powder
- Black pepper

TO SERVE

- 4 whole-grain wraps or lettuce cups
- Mixed greens
- Extra pickle slices

- 1 Make the dressing. Whisk mayo, Dijon, pickle juice, garlic powder, dill, and pepper until smooth.
- 2 Add chicken & veg. Fold in chicken, pickles, celery, red onion, cucumber, and red pepper. Season well.
- 3 Chill. Refrigerate 10–15 min — the flavours get better the longer it sits.
- 4 Wrap & go. Serve in wraps with greens and extra pickles, or spoon into mini bell peppers or lettuce cups for a portable no-carb option.



NUTRITION PER SERVING

370 cal 29g protein 18g carbs 20g fat 3g fibre

EMILY'S DIETITIAN TIPS

- This protein-packed salad is the perfect make-ahead summer lunch.
- Spoon into mini bell peppers for a portable, no-wrap option perfect for the park or sideline.

The Sandwich

Grilled Cajun Chicken with Lemon Dijon Sauce

Homemade Cajun spice, juicy grilled Alberta chicken, melted cheese, and tangy lemon Dijon sauce on a toasted brioche bun. The summer sandwich your family will ask for on repeat.

4 **20 min** **Grill-ready**
SERVES TOTAL SUMMER HERO



CHICKEN

- 4 small chicken breasts
- 1 tbsp olive oil

CAJUN SEASONING

- 2 tsp smoked paprika
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 1 tsp onion powder
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ tsp black pepper
- ¼ tsp cayenne (optional)

FOR BUILDING

- 4 brioche buns
- 4 slices cheese (cheddar, provolone, or pepper jack)
- Lettuce
- Tomato
- Red onion
- Pickles

- 1 Season. Brush chicken with olive oil. Mix Cajun spices and coat chicken evenly on both sides.
- 2 Grill. Preheat to medium-high. Cook 5–6 min per side until cooked through. Add cheese in the final minute, close lid to melt.
- 3 Make the sauce. Mix mayo, Dijon, and lemon juice together.
- 4 Toast & build. Toast buns lightly on the grill. Spread sauce, layer with lettuce, Cajun chicken, tomato, onion, and pickles. Serve immediately.
- 5 Suggested sides. Corn on the cob, coleslaw, or sliced watermelon.

LEMON DIJON SAUCE

- 1 cup mayo
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- 1 tsp lemon juice



NUTRITION PER SERVING

560 cal 40g protein 32g carbs 22g fat 3g fibre

EMILY'S DIETITIAN TIPS

- Make your own Cajun seasoning blend — no fillers, full control over heat and sodium.
- At 40g protein per sandwich this is a serious recovery meal after an active summer day.
- Pack and chill the cooked Cajun chicken separately. Assemble burgers on-site at the park or ball diamond — these sandwiches are delicious hot and cold!
- Enjoy fruit as a side. Watermelon is over 90% water — great natural hydration on a hot Alberta day.

The Sticky Sticks

Honey Sesame Chicken Skewers

Sweet, savoury, and absolutely impossible to stop eating. A kid-magnet at any summer gathering — and with chicken thighs on the grill, they stay juicy every single time. Make extra. You will need them.

12 sticks

MAKES

20 min + marinate

TOTAL

GF with tamari

OPTION



INGREDIENTS

- 8 boneless skinless chicken thighs
- ¼ cup Alberta honey
- ¼ cup light soy sauce or tamari
- ¼ cup sesame oil
- ¼ cup ketchup
- 1 tbsp fresh ginger, grated
- Pinch of black pepper

GARNISH

- Extra honey drizzle
- Sesame seeds

1

Cut. Trim chicken thighs and cut into 1-inch cubes.

2

Marinate. Whisk honey, soy sauce, sesame oil, ketchup, ginger, and pepper. Add chicken, stir to coat, cover and marinate 2–24 hours in the fridge.

3

Skewer. Soak wooden skewers 20 min (or use metal). Thread marinated chicken evenly.

4

Grill. Cook over medium heat 8–10 min, turning once, until cooked through to 165°F.

5

Finish. Drizzle with extra honey and scatter sesame seeds. Serve immediately.



NUTRITION PER SERVING

380 cal 28g protein 22g carbs 20g fat 0g fibre

EMILY'S DIETITIAN TIPS

- Overnight marinating is the move. Save time by prepping ahead.
- Chicken thighs stay juicy when cooked outdoor grills and BBQs — they're the ideal cut for skewers.
- Choose Alberta honey...another delicious, local ingredient worth adding to recipes.
- Serve with a big crunchy salad or your favourite whole-grain for a flavourful fibre boost!

Feed your family. *Grow the joy.*



Emily Mardell, RD

Thank you for taking these recipes outside this summer. I hope they find their way into your coolers, your backpacks, and the meals your family asks for again and again.



Jessica Musslewhite



Created in partnership with Alberta Chicken Producers.
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