

The Apple Salad Party Planner

A printable companion to Apple Salad with Candied Walnuts and Cranberries

Print this planner and keep it with your party notes. It gives you the market list, the vinaigrette ratio, the apple variety card, the candied walnut method, a make-ahead timeline, an assembly checklist and a scaling table up to 40 guests \u2014 everything you need to build this salad without scrolling back through the article.

Market List

Section	Item	On hand?
Produce	1 large crisp red apple (Honeycrisp, Fuji or Braeburn)	
Produce	Mixed baby salad leaves \u2014 about 5 oz / 5 handfuls	
Produce	1/2 small red onion	
Pantry	Dried cranberries (3/4 cup)	
Pantry	Walnut halves (1 cup)	
Pantry	White sugar (1/4 cup for the nuts, 1.5 tsp for the dressing)	
Pantry	Cider vinegar (2 tbsp)	
Pantry	Olive oil (4 tbsp)	
Pantry	Dijon mustard (1.5 tsp)	
Pantry	Fine salt and black pepper	
Fridge	Salted butter (1 tbsp)	
Fridge	Feta or soft goat cheese (2 tbsp)	
Optional	Apple cider for plumping the cranberries	
Optional	Orange peel and 1 clove for the spiced cider upgrade	

Vinaigrette Ratio Card

Learn this ratio and you will never need the recipe again. Shake everything in a lidded jar for fifteen seconds \u2014 no whisk required.

Component	Ratio	For 6 servings	Job
Cider vinegar	2 parts	2 tbsp	Brightness
Olive oil	4 parts	4 tbsp	Body
Dijon mustard	3/4 part	1 1/2 tsp	Emulsifier

Component	Ratio	For 6 servings	Job
Sugar	3/4 part	1 1/2 tsp	Softens the vinegar
Fine salt	1/4 part	1/2 tsp	Makes flavours louder
Black pepper	1/8 part	1/4 tsp	Background warmth

Tuning: flat? add vinegar. Too sharp? add a pinch of sugar. Want it creamier? add oil a tablespoon at a time. Separated? shake again with a teaspoon of mustard.

Apple Variety Card

Apple	Character	Verdict for this salad
Honeycrisp	Crisp, honeyed	Best choice
Fuji	Sweet, dense	Most reliable, holds its shape
Braeburn	Sweet-tart, firm	Adds a bright edge
Pink Lady	Tart, very crisp	For a sharper salad
Gala	Sweet, softer	Slice thicker so it does not collapse
Granny Smith	Very tart, firm	Only if you want real bite
Red Delicious	Sweet, often mealy	Skip \u2014 goes limp fastest

Cut paper-thin, 1 to 2 mm. Thin slices bend and tuck between leaves; thick wedges sink to the bottom of the bowl.

Candied Walnuts \u2014 Five Minutes

1. Line a tray with parchment before you turn on the heat.
2. Melt 1 tbsp salted butter in a small non-stick pan over medium heat.
3. Add 1/4 cup white sugar. Stir once, then leave it until mostly melted and bubbling at the edges.
4. Add 1 cup walnut halves and stir continuously for about two minutes until glossy and coated.
5. Pour onto the parchment and spread out with a fork while still hot \u2014 never leave them in a heap.
6. Cool ten minutes, then roughly chop half and leave the rest whole.

Grainy sugar means you stirred during melting \u2014 keep going on a lower heat. Bitter means past amber. Melted sugar is hotter than boiling water and sticks to skin: keep the handle turned inward and let nuts cool fully before touching.

Plumping the Cranberries

- 3/4 cup dried cranberries in a heatproof bowl
- Cover with warm apple cider (or just-boiled water) by about an inch
- Soak ten minutes until visibly swollen
- Drain well and pat dry \u2014 wet berries bleed into the dressing

Make-Ahead Timeline

2 weeks ahead	Candy the walnuts. Cool completely and store in an airtight jar at room temperature. Leftovers keep a fortnight, or freeze three months.
1 week ahead	Shake the vinaigrette in a lidded jar. Refrigerate; bring to room temperature and re-shake before use.
3 days ahead	Wash and dry the leaves thoroughly, then store them wrapped in a clean tea towel in the fridge drawer.
1 day ahead	Plump and drain the cranberries. Slice the onion and keep it in cold water in the fridge; drain and pat dry before use.
1 hour ahead	Cut the apple and hold the slices in cold salted water. Drain and dry them right before assembling.
At the table	Toss with the dressing and scatter the toppings. Dressing goes on last, always \u2014 five minutes of contact is plenty.

Assembly Checklist

- Leaves washed AND thoroughly dried \u2014 wet leaves are the number one cause of a soggy salad
- Leaves tossed with half the apple slices and all of the onion wedges
- Half the dressing added and tossed gently from the bottom up
- Cranberries scattered over, then the walnuts, then the remaining apple slices
- Cheese crumbled small over the top \u2014 2 tbsp only, it is a seasoning not an ingredient
- Remaining dressing drizzled around the rim of the bowl, not over the middle
- Served within five minutes of dressing, on cold plates

Transporting it? Carry the leaves, the toppings and the dressing in three separate containers and assemble at the other end. A dressed salad that spends twenty minutes in a car arrives limp.

Scaling Table

Serves	Leaves	Apple	Cranberries	Walnuts	Dressing
4 as a side	4 handfuls	1 apple	1/2 cup	3/4 cup	3/4 batch
6 as a side	5 handfuls	1 large apple	3/4 cup	1 cup	full batch
10 \u2013 12	10 handfuls	2 large apples	1 1/4 cups	double batch	1 3/4 batches
20 \u2013 24	20 handfuls	4 large apples	2 1/2 cups	triple batch	3 1/2 batches
40 (buffet)	40 handfuls	7 large apples	5 cups	five batches	7 batches

For a big crowd build two or three smaller bowls and dress them one at a time. Candy the nuts in separate batches in the same pan rather than crowding it.

Storage at a Glance

Component	Room temp	Fridge	Freezer
Candied walnuts	2 weeks airtight	3 weeks	3 months
Vinaigrette	1 day	2 weeks, re-shake	No
Plumped cranberries	Same day	3 days, drained	No
Washed dried leaves	Same day	3 days in a cloth	No
Cut apple	1 hour	1 day in salted water	No
Dressed salad	1 hour	Do not	Do not

Food safety: anything with dressing, cheese or cooked protein should not sit out more than two hours in total \u2014 one hour on a warm day.

Gift Tags

Cut along the lines and tie one tag to each jar of candied walnuts with kitchen twine.

Candied walnuts, made for you on _____

Candied walnuts, made for you on _____

Candied walnuts, made for you on _____

Candied walnuts, made for you on _____

savorydiscovery.com \u2014 By Elowen Thorn. Printable for personal use.