

The Maple Dijon Fall Salad Planner

A printable companion to Apple Cranberry Salad with Maple Dijon Vinaigrette

Print this planner and keep it in your binder or on the fridge. It gives you the market list, the vinaigrette ratio card, an apple variety chart, a make-ahead timeline, and the exact scaling numbers for any size of gathering — everything you need to build this salad without scrolling back through the article.

Market and Pantry List

Section	Item	On hand?
Produce	Mixed baby greens — 5 oz clamshell (arugula, spinach, baby kale)	
Produce	2 crisp apples — Honeycrisp, Fuji, Pink Lady or Jazz	
Produce	1 lemon (only if slicing apples more than 1 hour ahead)	
Pantry	Dried cranberries — 1/2 cup	
Pantry	Raw pecans or walnuts — 1 cup	
Pantry	Dijon mustard — smooth, mild (not hot)	
Pantry	Pure maple syrup — 2 Tbsp (real syrup, not pancake syrup)	
Pantry	White wine vinegar or apple cider vinegar — 2 Tbsp	
Pantry	Olive oil — 1/4 cup	
Pantry	Garlic powder, fine salt, black pepper	
Fridge	Gorgonzola or other crumbly blue cheese — 1/2 cup	
Optional	Cooked farro or quinoa — 1 cup, for bulk	
Optional	Grilled chicken or hard-boiled eggs, for protein	

The Vinaigrette Ratio Card

The whole dressing is a ratio. Learn it once and you can make it by eye, in any quantity, without reaching for measuring cups.

Component	Ratio	For 4 servings
Olive oil	4 parts	1/4 cup
Vinegar (white wine or cider)	2 parts	2 Tbsp

Component	Ratio	For 4 servings
Maple syrup	2 parts	2 Tbsp
Dijon mustard	2 parts	2 Tbsp
Garlic powder	a pinch	1/2 tsp
Salt and pepper	to taste	to taste

Shake it in a jar with the lid on. It stays emulsified for about 10 minutes — shake again just before you pour, every time.

Apple Variety Card

Apple	Texture in the salad	Best for
Honeycrisp	Explosively crisp, very juicy, honeyed	The showpiece bowl — best all-round choice
Fuji	Very crisp, consistently sweet	Buying out of season — holds quality year round
Pink Lady	Firm, snappy, sweet-tart and balanced	Cutting the sweetness of the dried cranberries
Jazz	Dense and crunchy, tangy finish	Standing up to a heavy blue cheese
Gala	Softer, mild and sweet	Feeding children — but it browns fastest
Granny Smith	Sharp, green, very firm	Only if you love a sour note — halve the maple

Whatever you choose, cut it no more than an hour ahead. If you must prep earlier, drop the slices into cold water with a good pinch of salt — not lemon. Salt slows browning without leaving the apple tasting sour.

Make-Ahead Timeline

3 days ahead	Toast the pecans. Cool completely, then store airtight at room temperature. Toasted nuts go soft if they sit in the fridge.
2 days ahead	Make the dressing and refrigerate it in a lidded jar. It keeps 5 days, and the mustard flavour mellows in that time.
1 day ahead	Wash and dry the greens. Store them in a bowl lined with paper towel, covered — wet leaves are the number one cause of a watery salad.
1 hour ahead	Slice the apples into cold salted water to hold them, or leave them whole and slice at the last minute.
10 minutes ahead	Drain the apples, layer the greens and toppings, then dress and toss. Dressing earlier than this wilts the greens.

Assembly Checklist

- Greens are bone dry — spun or patted, with no water pooling in the bowl.
- Pecans are toasted and cooled, not raw from the bag.
- Dressing was shaken again right before pouring.
- Apples were sliced within the hour and drained well.
- Blue cheese is crumbled in uneven, generous pieces — not fine crumbs.
- Onion or shallot, if using, was soaked in cold water 10 minutes and drained.
- Tossed with about two-thirds of the dressing, then tasted, then dressed further only if needed.
- Salt added at the end, then tossed once more — greens need salt added last.
- Served in a wide shallow bowl or on a platter, not a deep one, so nothing crushes.
- Extra dressing and extra nuts left on the side for people to add at the table.

Scaling for a Crowd

Guests	Greens	Apples	Cranberries	Nuts	Cheese	Dressing
4	5 oz	2	1/2 cup	1 cup	1/2 cup	1/4 cup oil
8	10 oz	4	1 cup	2 cups	1 cup	1/2 cup oil
12	15 oz	6	1 1/2 cups	3 cups	1 1/2 cups	3/4 cup oil
20	24 oz	10	2 1/2 cups	5 cups	2 1/2 cups	1 1/4 cups oil

Past 12 servings, build the salad across two platters rather than one deep bowl. Enormous bowls crush the greens at the bottom and dress unevenly — two shallow platters always look better and toss better.

Leftovers and Holding

Situation	What to do	How long it lasts
Dressed salad	Refrigerate in a sealed container; the greens soften fast	Next day only, and expect softening
Undressed components	Keep each in its own container, greens dry, apples in salted water	Greens 2 days, apples 1 day
Dressing on its own	Lidded jar in the fridge; it will separate, so shake before use	5 days
Toasted nuts	Airtight at room temperature, never the fridge	2 weeks
To revive day-old dressed leftovers	Add a handful of fresh dry greens and a splash of new dressing	Serve immediately
Travelling to a gathering	Carry the greens, toppings and dressing separately and toss on arrival	Assemble on site

Labels

Cut these out and tape one to each container you send home with someone, or to the bowl you take to the table.

Apple Cranberry Salad · dressing on the side · made _____

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