

Sierra Beauty Apple and Fennel Salad with Candied Native Pecans

Adapted by Elissa Rubin Mahon from a recipe by Martha Holmberg

Makes 6 servings

Candied pecans:

1 egg white	1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 tablespoon water	1/4 teaspoon ground coriander
1/4 cup granulated sugar	2 cups walnut halves
1 tablespoon brown sugar	
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt	
1/4 teaspoon crushed chipotle or red pepper flakes	

Preheat oven to 325 degrees and line a baking sheet with parchment or foil. In a medium bowl, whisk together the egg white and the water until foamy; add the sugar, brown sugar, salt, cinnamon, coriander and pepper flakes. Add the pecans and toss to coat thoroughly, then spread them on the baking sheet (be sure they're not clumped together). Bake about 15 minutes, then stir and bake another 10 to 15 minutes until the nuts are fragrant and dry-looking. Let cool, then break up any clumps with your fingers. When completely cool, roughly chop about 1 cup for the salad.

Vinaigrette:

3 tablespoons fresh orange juice	1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
1 tablespoon fresh lime juice, more if needed	2 tablespoons walnut oil
1/2 teaspoon granulated sugar	

In a small bowl, whisk together the orange juice, lime juice, sugar and salt until the sugar and salt are dissolved. Whisk in the walnut oil a few drops at a time to create a creamy, emulsified dressing. Taste and adjust seasoning

Salad:

1 medium fennel bulb
1 pound Sierra Beauty apples (about 2 medium)
1/4 cup raisins

Cut stalks and fronds off fennel bulb and trim the base. Peel off outer layer if tough. Cut bulb into small dice. Place in a medium bowl and toss with about 2 tablespoons of vinaigrette until fennel is well-coated. Halve and core the apples (do not peel them) and then cut into 1/8-inch slices. Place in a separate bowl, drizzle with about 2 tablespoons vinaigrette and toss until fruit is well-coated. Chill the apples and fennel separately for 30 minutes to 1 hour.

Pile the apple slices on a serving platter or in a large shallow bowl, and top with the fennel (in a mound so that the apples show underneath). Drizzle on the remaining vinaigrette. Taste the apples and fennel: If either needs some brightening, squeeze a little more lime juice on top. Sprinkle the raisins over the fennel and then top the whole salad with the chopped candied nuts.

Sources: Sierra Beauty apples are available from Lee Walker Apples in Graton
Pecans are available from www.mopecans.com