Spinach Salad with Roasted Apples, Candied Pecans and Apple Cider Vinaigrette

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APPLES:

4 each apples, Gala or Fuji (can substitute pears)

1/2 cup turbinado sugar (raw sugar)

VINAIGRETTE:

1/4 cup apple juice

2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar

2 tablespoons brown sugar

2 tablespoons Dijon mustard

3/4 cup canola oil, or grapeseed (use a neutral oil)

SALAD:

30 ounces baby spinach, or a mixture of field greens and spinach

1 cup of spiced nuts (below)

2 tablespoons poppy seeds

SPICED & CANDIED PECANS:

1 tablespoon unsalted butter

1 1/2 tablespoons sugar

1/4 teaspoon seasoned salt

1/4 teaspoon Lawry's garlic salt

1 pinch cayenne

1 cup pecans, or walnuts

1 tablespoon turbinado sugar, raw sugar

Carolyn T's Blog - Tasting Spoons
http://tastingspoons.com

Servings: 8

1. APPLES: Preheat oven to 400°F. Line a baking sheet with silicon or foil.
2. Arrange apple slices on baking sheet and sprinkle evenly with turbinado sugar. If you don't put too much space between the apples, you'll get most of the sugar on the apples, not on the baking sheet.
3. Roast for 15-20 minutes until the apples are caramelized. Cool and set aside. Apples can be made ahead and stored in refrigerator in an airtight container for up to 3 days.
4. VINAIGRETTE: Whisk together the apple juice, vinegar, brown sugar, mustard and oil (don't emulsify it in a blender - gets too thick). Can be made ahead up to 2 weeks. Whisk just before serving.
5. SALAD: In a large salad bowl mix the spinach and poppy seeds with some of the dressing until greens are coated. Place salad on individual plates and garnish with roasted apples and spiced nuts.
6. SPICED NUTS: Melt butter in medium-sized nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add the sugar, seasoned salt, garlic salt and cayenne and stir until the spices give off some aroma, about 1-2 minutes. Add the nuts and toss until well coated, about 4 minutes. Remove from heat and place nuts in a glass bowl (for easier clean-up). Sprinkle the turbinado sugar over the nuts and toss until coated. Cool completely, then store in a ziploc plastic bag. Store in refrigerator up to 2 weeks or freeze up to 2 months.

Per Serving (excluding unknown items): 435 Calories; 33g Fat (64.0% calories from fat); 5g Protein; 37g Carbohydrate; 6g Dietary Fiber; 4mg Cholesterol; 176mg Sodium. Exchanges: 0 Grain(Starch); 0 Lean Meat; 1/2 Vegetable; 1 Fruit; 6 1/2 Fat; 1 Other Carbohydrates.