
Cranberry, Beet, and Walnut Salad

For the Salad

1 fresh beet, shredded
6 cups baby spinach or mixed greens
½ avocado, ripe and cubed
½ cup dried cranberries
¼ cup fresh basil, chopped

For the Dressing:

1/5 cup balsamic vinegar
1/3 cup olive oil
1 tbsp honey or maple syrup
½ tsp Celtic sea salt
¼ tsp red chili pepper flakes (optional)

For the Candied Walnuts

½ cup walnuts
1 tbsp olive oil
1 tbsp honey
(can substitute almonds and maple syrup)

First, candy the walnuts: heat 1 tbsp oil in a skillet over medium heat. When warm, add the walnuts. Once they have begun to brown, toss in honey. Brown but do not burn; 5 minutes. Take off heat. Then, prep the ingredients: shred the beet, cube the avocado, and chop the basil. Next make dressing: mix the remaining 1 tablespoon of honey with the vinegar, and then add the olive oil. Put the walnuts, beet, avocado, basil, and cranberries in a large bowl with the greens. Gradually add half the dressing. Gently toss. If you prefer heavier dressing, add more until the strength suits your taste. Serve the rest on the side.

Adapted from Hilary Stamper, Care2's Organic Speedchef; www.care2.com

Nutritional Value of Select Ingredients

Cranberries – Great for the kidneys, bladder, and skin, these tart berries are full of vitamin C, fibre, calcium, iron, and other minerals; and phytonutrients like beta-carotene and quercetin. They are useful in the treatment of asthma, cystitis, and kidney and bladder stones.

Beets – The beetroot is an excellent source of folic acid, and a great source of fibre, manganese, and potassium. It is an excellent tonic for the liver, has anti-cancer properties, increase bowel function, and decrease cholesterol levels.

Walnuts – These nuts contain beneficial polyunsaturated fatty acids that are great for the brain and lowering cholesterol. They are also high in protein, fibre, minerals, and vitamins.

Basil – A member of the mint family, basil helps relieve digestive disorders, is an immune stimulant, a treatment for intestinal parasites, and may reduce the risk of lung cancer. It is helpful for the lungs, spleen, and large intestines.

Avocado – High in mono-unsaturated fatty acids, avocados contains 20% fats – all good ones. High in potassium, vitamin E, B vitamins, and fibre, avocados can help normalize cholesterol levels.