Prep Time	20 minutes
Cook Time	5 minutes
Total Time	25 minutes
Yield	8 servings
Difficulty	Easy
Cuisine	American / Holiday

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Ingredients

For the salad:

- 8 cups mixed greens (baby spinach, arugula, and romaine)

- 1 cup pomegranate arils (seeds)
- ½ cup dried cranberries
- 2 mandarin oranges or 1 large navel orange, peeled and segmented
- ½ cup crumbled feta cheese (or goat cheese)
- ½ cup candied pecans (store-bought or homemade — see below)
- ¼ cup thinly sliced red onion (optional)
- 1 crisp apple (Honeycrisp or Fuji), thinly sliced

For the candied pecans (if making from scratch):

- ½ cup pecan halves
- 2 tablespoons granulated sugar
- 1 tablespoon butter
- Pinch of cinnamon and salt

For the maple-dijon vinaigrette:

- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1½ tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- 1 tablespoon pure maple syrup
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1 small garlic clove, minced
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ⅛ teaspoon black pepper
- Pinch of cinnamon (optional)

Equipment Needed

- Large salad bowl

- Small jar with lid (for shaking dressing)
- Small skillet (for candying pecans)
- Whisk or fork
- Knife and cutting board
- Salad tongs or serving spoons

Instructions

Step 1: Make the Candied Pecans — *Time: 5 minutes | Intensity: Medium*

If making homemade candied pecans, melt the butter in a small skillet over medium heat. Add the pecans, sugar, cinnamon, and a pinch of salt. Stir constantly for 3–4 minutes until the sugar melts and coats the nuts in a glossy glaze. Spread on parchment paper to cool completely. (If using store-bought candied pecans, skip this step.)

Step 2: Prepare the Vinaigrette — *Time: 3 minutes | Intensity: Low*

In a small jar, combine the olive oil, apple cider vinegar, maple syrup, Dijon mustard, minced garlic, salt, pepper, and cinnamon (if using). Screw on the lid and shake vigorously for 20–30 seconds until the dressing is emulsified and creamy. Set aside. (Alternatively, whisk in a

small bowl.)

Step 3: Prepare the Fruit and Vegetables — *Time: 7 minutes* | *Intensity: Medium*

Peel and segment the mandarin oranges or navel orange, removing any pith. Slice the apple thinly (leave the skin on for color and crunch). Thinly slice the red onion, if using, and soak it in cold water for 5 minutes to mellow its bite, then drain and pat dry. If using fresh pomegranate, cut it in half and tap the back with a spoon to release the arils into a bowl.

Step 4: Build the Salad Base — *Time: 3 minutes* | *Intensity: Low*

Add the mixed greens to a large salad bowl. Drizzle with about 2 tablespoons of the vinaigrette and gently toss with tongs until every leaf is lightly coated. This prevents the salad from becoming soggy and ensures even flavor distribution.

Step 5: Arrange the Toppings — *Time: 4 minutes* | *Intensity: Low*

Scatter the pomegranate arils, dried cranberries, orange segments, apple slices, red onion, crumbled feta, and candied pecans over the dressed greens. Arrange them in clusters or concentric circles for a beautiful, photo-worthy presentation — this is a holiday showpiece, after all.

Step 6: Finish and Serve — *Time: 2 minutes* | *Intensity: Low*

Drizzle the remaining vinaigrette over the top (or serve it on the side so guests can add their own). Give the salad one gentle toss at the table, or leave it arranged and let guests toss individual portions. Serve immediately.

Time & Intensity Summary

Phase	Duration	Intensity
Candy pecans	5 minutes	Medium
Make vinaigrette	3 minutes	Low
Prep fruit & vegetables	7 minutes	Medium
Build salad base	3 minutes	Low
Arrange toppings	4 minutes	Low
Finish & serve	2 minutes	Low
Total	~25 minutes	Easy

Nutrition Information (Per Serving — 1/8 of recipe)

Nutrient	Amount
Calories	195 kcal
Total Fat	13 g
Saturated Fat	3 g
Cholesterol	8 mg
Sodium	165 mg
Total Carbohydrates	18 g
Dietary Fiber	3 g
Total Sugars	13 g
Protein	3 g
Calcium	65 mg
Iron	0.9 mg
Vitamin A	30% DV
Vitamin C	35% DV