

Aunt Margie's Cranberry Salad (with a Pragmatic twist)

Ingredients:

2 bags of cranberries
2 apples (peeled and cored)
1 can of pineapple chunks (drained)
2 oranges
1 cup of sugar
walnuts to garnish

Instructions:

Wash the cranberries and discard stems and rotten berries.
Chop the cranberries, apples, and pineapple. (*See below for further explanation.*)
Zest the oranges. (*See below for further explanation.*)
Remove the orange pith and chop the oranges. (*See below for further explanation.*)
Stir in the sugar.
Refrigerate.
Serve chilled with walnuts to garnish. (*I prefer pecans.*)

(Now here's the pragmatic twist. My father delivered a hand grinder to me when he asked me to make this recipe. A hand grinder. Serious flashback. I remember hand grinding the fruit and cranberries. Every. Year. What a mess. Cranberry juice everywhere. Seriously. A MESS. As soon as my sisters got old enough to use the grinder without losing a finger, I gladly passed the job to them. In their young naiveté, they thought it would be fun. By the time they realized it was a sticky and disgusting job, the cranberry crushing baton was completely out of my hands. When my mother took over again, I think she switched from hand grinder to blender. So over the years, the whole thing went from cranberry goo (in the grinder) to cranberry soup (in the blender). Although resistant, I tested the grinder and my memory on the apples first. Yep. Just like old times. Applesauce. So I pulled out my handy dandy Oster chopper attachment. And I tried again. MUCH better.)

I chopped the cranberries, the apples and the pineapple using the "pulse" button on my chopper. Filling the container multiple times allowed me to chop in different . . . textures? Sizes? Basically, there are three different textures of cranberries and apples, ranging from finely chopped, medium chopped and barely chopped. I didn't have to chop the pineapple very much since it started out in small chunks anyway.

That leaves the oranges. I made two changes which were a HUGE difference from how I made this as a kid. First, I zested the orange. We NEVER did that. NEVER. Didn't even have a zester in the house growing up. I don't own one now. I had to use a small grater this year. I got the sweetness and the taste, but not the texture. I'm buying a zester for next year.

The second difference with regard to the oranges? My Aunt Margie strongly emphasized removing the "white stuff" from the orange. It's called the "pith" and while it is actually good for you, it tastes a little bitter. There are a few ways to remove the pith, but I just rolled the orange on the counter, peeled it and then cut away the white layer that remained. I also removed the

inner white stuff - I've been calling it the "cartilage" of the orange. It's hard and crunchy and bitter and it is THE reason I would never eat this cranberry salad. I hate that stuff. yuck.