Thanksgiving Apple-Cranberry Sauce with Toasted Pecans

Sweet, lightly tart, warm, and a little crunchy. A delicious twist on traditional Thanksgiving cranberry sauce.

Servings: 8–10
Prep Time: 10–15 minutes
Cook Time: 12–15 minutes

INGREDIENTS

- 3 medium apples (Honeycrisp, Pink Lady, or Granny Smith), peeled (your choice), cored, and diced into ½-inch pieces
- 1 cup sweetened dried cranberries
- ½ cup fresh orange juice
- 1 teaspoon fresh orange zest
- ¼ cup water, plus more as needed
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon ground ginger
- ⅛ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
- ¾ cup toasted slivered almonds
- Small pinch of salt

DIRECTIONS

1. Prepare the Apples

- Wash, peel, core, and dice the apples into evenly sized pieces. Set aside approximately ½ cup of diced apples to add later for extra texture.

2. Cook the Apples

- In a medium saucepan, combine the remaining apples, orange juice, orange zest, water, cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, and salt.
- Bring to a gentle simmer over medium heat. Reduce the heat and cook for approximately 8–10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the apples begin to soften.

3. Add the Sweetened Dried Cranberries

- Stir in the sweetened dried cranberries and reserved diced apples.
- Continue cooking for 3–5 minutes, until the cranberries become slightly plump and the apples are tender but still hold their shape.
- Add a splash of water or orange juice if the mixture becomes too thick.

4. Balance the Flavor

- Remove from the heat and stir in the fresh lemon juice. Taste and adjust the cinnamon or citrus as desired.
- For a chunkier sauce, leave the apples intact. For a softer consistency, gently mash a portion of the apples with a spoon.

5. Toast the Slivered Almonds

- Place the slivered almonds in a dry skillet over medium-low heat. Toast for 3–5 minutes, stirring frequently, until fragrant and lightly golden. Remove from the heat and allow to cool.

6. Finish and Serve

- Transfer the apple-cranberry sauce to a serving bowl.
- Sprinkle the toasted pecans over the top just before serving and garnish with a little fresh orange zest.
- Serve warm or chilled alongside your Thanksgiving turkey.

CHEF RICH'S KITCHEN CONFIDENCE TIPS

Naturally Sweeter: Sweetened dried cranberries provide sweetness without needing additional maple syrup or sugar. Taste before making any adjustments.

Save Time: Unlike fresh cranberries, dried cranberries don't need to burst and cook down. They soften quickly while maintaining a pleasant, chewy texture.

Keep the Crunch: Add toasted slivered almonds just before serving so they stay crisp and provide a contrast to the tender apples and chewy cranberries.

Make It Ahead: Prepare the apple-cranberry mixture up to three days in advance. Refrigerate in a covered container and store the toasted slivered almonds separately until serving.

Nut-Free Option: Substitute toasted pumpkin seeds for the slivered almonds if appropriate for your guests' dietary needs.