

BEET & APPLE SALAD WITH MAPLE DRESSING

(from Woman's Day -December 6, 2006)

Ingredients:

6 slices thin sandwich bread/3-inch tree cookie cutter
Olive oil cooking spray
6 small fresh beets, trimmed
2 Tbsp. chopped parsley
1 tsp. chopped fresh thyme
2 tsp. butter, softened
1/3 c. olive oil & vinegar dressing
1 Tbsp. maple pancake syrup
1 each small Royal Gala and Granny Smith apple, cut in thin wedges
4-5 oz. baby arugula (or 1 bag)
1 large Belgian endive, cut in strips

Directions:

- Heat oven to 400 F. Using a 3-inch tree cookie cutter cut 2 trees from each slice of bread. Place on baking sheet, coat with cooking spray & bake 5-6 minutes until lightly toasted. Cool.
- Microwave beets & 2 tbsp. water in a loosely covered shallow dish on high 5 minutes, until tender. When cool enough to handle, hold under running water & rub off skins; cut in chunks.
- Mix parsley and thyme on a sheet of wax paper. Spread toasts with butter; press into herbs.
- Pour dressing into a large bowl; stir in syrup. Add apples, arugula and endive; toss to mix and coat.
- Divide salad among 6 plates; add beets and 2 trees to each plate.

Can prepare toast and beets up to 2 days ahead: refrigerate beets and store toasts in an airtight container.