Beet Horseradish Gelatin Loaf

One deep beet-red savory loaf, about 3¼ cups (780 ml); 8 small side slices · Active 25 min · Total 9 hr 30 min

Ingredients

- 2 standard ¼-ounce envelopes unflavored powdered gelatin (14 g total), of the specified setting strength
- 6 tablespoons cold drinking water (90 ml)
- 1¼ cups plain beet juice (300 ml), from label-suitable canned plain beet liquid or pasteurized bottled beet juice
- ½ cup pasteurized apple juice (120 ml)
- 1 tablespoon cider vinegar (15 ml)
- ⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon plain pasteurized sour cream (100 g), kept cold
- 1 cup very small fully cooked plain beet dice (150 g drained), blotted dry
- 2 teaspoons prepared noncreamy horseradish (10 g), label-checked
- ⅛ teaspoon fine salt (0.75 g)
- ¼ teaspoon neutral oil (1.25 ml), for wiping mold

Set out

Kitchen scale and measuring jug, Knife and clean board, Small saucepan, Mixing bowl and whisk, Small dairy bowl, External cool-water bath bowl, Metal loaf mold of at least 1-liter capacity, Paper towel, Food thermometer, Cold serving platter, Refrigerator

Allergens

Milk. Check labels and substitutions.

Make it

1. Check mold capacity with water, then dry and wipe thinly with oil. Keep drained beet dice and sour cream refrigerated. Sprinkle gelatin over the 90 ml cold water in the mixing bowl and bloom 5–10 minutes.

2. Warm beet juice, apple juice and salt in the saucepan to about 140–150°F (60–65°C). Take off heat and stir into gelatin until fully dissolved. Stir in vinegar. Cool briefly in an external cool-water bath, keeping bath water out, until merely lukewarm.

3. Put cold sour cream in its small clean bowl. Whisk 3 tablespoons of the cold sour cream gradually INTO the lukewarm dissolved beet-gelatin base until smooth. Then gradually whisk that tempered mixture into the remaining cold sour cream. Stir in horseradish. Refrigerate 20–30 minutes, stirring every 10 minutes, until lightly thickened but still pourable.

4. Fold in small dry beet dice and pour into the mold, leaving at least ½ inch (1.25 cm) below the rim. Refrigerate covered at 40°F (4°C) or below for at least 8 hours and until fully set. The 9½-hour estimate includes prep and preliminary cooling.

5. For unmolding, set a cold plate beside the refrigerator. Dip only the outside of the metal mold in warm, not hot, water, about 100°F (38°C), for 5–8 seconds without letting water touch food. Dry the outside, loosen just the upper edge with a clean fingertip and invert onto the plate. If stuck, repeat a brief dip rather than shaking violently. Refrigerate again immediately if not serving now. Cut into eight small side slices and return reserves promptly to refrigeration.

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Gelatin starting strength

Use food-grade unflavored powdered gelatin with a manufacturer benchmark of 7 g for about 2 cups (500 ml) plain liquid. Weigh the stated grams: envelope sizes and powder density vary. A flavored dessert packet, collagen peptides, sheet gelatin or agar is not an equal substitute.

Cold service

This is an original retro-inspired recipe, not a recovered 1960s formula. Gelatin is animal-derived; the vegetable ingredients do not make the dish vegetarian. A reliable refrigerator and the stated earlier ingredient deadlines are essential.

Ingredient labels

Prepared horseradish may contain sulfites or other ingredients. Check juice, dairy, horseradish and gelatin labels.

A useful detail

Measured pourable liquid is 525 ml: 90 ml water +300 ml beet juice +120 ml apple juice +15 ml vinegar. Sour cream adds 100 g and drained cooked beet 150 g. Fourteen grams gelatin allows for that acidic moist mixture. Use the same total juice measures even when canned beet yield varies.

Keep it well

Keep covered at 40°F (4°C) or below. Use within 2 days of assembly or the earliest ingredient deadline, whichever comes first. Include the overnight setting period in that limit. Keep total unrefrigerated preparation and serving below 2 hours, or 1 hour above 90°F (32°C). Chill slices promptly after service; discard food exceeding those limits. Do not freeze; freezing damages the gel and releases water.