Roasted Pepper Tomato Mosaic

One small tomato mosaic loaf, about 3 cups (740 ml); 8 vegetable 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)
- 1¾ cups plus 2 tablespoons unsweetened tomato juice (450 ml), divided
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar (15 ml)
- 1 teaspoon sugar (4 g)
- ⅛ teaspoon fine salt (0.75 g), or omit if juice is salty
- ⅛ teaspoon black pepper
- 4¼ oz drained ready-to-eat roasted red pepper (120 g), blotted dry and cut into short thin strips
- 2 oz drained ready-to-eat roasted yellow pepper (60 g), blotted dry and cut into short thin strips
- ¼ teaspoon neutral oil (1.25 ml), for wiping mold

Set out

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

Allergens

No major US allergen identified in the base ingredients. Check labels and substitutions.

Make it

1. Check mold capacity with water, empty and dry it, then wipe with oil. Keep peppers cold after opening. Bloom gelatin in the 90 ml cold water in the mixing bowl for 5–10 minutes.

2. Heat 240 ml tomato juice with sugar, salt and pepper to about 140–150°F (60–65°C). Take off heat, stir into bloomed gelatin until completely dissolved, then add remaining 210 ml juice and balsamic vinegar. Do not boil the gelatin.

3. Cool briefly in an external cool-water bath and refrigerate, stirring gently every 10 minutes, until lightly syrupy, usually 20–40 minutes. Fold in dry pepper strips. Spoon into mold with at least ½ inch (1.25 cm) below the rim; keep any excess in a separate small refrigerator cup.

4. Cover and chill at 40°F (4°C) or below at least 8 hours, preferably overnight, until firm. Allow 9½ hours total including cutting and the suspension stage.

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 8 small vegetable side slices.

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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

Check pepper marinade, tomato juice, balsamic vinegar and gelatin labels. Sulfites or other ingredients may be present.

A useful detail

Free liquid totals 555 ml: 90 ml bloom water +450 ml tomato juice +15 ml vinegar. Pepper contributes 180 g drained moist solids. The 14 g gelatin and dry pepper surfaces are intentional; an extra pour of jar liquid is not included.

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.