Pea Mint Cream Cheese Crown

One pale-green pea and cream-cheese crown, about 2¾ cups (660 ml); 8 small side wedges · Active 30 min · Total 10 hr

Ingredients

- 7 oz plain frozen peas (200 g)
- Water to cook peas according to packet, drained away
- Unflavored powdered gelatin, 10 g (one standard 7 g envelope plus 3 g weighed from another), of the specified setting strength
- ¼ cup cold drinking water (60 ml)
- 1 cup pasteurized whole milk (240 ml), divided
- 5¼ oz plain pasteurized full-fat cream cheese (150 g), kept cold
- 2 teaspoons lemon juice (10 ml)
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped washed mint leaves (4 g)
- ⅛ teaspoon fine salt (0.75 g)
- ⅛ teaspoon white pepper
- ¼ teaspoon neutral oil (1.25 ml), for wiping mold

Set out

Small covered saucepan and colander, Shallow tray for cooling peas, Blender or food processor suitable for a 600 ml cold batch, Small saucepan, Mixing bowl and whisk, Kitchen scale, Metal ring mold of at least 1-liter capacity, Paper towel, Food thermometer, Cold platter, Refrigerator

Allergens

Milk. Check labels and substitutions.

Make it

1. Cook peas fully using their actual packet water and time. Drain and spread on the shallow tray; refrigerate promptly until cold, allowing about 30 minutes or longer as needed. Check mold capacity, dry and wipe with oil.

2. Blend cold peas, cream cheese and ¾ cup (180 ml) milk until smooth, stopping the machine before scraping. Put purée in the mixing bowl, stir in mint, lemon, salt and pepper and keep refrigerated.

3. Bloom gelatin in the 60 ml cold water in the small saucepan for 5–10 minutes. Add remaining ¼ cup (60 ml) milk and heat gently, stirring, just until fully dissolved, about 120–140°F (50–60°C); do not boil. Take off heat.

4. Whisk 3 tablespoons cold purée into the warm gelatin one at a time. Once smooth and merely lukewarm, whisk that mixture into the remaining purée. Spoon into mold, leaving at least ½ inch (1.25 cm) below rim; smooth without vigorous beating.

5. Cover and refrigerate at 40°F (4°C) or below at least 8 hours until fully set. The 10-hour allowance includes pea cooking/cooling and handling. 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. Serve 8 small side wedges.

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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 cream cheese, milk, gelatin and pea labels for other ingredients. Gelatin remains animal-derived.

A useful detail

The base is 60 ml water +240 ml milk +150 g cream cheese +200 g drained peas, with 10 ml lemon. Ten grams gelatin supports this relatively thick purée; do not add water to make the blender run. Use its permitted minimum batch or a smaller suitable processor instead.

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.