Crab Pimento Cottage Cheese Ring

One small crab-pimento ring, about 3¼ cups (790 ml); 6 cold seafood starters · Active 30 min · Total 10 hr

Ingredients

• Unflavored powdered gelatin, 12 g (one standard 7 g envelope plus 5 g weighed from another), of specified setting strength

• ¼ cup cold drinking water (60 ml)

• ¾ cup pasteurized whole milk (180 ml), divided

• 1¼ cups pasteurized full-fat cottage cheese (300 g), kept cold

• 1 tablespoon lemon juice (15 ml)

• 7 oz fully cooked ready-to-eat crabmeat (200 g drained edible weight), shell-checked and kept cold

• ¼ cup drained ready-to-eat jarred pimento dice (40 g), patted dry

• ⅛ teaspoon black pepper

• ¼ teaspoon neutral oil (1.25 ml), for wiping mold

Set out

Blender suitable for cold dairy, Small saucepan, Mixing bowl and whisk, Clean plate and fork for shell check, Scale and measuring jug, Fine sieve, Metal ring mold of at least 1-liter capacity, Paper towel, Food thermometer, Cold platter, Refrigerator

Allergens

Crustacean shellfish (crab), Milk. Check labels and substitutions.

Make it

1. Read crab label and check its opening deadline through tomorrow’s service. Keep cold. Check mold capacity, dry and wipe lightly with oil. Blend cottage cheese with 120 ml milk until smoother; transfer to mixing bowl and refrigerate. Drain crab, check for shell and keep 200 g edible flakes cold.

2. Bloom gelatin over 60 ml cold water in the saucepan 5–10 minutes. Add remaining 60 ml milk and warm gently, stirring, until dissolved, about 120–140°F (50–60°C). Take off heat before boiling.

3. Whisk 3 tablespoons cold dairy mixture gradually into the warm gelatin. When smooth and lukewarm, whisk back into the remaining cold mixture with lemon and pepper. Refrigerate 15–30 minutes, stirring gently, until slightly thickened. Fold in cold crab and dry pimento without mashing.

4. Spoon into ring, leaving at least ½ inch (1.25 cm) headroom; refrigerate any excess in a separate cup. Cover and refrigerate at 40°F (4°C) or below at least 8 hours until firm. Allow 10 hours total, starting with cooked ready-to-eat crab.

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 6 small seafood-starter portions.

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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

Imitation crab is not equivalent plain crab and may contain fish, wheat, egg or soy. Read every prepared ingredient label.

A useful detail

Measured water, milk and lemon total 255 ml. Cottage cheese 300 g, crab 200 g and pimento 40 g bring the mixture to roughly 790 ml. Twelve grams gelatin supports this thick dairy base; crab package liquid is excluded.

Keep it well

Keep covered at 40°F (4°C) or below. Use within 24 hours of final assembly, including the overnight set, or the earliest fish, dairy or other ingredient deadline, whichever is sooner. Keep cumulative unrefrigerated preparation and service below 2 hours, or 1 hour above 90°F (32°C); discard beyond those limits. Do not freeze the finished gel.