Chicken Pickle Sandwich-Filling Mold

One small chicken-pickle filling loaf, about 3 cups (720 ml), sliced into 8 pieces for 4 generous sandwiches · Active 35 min · Total 10 hr 30 min

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)
- ½ cup pasteurized whole milk (120 ml), divided
- ¾ cup plus 1 tablespoon pasteurized full-fat cottage cheese (200 g), kept cold
- 2 tablespoons commercial mayonnaise (30 g)
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard (5 g)
- 9 oz fully cooked ready-to-eat plain chicken (250 g), safely chilled and finely cut into ¼-inch (5 mm) pieces
- ⅓ cup very finely diced ready-to-eat dill pickle AFTER draining (60 g), patted dry
- ⅛ teaspoon black pepper
- ¼ teaspoon neutral oil (1.25 ml), for wiping mold
- 8 slices sturdy ready-to-eat sandwich bread, about 11¼ oz (320 g) total, for 4 sandwiches

Set out

Blender for cold dairy, Small saucepan, Mixing bowl and whisk, Knife and clean board, Scale and measuring jug, Metal mini loaf mold of at least 1-liter capacity, Paper towel, Food thermometer, Cold platter, Refrigerator

Allergens

Milk, Egg, Wheat, Mustard. Check labels and substitutions.

Make it

1. Confirm chicken is fully cooked ready to eat and its original deadline extends through tomorrow’s lunch; keep cold. Check mold capacity, dry and oil lightly. Blend cottage cheese, mayonnaise, mustard and 60 ml milk until smoother; transfer to bowl and refrigerate.

2. Bloom gelatin over 60 ml cold water in the saucepan 5–10 minutes. Add remaining 60 ml milk and warm gently while stirring until dissolved, about 120–140°F (50–60°C), then remove before boiling. Whisk 3 tablespoons cold dairy mixture gradually into warm gelatin. When smooth and lukewarm, whisk into remaining cold base with pepper.

3. Refrigerate 15–25 minutes until lightly thickened, stirring gently. Fold in cold finely cut chicken and dry pickle dice. Spoon into loaf with at least ½ inch (1.25 cm) headroom; use a separate refrigerator cup for excess. Cover and refrigerate at 40°F (4°C) or below at least 8 hours until firm.

4. Allow 10½ hours total from cold cooked chicken. 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 thin slices with a clean knife, wiping between cuts. Put 2 filling slices between 2 bread slices for each of 4 sandwiches; cut in half if useful and serve promptly.

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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

Mayonnaise commonly supplies egg and bread commonly supplies wheat; bread may also add soy, sesame, milk or other allergens. Read every label.

A useful detail

Water and milk total 180 ml; cottage cheese 200 g, mayonnaise 30 g, chicken 250 g and pickle 60 g produce roughly 720 ml filling. Twelve grams gelatin makes a sliceable base. Bread is additional serving food, not folded into the mold.

Keep it well

Keep the filling mold covered at 40°F (4°C) or below and use within 2 days of assembly AND within 3 days of the chicken’s original cooking, or an earlier commercial opening/use-by deadline, whichever comes first. Count the overnight set. Make sandwiches just before serving and eat promptly; this is not an unrefrigerated packed lunch. Keep cumulative unrefrigerated handling/service below 2 hours, or 1 hour above 90°F (32°C); discard beyond those limits. Do not freeze the gel.