Lentil Tomato Pepper Savory Loaf

One tomato-lentil loaf, about 4 cups (960 ml); 6 substantial cold side portions · Active 30 min · Total 10 hr

Ingredients

- 2 standard ¼-ounce envelopes unflavored powdered gelatin (14 g total), of specified setting strength
- 6 tablespoons cold drinking water (90 ml)
- 1 cup clear ready-to-use low-sodium vegetable broth (240 ml)
- 1 cup strained ready-to-drink low-sodium tomato juice (240 ml)
- 1 tablespoon red wine vinegar (15 ml)
- 1½ cups fully cooked ready-to-eat brown lentils AFTER draining (300 g), safely chilled
- ½ cup drained ready-to-eat roasted red pepper dice (80 g), patted dry
- ¼ teaspoon dried oregano (0.25 g)
- ⅛ teaspoon black pepper
- ¼ teaspoon neutral oil (1.25 ml), for wiping mold

Set out

Sieve, Knife and board, Small saucepan, Mixing bowl and spoon, Scale and measuring jug, Metal loaf mold of at least 1¼-liter capacity, Paper towel, Food thermometer, Cold platter, Refrigerator

Allergens

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

Make it

1. Check lentils are fully cooked ready to eat; drain well and keep 300 g cold. Drain, dry and dice pepper. Check mold capacity, dry and oil lightly. Bloom gelatin over 90 ml cold water in mixing bowl 5–10 minutes.

2. Heat broth with oregano and pepper to 140–150°F (60–65°C); take off heat and stir into gelatin until dissolved. Stir in cold tomato juice and vinegar. Refrigerate 25–40 minutes, stirring gently every 10 minutes, until lightly syrupy.

3. Fold in cold drained lentils and dry pepper. Spoon into loaf with at least ½ inch (1.25 cm) headroom, keeping excess in a separate covered refrigerator cup. Cover and refrigerate at 40°F (4°C) or below at least 8 hours until firm.

4. Allow 10 hours total, starting with cooked lentils. 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 substantial cold side 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

Gelatin is animal-derived; this is not vegetarian or vegan. Broth and prepared lentils may add celery, wheat, soy or other allergens.

A useful detail

Free liquid is 585 ml: 90 ml water +240 ml broth +240 ml tomato juice +15 ml vinegar. Lentils 300 g and pepper 80 g bring estimated volume to roughly 960 ml. Fourteen grams gelatin supports the moist lentil-filled loaf.

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.