Chickpea Cucumber Lemon Lunch Mold

One chickpea-cucumber mold, about 3⅓ cups (800 ml); 4 substantial cold side portions · Active 40 min · Total 11 hr

Ingredients

- ⅔ cup finely diced peeled deseeded cucumber AFTER draining (100 g); prepare extra before draining
- ¼ teaspoon fine salt (1.5 g), divided
- 1½ cups ready-to-eat canned chickpeas AFTER draining (240 g), safely chilled
- 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)
- 1 cup thick plain pasteurized Greek-style yogurt (240 g), kept cold
- 1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon lemon juice (20 ml)
- 1 tablespoon tahini (15 g), stirred smooth and label-checked
- ⅛ teaspoon ground cumin (0.25 g)
- ¼ teaspoon neutral oil (1.25 ml), for wiping mold

Set out

Sieve over bowl and clean cloth, Knife and board, Fork and plate, Small saucepan, Mixing bowl and whisk, Scale and measuring jug, Metal ring or round mold of at least 1-liter capacity, Paper towel, Food thermometer, Cold platter, Refrigerator

Allergens

Milk, Sesame. Check labels and substitutions.

Make it

1. Salt cucumber with half the salt and drain in refrigerator 20 minutes. Press, pat dry and weigh 100 g; keep cold. Drain chickpeas well, weigh 240 g, crush half coarsely with fork and leave half whole. Keep cold. Check mold capacity, dry and oil lightly.

2. Bloom gelatin over 60 ml cold water in saucepan 5–10 minutes. Add milk and cumin, warm gently while stirring until gelatin dissolves, about 120–140°F (50–60°C), and remove before boiling. Whisk yogurt, tahini, lemon and remaining salt in bowl.

3. Whisk 3 tablespoons cold yogurt mixture gradually into warm gelatin; once smooth and lukewarm, whisk back into remaining cold mixture. Whisk in the crushed half of chickpeas. Refrigerate 15–25 minutes until lightly thickened. Fold in whole chickpeas and dry cucumber.

4. Spoon into mold with at least ½ inch (1.25 cm) headroom; refrigerate any excess separately. Cover and refrigerate at 40°F (4°C) or below at least 8 hours until firm. Allow 11 hours total including draining, fork-crushing and setting.

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. Divide into 4 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

Tahini is sesame paste. A substitution does not remove shared-equipment risk; read chickpea, dairy, gelatin and tahini labels. Animal gelatin means this is not vegetarian.

A useful detail

Water, milk and lemon total 200 ml, with 240 g yogurt, 15 g tahini, 240 g chickpeas and 100 g drained cucumber. Twelve grams gelatin supports roughly 800 ml of thick mixture. Crushing half the chickpeas changes texture without adding hidden liquid.

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.