Smoked Ham Coleslaw Crown

One smoked-ham coleslaw crown, about 4¼ cups (1 liter); 4 modest ham-and-slaw cold-course portions · Active 45 min · Total 11 hr

Ingredients

- 1½ cups finely shredded washed green cabbage AFTER salting/draining (100 g); prepare about 150–180 g before draining
- ¼ teaspoon fine salt (1.5 g), for draining cabbage
- ½ cup finely grated washed carrot (60 g), patted dry
- 9 oz fully cooked ready-to-eat smoked ham (250 g), safely chilled, tough rind removed and finely diced
- 2 standard ¼-ounce envelopes unflavored powdered gelatin (14 g total), of specified setting strength
- 6 tablespoons cold drinking water (90 ml)
- ½ cup pasteurized whole milk (120 ml)
- 1 cup pasteurized cultured buttermilk (240 ml), kept cold
- 3 tablespoons commercial mayonnaise (45 g)
- 1 tablespoon cider vinegar (15 ml)
- ⅛ teaspoon black pepper
- ¼ teaspoon neutral oil (1.25 ml), for wiping mold

Set out

Sieve over bowl, Knife and board, Grater, Clean cloth or paper towel, Small saucepan, Mixing bowl and whisk, Scale and measuring jug, Metal ring mold of at least 1½-liter capacity, Food thermometer, Cold platter, Refrigerator

Allergens

Milk, Egg. Check labels and substitutions.

Make it

1. Salt finely shredded cabbage and drain in refrigerator sieve 20 minutes. Press gently and pat dry; weigh 100 g drained shreds and keep cold. Pat grated carrot dry. Check ham label and original deadline through service; keep cold. Check mold capacity, dry and oil lightly.

2. Bloom gelatin over 90 ml cold water in saucepan 5–10 minutes. Add milk and warm gently while stirring until dissolved, about 120–140°F (50–60°C); take off heat before boiling. Whisk buttermilk and mayonnaise in mixing bowl. Whisk 3 tablespoons cold dairy base gradually into warm gelatin, then once smooth and lukewarm whisk back into remaining cold base with vinegar and pepper.

3. Refrigerate 15–30 minutes, stirring gently, until lightly thickened. Fold in cold diced ham, dry drained cabbage and dry carrot. Spoon into ring with at least ½ inch (1.25 cm) headroom; keep any excess in a separate refrigerator cup.

4. Cover and refrigerate at 40°F (4°C) or below at least 8 hours until firm. Allow 11 hours total including cabbage draining and suspension.

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 modest cold ham-and-slaw course 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

Commercial mayonnaise commonly contains egg. Ham and other prepared products may add additional allergens; celery is added only by the declared celeriac variation.

A useful detail

Water, milk, buttermilk and vinegar total 465 ml; mayonnaise 45 g, ham 250 g and dry vegetables 160 g bring finished volume to roughly 1 liter including irregular shreds. Fourteen grams gelatin supports this thick base. Draining liquid is discarded and a 1½-liter mold leaves generous headroom.

Keep it well

Keep covered at 40°F (4°C) or below and use within 2 days of assembly AND within 3 days of the meat's original cooking, or an earlier commercial opening/use-by deadline, whichever comes first. The overnight set counts. 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.