Cheddar Broccoli Cottage Cheese Mold

6 small broccoli-cheddar cottage-cheese molds, about 145–150 ml each; cold side portions · Active 40 min · Total 11 hr

Ingredients

• 1½ cups finely chopped fully cooked broccoli AFTER draining (200 g), safely chilled; prepare extra before cooking/draining

• Drinking water for cooking broccoli, drained rather than added to gel

• 2 standard ¼-ounce envelopes unflavored powdered gelatin (14 g total), of specified setting strength

• 6 tablespoons cold drinking water (90 ml)

• 1 cup pasteurized whole milk (240 ml), divided

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

• 2¾ oz pasteurized ready-to-eat cheddar (80 g), about ¾ cup finely grated and kept cold

• 2 teaspoons lemon juice (10 ml)

• ⅛ teaspoon black pepper

• ½ teaspoon neutral oil (2.5 ml), divided for wiping molds

Set out

Broccoli steaming/simmering pan or permitted microwave vessel, Sieve and shallow cooling dish, Knife and board, Fine grater, Blender suitable for cold dairy, Small saucepan, Mixing bowl and whisk, Scale and measuring jug, 6 metal individual molds of at least 200 ml capacity each, Paper towel, Food thermometer, Cold plates, Refrigerator

Allergens

Milk. Check labels and substitutions.

Make it

1. Cook broccoli fully by package directions if frozen; if fresh, steam or simmer until florets and stems are tender, usually 6–10 minutes. Drain well, spread in shallow dish and refrigerate promptly until cold, allowing 30–45 minutes. Chop finely, remove tough pieces and weigh 200 g drained cooked broccoli.

2. Check mold capacities, dry and oil lightly. Blend cottage cheese with 180 ml milk until smoother; transfer to bowl and refrigerate. Bloom gelatin over 90 ml cold water in saucepan 5–10 minutes. Add remaining 60 ml milk and warm gently while stirring until dissolved, about 120–140°F (50–60°C); take off heat before boiling.

3. Whisk 3 tablespoons cold cottage-cheese base gradually into warm gelatin. Once smooth and lukewarm, whisk back into remaining cold base with lemon and pepper. Refrigerate 15–25 minutes, stirring gently, until lightly thickened. Fold in cold finely chopped broccoli and cold finely grated cheddar.

4. Divide among six molds, about 145–150 ml each, leaving at least ½ inch (1.25 cm) headroom; keep excess in separate refrigerator cup. Cover and refrigerate at 40°F (4°C) or below at least 8 hours until firm. Allow 11 hours total including broccoli cooking/cooling 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. Serve one small cold side mold per person.

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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

Read cheese, cottage cheese and gelatin labels. Animal gelatin makes this nonvegetarian even if a cheese uses vegetarian rennet.

A useful detail

Water, milk and lemon total 340 ml; cottage cheese 300 g, cheddar 80 g and cooked drained broccoli 200 g make roughly 900 ml thick mixture. Fourteen grams gelatin supports the moist dairy/vegetable base. Six 200 ml molds provide space above 150 ml fills.

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. Start with freshly cooked broccoli as directed and retain its original clock.