Cranberry Orange Apple Mold

6 small cranberry-orange apple molds, about 125–130 ml each; fruit-salad 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)
- 1½ cups pasteurized sweetened cranberry juice cocktail (360 ml), divided
- ¾ cup strained pasteurized orange juice (180 ml)
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice (15 ml)
- 2½ teaspoons granulated sugar (10 g)
- 1 small firm apple, about 4¼ oz (120 g peeled/cored edible weight), finely diced
- ½ teaspoon neutral oil (2.5 ml), divided for wiping molds

Set out

Knife and board, Small apple bowl, Small saucepan, Mixing bowl and spoon, Scale and measuring jug, 6 metal individual molds of at least 180 ml capacity each, Paper towel, Food thermometer, Cold plates, Refrigerator

Allergens

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

Make it

1. Check molds, dry and oil lightly. Peel/core apple, weigh 120 g fine dice, toss with lemon juice and keep cold. Bloom gelatin over 90 ml cold water in mixing bowl 5–10 minutes.

2. Warm 180 ml cranberry cocktail with sugar to 140–150°F (60–65°C), stirring until sugar dissolves. Remove from heat and stir into gelatin until dissolved. Add remaining 180 ml cocktail and orange juice.

3. Refrigerate 25–40 minutes, stirring gently every 10 minutes, until lightly syrupy. Fold in cold apple with all measured lemon juice. Divide among molds, about 125–130 ml each, leaving at least ½ inch (1.25 cm) headroom; keep excess in separate refrigerator cup.

4. Cover and refrigerate at 40°F (4°C) or below at least 8 hours until firm. Allow 10 hours total. 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 fruit-salad 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

Check juice cocktail, citrus juice and gelatin labels. Gelatin is animal-derived; no no-added-sugar claim is made.

A useful detail

Free liquid totals 645 ml, plus 10 g sugar and 120 g prepared apple. Fourteen grams gelatin supports roughly 780 ml mixture. Six 180 ml molds give reliable space above roughly 130 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.