Grape Juice Apple Celery Mold

6 small grape-apple celery molds, about 130–135 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)
- 2 cups pasteurized 100 percent purple grape juice (480 ml), divided
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice (15 ml)
- 1 medium firm apple, about 5¼ oz (150 g peeled/cored edible weight), finely diced
- ½ cup very finely diced washed celery (60 g), strings removed, dried and cut about ⅛ inch (3 mm)
- ½ teaspoon neutral oil (2.5 ml), divided for wiping molds

Set out

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

Allergens

Celery. Check labels and substitutions.

Make it

1. Check mold capacities, dry and oil lightly. Peel/core apple, weigh 150 g fine dice, toss with lemon and refrigerate. Remove celery strings, dice finely, dry and weigh 60 g. Bloom gelatin over 90 ml cold water in bowl 5–10 minutes.

2. Warm 240 ml grape juice to 140–150°F (60–65°C), remove from heat and stir into gelatin until dissolved. Add remaining 240 ml grape juice. Refrigerate 25–40 minutes, stirring gently every 10 minutes, until lightly syrupy.

3. Fold in cold apple with all measured lemon juice and dry fine celery dice. Divide among molds, about 130–135 ml each, keeping at least ½ inch (1.25 cm) headroom; refrigerate excess separately.

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 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

Celery can cause allergy although not one of the nine major US categories. Check juice and gelatin labels as well.

A useful detail

Free liquid totals 585 ml, plus 150 g prepared apple and 60 g dry celery, producing roughly 800 ml. Fourteen grams gelatin supports the crisp inclusions. Six 180 ml molds leave useful space above about 133 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.