Lime Cucumber Canned Pineapple Salad

6 small lime-cucumber pineapple molds, about 140–145 ml each; fruit-salad side portions · Active 40 min · Total 11 hr

Ingredients

- ⅔ cup finely diced peeled deseeded cucumber AFTER draining (100 g); prepare extra before draining
- ⅛ teaspoon fine salt (0.75 g), for draining cucumber
- 2 standard ¼-ounce envelopes unflavored powdered gelatin (14 g total), of specified setting strength
- 6 tablespoons cold drinking water (90 ml)
- ¾ cup pasteurized whole milk (180 ml), divided
- 5¼ oz plain pasteurized full-fat cream cheese (150 g), kept cold
- ½ cup canned heat-processed pineapple juice (120 ml)
- 2 tablespoons lime juice (30 ml)
- 1 tablespoon plus 2 teaspoons granulated sugar (20 g)
- 1 cup canned heat-processed pineapple pieces AFTER draining (150 g), packed in juice, patted dry and cut small
- ½ teaspoon neutral oil (2.5 ml), divided for wiping molds

Set out

Sieve over bowl and clean cloth, Knife and board, Blender for cold dairy, Small saucepan, Mixing bowl and whisk, Scale and measuring jug, 6 metal molds of at least 200 ml capacity each, Paper towel, Food thermometer, Cold plates, Refrigerator

Allergens

Milk. Check labels and substitutions.

Make it

1. Salt cucumber and drain in refrigerator sieve 20 minutes. Press/pat dry, weigh 100 g and keep cold. Check pineapple/juice are canned heat-processed products; drain/dry fruit and weigh 150 g small pieces. Check mold capacities, dry and oil lightly. Blend cream cheese with 120 ml milk until smooth, transfer to bowl and refrigerate.

2. Bloom gelatin over 90 ml cold water in saucepan 5–10 minutes. Add remaining 60 ml milk and sugar, warm gently while stirring until dissolved, about 120–140°F (50–60°C), and remove before boiling. Temper with 3 tablespoons cold cheese base, then when smooth and lukewarm whisk back into remaining cold base. Gradually whisk in canned juice and lime.

3. Refrigerate 15–30 minutes until lightly thickened, stirring gently. Fold in cold dry cucumber and pineapple. Divide among molds, about 140–145 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 11 hours total including draining. 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 cream cheese, canned pineapple/juice and gelatin labels. Celery allergen enters only the stated variation.

A useful detail

Water, milk, canned juice and lime total 420 ml, plus 150 g cream cheese, 20 g sugar, 100 g drained cucumber and 150 g drained pineapple. Fourteen grams gelatin supports roughly 850 ml. No raw pineapple, drain liquid or green coloring is included.

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.