Strawberry Vanilla Cream Ribbon Mold

One strawberry-vanilla ribbon ring, about 4 cups (950 ml); 8 modest dessert portions · Active 1 hr 5 min · Total 14 hr 30 min

Ingredients

- 14 oz frozen strawberries (400 g)
- 2 tablespoons drinking water (30 ml), for berries; extra only to bring cooked purée to 360 ml if short
- Unflavored powdered gelatin, 19 g total, divided 5 g +9 g +5 g, of specified setting strength
- 10 tablespoons cold drinking water (150 ml), divided 45 ml per red band and 60 ml center
- ⅓ cup granulated sugar (70 g total), divided 20 g per red band and 30 g center
- 1 cup pasteurized whole milk (240 ml), divided
- ½ cup pasteurized heavy cream (120 ml), kept cold
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract (5 ml)
- ¼ teaspoon neutral oil (1.25 ml), for wiping mold

Set out

Berry saucepan, Blender safe for cooled fruit, Metal ring mold of at least 1½-liter capacity, Food scale reading 0.1 g for gelatin, Small gelatin saucepan washed between layers, Mixing bowls and whisk, Measuring jug, Paper towel, Food thermometer, Cold platter, Refrigerator

Allergens

Milk. Check labels and substitutions.

Make it

1. Simmer frozen berries with 30 ml cooking water until bubbling throughout, then simmer 5 minutes or follow longer packet heating. Cool to blender-safe temperature, blend smooth and measure 360 ml purée; top up only if short and chill extra separately. Divide measured purée into two 180 ml portions and cool. Check mold capacity, dry and oil lightly.

2. For first red band, bloom 5 g gelatin over 45 ml cold water 5–10 minutes. Warm 90 ml purée with 20 g sugar to 140–150°F (60–65°C), remove from heat and dissolve bloomed gelatin in it. Add remaining 90 ml purée. Pour into mold and refrigerate 45–60 minutes until softly firm and tacky.

3. For center, bloom 9 g gelatin over 60 ml cold water in clean pan 5–10 minutes. Add 120 ml milk and 30 g sugar; warm gently while stirring until dissolved, about 120–140°F (50–60°C), and remove before boiling. Add remaining 120 ml cold milk, cream and vanilla. Cool to lukewarm and spoon gently over back of spoon onto first red layer. Refrigerate 45–60 minutes until softly firm and tacky.

4. Make last red band freshly with remaining 180 ml purée, 45 ml cold bloom water, 5 g gelatin and 20 g sugar as for first band. Cool to lukewarm and spoon gently over white layer. Leave at least ½ inch (1.25 cm) headroom; refrigerate excess separately.

5. Cover and refrigerate at 40°F (4°C) or below at least 8 hours after final band until firm throughout. Allow 14½ hours total including berry cooking/cooling and three stages. 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. Cut 8 modest dessert 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

Read cream, milk, berry, extract and gelatin labels. This is animal-gelatin dessert.

A useful detail

Each red band has 5 g gelatin, 180 ml purée, 45 ml water and 20 g sugar, roughly 245 ml. Center has 9 g gelatin, 60 ml water, 240 ml milk, 120 ml cream, 30 g sugar and 5 ml vanilla, roughly 455 ml. Total about 950 ml with white center wider than either red band.

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. Chill extra cooked berry purée promptly separately and use within 2 days.