Lemon Cheesecake-Style Gelatin Loaf

One plain lemon cheesecake-style loaf, about 3 cups (750 ml); 8 rich small dessert slices · Active 35 min · Total 10 hr 30 min

Ingredients

- 10½ oz plain pasteurized full-fat cream cheese (300 g), kept cold
- ¾ cup thick plain pasteurized Greek-style yogurt (180 g), kept cold
- ½ cup pasteurized whole milk (120 ml), divided 90 ml cold base and 30 ml gelatin pan
- Unflavored powdered gelatin, 12 g (one standard 7 g envelope plus 5 g weighed from another), of specified setting strength
- ¼ cup cold drinking water (60 ml)
- ¼ cup plus 2 teaspoons granulated sugar (60 g)
- 3 tablespoons lemon juice (45 ml)
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract (2.5 ml)
- ¼ teaspoon neutral oil (1.25 ml), for wiping mold

Set out

Blender for cold dairy, Small saucepan, Mixing bowl and whisk, Scale and measuring jug, Metal loaf mold of at least 1¼-liter capacity, Paper towel, Food thermometer, Thin knife, Cold platter, Refrigerator

Allergens

Milk. Check labels and substitutions.

Make it

1. Check mold capacity, dry and oil lightly. Blend cream cheese, yogurt and 90 ml milk until smooth; transfer to bowl and refrigerate. Bloom gelatin over 60 ml cold water in saucepan 5–10 minutes.

2. Add remaining 30 ml milk and sugar. Warm gently while stirring until gelatin and sugar dissolve, about 120–140°F (50–60°C), then remove before boiling. Whisk 3 tablespoons cold cheese base gradually into warm gelatin. When smooth and lukewarm, whisk back into remaining cold base, then gradually whisk in lemon and vanilla.

3. Spoon into mold, tapping very gently once to release a large air pocket without beating in bubbles. Leave at least ½ inch (1.25 cm) headroom; refrigerate excess separately. Cover and refrigerate at 40°F (4°C) or below at least 8 hours until firm. Allow 10½ hours total including blending and a setting margin.

4. 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 rich small slices with clean thin knife, wiping between cuts. Serve plain as written.

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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 cheese, yogurt, milk, extract and gelatin labels. This is not a dairy-free or vegetarian cheesecake.

A useful detail

Water, milk and lemon total 225 ml, plus 300 g cream cheese, 180 g yogurt, 60 g sugar and vanilla. Twelve grams gelatin supports roughly 750 ml thick dairy mixture. No crust, flour, egg or unmeasured sauce 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.