Cranberry Orange Cream Star

One cranberry-orange cream star, about 3¼ cups (800 ml); 8 small dessert portions · Active 35 min · Total 10 hr 30 min

Ingredients

- 5¼ oz plain pasteurized full-fat cream cheese (150 g), kept cold
- 5¼ oz ready-to-eat canned jellied cranberry sauce (150 g)
- ½ cup pasteurized whole milk (120 ml), divided
- 2 standard ¼-ounce envelopes unflavored powdered gelatin (14 g total), of specified setting strength
- 6 tablespoons cold drinking water (90 ml)
- ½ cup pasteurized heavy cream (120 ml), kept cold
- ¾ cup strained pasteurized orange juice (180 ml), kept cold
- ¼ teaspoon neutral oil (1.25 ml), for wiping mold

Set out

Food-safe five-point metal star mold of at least 1¼-liter capacity, Blender for cold dairy, Small saucepan, Mixing bowl and whisk, Scale and measuring jug, Paper towel, Food thermometer, Cold platter, Refrigerator

Allergens

Milk. Check labels and substitutions.

Make it

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

2. Add remaining 60 ml milk and warm gently while stirring until dissolved, about 120–140°F (50–60°C); remove before boiling. Whisk 3 tablespoons cold cheese base gradually into warm gelatin. Once smooth and lukewarm, whisk back into remaining cold base, then gradually whisk in cold cream and orange juice.

3. Pour into star with 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 small dessert portions; star points do not define one whole serving each.

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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 dairy, canned sauce, juice and gelatin labels. Gelatin is animal-derived.

A useful detail

Water, milk, cream and orange juice total 510 ml, with 150 g cream cheese and 150 g cranberry sauce. Fourteen grams gelatin supports roughly 800 ml. No extra granulated sugar is added, but the canned sauce is a sweetened ingredient.

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.