

Making simple gelatin salads

Children learn to prepare foods

Sweet or savory, plain or fancy, gelatin salads add a splash of color to the meal. Children can help with these salads with a shape which can be prepared hours or even a day in advance of serving. When children learn to prepare gelatin salads, they'll be proud of the impressive contribution they've made to the meal.

Many gelatin salads are made in molds, and the recipe should indicate the correct size to use. To make unmolding easier, have your child oil the mold, removing excess oil with a paper towel. Gelatin salads can be clear or creamy. Clear salads may be bright in color, but creamy salads are rich in flavor. . . and both add pizzazz to the meal. Layered gelatin salads for special occasions can even combine clear and creamy layers.

Ingredients which add creamy texture and rich flavor to gelatin salads include sour cream, whipped cream, cream cheese, salad dressing or mayonnaise. Experienced cooks may wish to experiment with these ingredients, but success for beginners comes from carefully following recipes. Youngsters preparing gelatin salads for the first time will need adult assistance "translating" cooking terms and conquering a few basic techniques. Help your child by explaining and demonstrating these cooking terms as you prepare gelatin salads together.

- Stir until gelatin is completely dissolved — add boiling water to flavored gelatin and stir until no crystals of gelatin remain. Liquid will be clear.
- Cool — allow hot gelatin to come to room temperature.

- Chill until partially set — place in refrigerator until gelatin is the consistency of chilled, un-beaten egg whites. At this stage, ingredients which are folded into the gelatin will not float or sink, but will stay evenly distributed throughout the mixture.

- Fold in — combine delicate ingredients, such as partially set gelatin, with other ingredients. Using a rubber scraper, gently cut down the center of the mixture, across the bottom of the bowl, and up and over the top of the mixture, using a circular motion.

- Shred — cut into very thin pieces using a shredder or a knife.

- Chill until firm — place in the refrigerator until gelatin mixture does not move when the mold is tilted, and does not stick to the fingers when touched. This may take 6-8 hours overnight.

Green Garden Salad is a good gelatin salad project for beginning cooks. This kaleidoscope salad has colorful flecks of vegetables distributed evenly throughout a creamy lemon gelatin base. The rich flavor and creamy color comes from mayonnaise. Explain to novice cooks that liquid ingredients must be gradually added to the mayonnaise, never the reverse. If a large amount of liquid is added rapidly, the mixture will become lumpy and difficult to blend. Stirring constantly with a whisk, wooden spoon or rubber scraper will insure a smooth texture.

Children will need adult assistance with the tricky job of unmolding the salad. Carefully follow the procedure given in the recipe for best results.

State asparagus harvest is ready for markets

It's about time for fresh Michigan asparagus to arrive at our markets, signaling that spring is really here.

Michigan ranks third among the states in asparagus production. The 1981 commercial harvest amounted to more than 17 million pounds, worth nearly \$11 million, according to the Michigan Department of Agriculture.

About 70 percent of the crop goes into processing with the remaining 30 percent available for fresh market. It's a short season crop, so enjoy it while you can.

Asparagus is an excellent source of vitamins A and C, iron, potassium and phosphorus. And there are just 35 calories in a cup of cooked asparagus — but remember that's not counting the butter or sauce you add.

Asparagus in Ambush is an adaptation of a James Beard recipe whose origin dates to early American cookbooks. Cooks like the fanciful name, and this is an attractive and unusual dish to serve for brunch.

Slice individual French rolls in half, scoop out most of the interior (saving the crumbs for another use), toast under the broiler until lightly browned, then brush with melted butter and keep warm.

Steam asparagus spears, which you have previously washed and trimmed, until just tender. Arrange the well-drained asparagus in the halves of rolls (you may have to cut to fit). Just before serving, top with hollandaise sauce, sprinkle lightly with paprika. Figure on about three pounds of asparagus to fill six split rolls, serving 12 people.

Asparagus Vinaigrette can be served either hot or cold, dressed with oil and vinegar seasoned with herbs and salt. Or try mayonnaise to which you've added a little prepared mustard. Another choice could be sour cream flavored with dill or chives.

GREEN GARDEN SALAD

- 1 3-oz. pkg. lemon flavored gelatin
- 1/4 cup salt
- 1 cup boiling water
- 1 cup milk
- 2 tsp. vinegar
- 1/4 cup Kraft real mayonnaise
- 1/4 cup chopped celery
- 1/4 cup shredded cabbage
- 1/4 cup shredded carrot
- 2 tsp. chopped green pepper
- 1 tsp. finely chopped onion

Take out:

- Glass and metal measuring cups
- Measuring spoons
- Small and medium mixing bowls
- Cutting board and small sharp knife
- Small saucepan or tea kettle for boiling water
- Wooden spoon
- Rubber scraper
- Vegetable oil and paper towel for oiling mold
- 1-quart (4 cup) mold or six 1/2-cup mold
- Serving plate or plates, chilled

Combine gelatin and salt in small mixing bowl. Pour boiling water into bowl. Stir until gelatin is completely dissolved. Cool.

Place mayonnaise in medium mixing bowl. Gradually add gelatin mixture, milk and vinegar to mayonnaise, mixing until well blended. Chill until partially set.

Using rubber scraper, fold in vegetables. Pour mixture into lightly oiled mold. Chill until firm. Run of small sharp knife around edge of mold to loosen gelatin. Dip mold, just to the rim, into warm (not hot) water, about 10 seconds. Place plate over mold and invert. Shake gently and lift off mold carefully. Makes 6 servings.

Fruit gelatin salads are always a hit with chil-

dren. Empress Mold gives junior cooks a choice of orange or lime flavored gelatin, blended with cream cheese. Kid-pleasing peaches throughout the mold contribute a delightful flavor and texture contrast. Have children drain peaches well, in a strainer or small colander, before folding into the gelatin mixture. This will prevent extra liquid from diluting the mold.

Empress Mold is made in an 8-inch square baking pan. To serve, have your child cut into squares with a small sharp knife. Use a pancake turner to lift squares from the pan. Serve on lettuce-lined plates for an appealing and texture contrast. If your junior cook prefers, Empress Mold can be chilled in a lightly oiled 1-quart salad mold and unmolded onto a serving plate.

EMPRESS MOLD

- 1 cup boiling water
- 1 3-oz. pkg. orange or lime flavored gelatin
- 1/4 cup cold water
- 1 8-oz. pkg. cream cheese, softened
- 1 16-oz. can peach slices, drained

Take out:

- Small saucepan or tea kettle for boiling water
- Glass measuring cup
- Large and small mixing bowls
- Wooden spoon
- Strainer or small colander
- Rubber spatula
- 8-inch square pan
- Small sharp knife

Pour boiling water over gelatin in small mixing bowl; stir until gelatin is completely dissolved. Add cold water. Place cream cheese in large mixing bowl. Gradually add gelatin mixture, mixing until well blended. Chill until partially set. Fold in peaches; pour into 8-inch square pan. Chill until firm. Cut into squares. Makes 6 servings.

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