THERE’S ALWAYS ROOM FOR JELLO

Looking for that last menu item to round out your holiday party or meal? Have you considered Jell-O? YES, while totally absent of nutritional value, except calories, it is loaded with jiggly, sugary fun! Baby boomers remember the hilarious Bill Cosby commercials which can be enjoyed today thanks to YouTube. They ran for 30 years and became an icon of American culture. Older folks can recall the early days of radio comedy with The JELLO Program starring Jack Benny. Benny claimed, “that Jell-O had kitchen magic that every busy woman can appreciate.” Eighty years later the busy woman is busier than Benny could have predicted or ever imagined.  

For a trip down memory lane listen at the Mevio website at http://www.mevio.com/episode/131483/the-jack-benny-show-jello-program-alexander

Today kids still love the stuff! When my boys were younger, I purposely served Jell-O for the little ones to indulge in at holiday meals. It was the easiest item to prepare on the menu, yet produced the biggest of smiles. Imagine sitting down at the fancy dining room table to find a grown-up crystal bowl of bright red Jell-O. Or better yet, the Jell-O is individually portioned in fancy glasses, perhaps layered with whipped topping, and you get to have more than one. Pure heaven for kids, almost as good as a trip to the candy store!

For grown-ups I often serve one of many favorite gelatin salads. They offer just enough sweet to counter the salty items, cold temperature to balance all the hot dishes, and texture variations. A bonus for the cook is they can be prepared ahead of time and can easily be made in large quantities for a crowd.

Here are some of my very personal favorites for the holidays. Enjoy and best wishes for the season!
**PINEAPPLE DELIGHT SALAD**

1 large (6 ounce) box orange jello
1 large (20 ounce) can crushed pineapple, undrained
2 cups buttermilk
1 medium (12 ounce) container cool whip
1 cup chopped nuts, optional

Place jello and pineapple in a double boiler, stir and bring to a boil or until gelatin is dissolved. Let cool. Add buttermilk and place in refrigerator for 1/2 hour until it begins to congeal.

Then add cool whip and nuts, folding in until it is smooth. Place back into refrigerator and let congeal.

**CRANBERRY CONGEALED SALAD**

1 large (6 ounce) box cherry jello
1 1/2 cups boiling water
1 can jellied cranberry sauce
1 Granny Smith apple, chopped
3/4 cup chopped walnuts

Combine jello and boiling water and stir until dissolved. Stir in cranberry sauce. Chill 1 hour, add apples and nuts, stir well.

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