

Outrageous Coca-Cola Bing Cherry Jell-O Mold

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Oh yes, indeedy, prepare yourself for the outrageous and tasty flavor of everyone's favorite - Coca-Cola! Now, who ever heard of using Coca-Cola to make a holiday Jell-O ring? Only a few who dared to play with CO2 and carmel coloring. And why not put in some Hawaiian pineapple, Georgia pecans, Bing Cherries (butta-bing!) and deep down black cherry Jell-O mix. This recipe was a favorite at the Arkansas capitol when President Clinton was there and a variation of it was published in "Cooking at the Mansion." I've got my own twist to it and it seems to be the ultimate version. Of course, that's what I would think! We all dream our recipe is the best, don't we?

Ingredients:

- 1 (12 fluid ounce) can of Coca-Cola
- 1 (16.5-ounce) can of pitted Bing cherries
- 1/2 teaspoon of fresh zested (tiny, miniscule pieces) orange
- 1 (20 ounce) can crushed pineapple with juice
- 1 (6 ounce) package black cherry flavored gelatin mix
- 1 cup chopped pecans
- 1 block of Cream cheese for decorating and garnishing
- 1 pastry bag with a simple star tip in it (at Wal-Mart they always sell these two items in the decorating section, in the cake decorating aisle.
- 1 bag of fresh mesclun greens or designer greens for platter

Directions:

1. Drain pineapple juice right down the drain, save pineapple.
2. Drain off the cherry juice but save all of IT in a separate bowl. Just let the drained cherries sit in the can, right there on the counter.
3. In a saucepan mix the cherry juice with the Coke. Heat to boiling then stir in the Jell-O mix. Stir until the Jell-O is dissolved. Take it off of the heat and fold in the drained pineapple, drained cherries and chopped pecans. Spray your Jell-O ring or pan with a quick shot of Pam spray. Go on ahead and pour the mixture into a nice mold that you have and refrigerate for at least 24 hours before serving. Make sure that it is in there for at least a full day to ensure its real solid. It would not have made anyone sad, if you had chilled the empty mold pan before hand, either. But that's between you and your pans - relationship stuff, you know...

3. When it comes time to UN-mold it, it helps to just hold the whole ring in a hot, hot water bath bowl. Don't let any water actually touch the Jell-O. A quick dip in the "pool," like this, helps to loosen the whole mold up – just around the edges. We are talking, like, a 10-second dip here. Then place your platter on top of the mold and flip. Beware of running, red juices! You could very well flip them all over your beautiful, white Christmas blouse or shirt. Best to flip slowly and steadily – don't be a maniac with it or ensure you have the ole apron on. Lift off mold, slowly.

4. Garnish with pastry bag filled with cream cheese. Gotta make sure you drop the star tip in first – then fill it up with softened cream cheese. If it's not soft yet, then work it up with your hands until it is. Or leave on the counter for an hour. Any type of neat designs looks great! There is no "correct" way to do it. The right way is what you think looks good! Then put some nice lettuce leaves around the bottom and in the center. Put back in fridge for later.