



Gelatin Rainbow Cake

1960s

I first discovered this cake in *Joys of Jello*, published in 1961, and knew it would be an essential addition to the book. There is something so quintessential about a gelatin based dessert, and this colorful cake is so much fun to share with others.

This particular recipe took some testing, as many old cookbooks lack the technical tricks needed for success, so please thoroughly read through before trying to make this. Trust me, you don't want to spend hours making this to have it fall apart or not set properly. It requires quite a bit of patience, planning, and perhaps practice, but it will be sure to spark joy to anyone that receives a slice. You'll need to have everything ready to go, since timing is essential for this to work. You will need five bowls or plastic deli containers that you can use to keep each gelatin flavor separate. Makes 12 servings

Ingredients:

For the cake

5 (3--ounce/85 g) packages gelatin mix, in different flavors such as black cherry, lime, lemon, orange, and strawberry

7½ cups (1.75 L) water

For the icing

1½ cups (360 mL) heavy cream

½ cup (60 g) confectioners' sugar

1 teaspoon (5 g) vanilla bean paste

½ teaspoon (2.5 g) salt

Directions:

1. Line a 9-inch springform pan or mold with a double layer of wax paper, leaving about 3 inches of overhang on each end.
2. In a small saucepan, bring 1 cup water to a rapid boil. Add one of the packages of gelatin mix and whisk constantly for about 2 minutes or until completely dissolved. If the gelatin mixture begins to rise, remove the pot from the heat for a moment and allow the gelatin mixture to lower and settle again before continuing to boil. This will prevent the mixture from boiling over. Once the gelatin is dissolved, transfer the mixture to a bowl and add 1/2 cup cold water. Rinse out the pot and repeat the process to make the other gelatin flavors, using a different bowl for each.
3. Fill a large metal bowl halfway with crushed ice, then place another metal bowl on top of the ice. Pour the first flavor of gelatin into the top metal bowl and begin to whisk. After about 2 minutes, you will notice it begins to bubble a bit more, with some liquid still on the bottom. Continue to whisk until the gelatin base has doubled in volume and any liquid has disappeared and become foamy, 3 to 5 minutes. When you can easily scoop a large dollop of the gelatin, like scooping a stiff meringue, spoon the gelatin into the prepared springform pan and use the bottom of the spoon or an offset spatula to level off the surface. Place the springform pan in the refrigerator for 5 to 7 minutes, until the next layer is ready to be added.
4. Rinse out the metal bowl and repeat with the remaining gelatin flavors in the order listed for a rainbow effect. Generally, by the time the next layer is ready, the previous layer should be set enough to carefully spoon on top of. Once all the layers are

complete, allow the cake to set in the refrigerator to fully firm up for at least 6 hours, or overnight.

5. To make the icing, combine the cream, confectioner's sugar, vanilla, and salt in a medium bowl and whip with a whisk until you have a rich whipped cream topping. Remove the cake from the springform pan to a serving platter. Frost the cake with the icing and serve.

Notes: The gelatin is extremely prone to staining clothing or countertops, so work with caution and keep some cleaner handy.

I have found it more effective to add the gelatin to the boiling water in the pot and continue to cook, rather than simply pour boiling water from a kettle into the bowl with the gelatin. I also found it is much easier to control the proper texture by hand whisking, rather than using an electric mixer. This will prevent too much aeration, and you can also feel the proper consistency from the natural resistance while it's setting in the ice bath.

I recommend using a large spoon to transfer the gelatin to the springform pan, not pouring the layers onto each other. There's more control and less risk of disturbing the layers.

About the Recipe: This Rainbow Cake captures pure 1960s fun with its vibrant, jiggly layers and whipped cream topping. While it does require patience, careful timing, and some planning (you'll need five containers), the delightful result is well worth the effort. Follow the instructions closely and it will be sure to offer joy in every slice.

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