

GIN AND TONIC JELLY

I love jellies and one of the wonderful things about them is that they are so simple to make. This has a definite kick and unarguable elegance: what better food to emanate from the modern woman's kitchen?

I remind you again of the necessity, in my book, of using leaf gelatine, since it is about a thousand times easier than the powdered sort.

300ml plus 50ml water	2 punnets whitecurrants or 3-4
300g caster sugar	punnets raspberries, optional
Zest and juice of 2 lemons	1 teaspoon icing sugar if using
400ml tonic water (not slimline!)	raspberries
250ml gin	1 ½ litre jelly mould
8 sheets of leaf gelatine	

Put the water and sugar into a wide, thick-bottomed saucepan and bring to the boil. Let boil for 5 minutes, take off the heat, add the lemon zest and leave to steep for 15 minutes. Strain into a measuring jug, then add the lemon juice, the tonic water and the gin; you should have reached the 1,200ml mark; if not, add more tonic water, gin or lemon juice to taste.

Soak the gelatine leaves in a dish of cold water for 5 minutes to soften. Meanwhile, put 50ml of water into a small saucepan and bring to the boil. Remove from the heat, squeeze out the gelatine leaves and whisk them in. Pour some of the gin and lemon syrup mixture into the saucepan and then pour everything back into the jug. Pour into the mould and, when cold, put in the fridge to set. This should take about 6 hours.

When you are ready to unmould, half-fill a sink with warm water and stand the jelly mould in it for 30 seconds or so. Clamp a big flat plate over the jelly and invert to unmould, shaking it as you do so. If it doesn't work, stand it in the warm water for another half-minute or so and try again. If you've used a dome mould, surround the jelly with whitecurrants (Sainsbury's sells them in summer, as do many greengrocers'), or fill the hole with them if you've used a ring mould. Raspberries are just as good, but dust these with icing sugar – it sounds poncey, but it makes the pale-jade glimmer of the jelly and the otherwise-too-vibrant red of the fruit come together on the plate. The whitecurrants should be left to glimmer, opal-like, without interference.

Serves 8.

Variation:

To make a vodka and lime jelly, simply substitute 6 limes for the 2 lemons and use vodka in place of the gin.