CRANBERRY-ORANGE JELLY

really good - but don't strain

ADAPTED FROM CANAL HOUSE COOKING
TIME: 20 MINUTES, PLUS AT LEAST 3 HOURS' CHILLING
YIELD: 12 TO 16 SERVINGS

- 1½ cups Lillet (see note)
- ½ cup orange liqueur, like Grand Marnier
- 2 cups sugar
- 2 tablespoons juniper berries (optional)
- 2 12-ounce bags fresh or frozen cranberries (about 8 cups; frozen can be substituted)
- Nonstick cooking spray (if chilling in a mold)

1. In a heavy saucepan, combine Lillet, liqueur, sugar and juniper berries if using. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Add cranberries and return to a boil. Reduce the heat to low and simmer until all the cranberries burst and are very soft, at least 10 minutes total (or use a candy thermometer and cook mixture to 210 to 215 degrees). The mixture should be reduced and thickened, like a very loose jam.

2. Strain the sauce into a bowl through a sieve, pushing on the solids with a rubber spatula to extract all the liquid. Discard the solids. Stir the liquid and transfer to a pretty serving bowl or a mold. (If using a mold, spray the insides first with nonstick cooking spray.) A funnel or liquid measuring cup with a spout can be useful for transferring without splashing the sides. Cover and refrigerate for at least three hours, or up to several days. Keep refrigerated until ready to serve.

3. If you chilled the jelly in a mold, turn it out by placing the mold in a large bowl. Carefully pour hot water into the bowl so it comes up the sides of the mold, melting the jelly just enough to release it from the mold. After 3 minutes, try unmolding the jelly onto a serving dish. If it doesn't come out, return to the bowl and try again 2 minutes later. Repeat until the jelly is released. If necessary, return it to the refrigerator to firm up before serving.

Note: Two cups of red wine, port, Madeira or orange juice can be substituted for the Lillet and liqueur.

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