

Strawberry Pretzel Salad

Signature Dish recipe

This recipe appeared in The News & Observer's monthly Signature Dish column where we share readers' most popular recipes. This Strawberry Pretzel Salad was adapted from a recipe shared by Elizabeth Harrison of New Bern, N.C. To read more about this dish that could be served as a salad or dessert, go to <http://nando.com/rd>.

Tell us about your most-requested recipe. If we publish it, you'll be entered in a quarterly drawing for a gift card. Send it to Signature Dish, The N&O, P.O. Box 191, Raleigh, NC 27602; or email aweigl@newsobserver.com.

Cooking or baking spray

2 cups pretzel sticks, broken or crushed

3/4 cup margarine, melted

1 cup plus 3 tablespoons sugar, divided

8 ounces cream cheese

8 ounces Cool Whip, thawed

6-ounce package strawberry Jell-O

2 cups boiling water

2 (10-ounce) packages of frozen strawberries or 4 cups fresh, sliced strawberries

HEAT oven to 350 degrees. Spray bottom of a 9-by-13-inch baking dish with cooking spray. Set aside.

TOSS crushed pretzel sticks, melted margarine and 3 tablespoons sugar in a medium bowl. Spread crust evenly in the bottom of baking dish. Bake 10 minutes. Remove from oven and let cool completely.

ONCE crust is cooled, whip cream cheese and 1 cup sugar in a large bowl with a handheld mixer or in bowl of a standing mixer. Once fully combined, fold in Cool Whip and spread evenly over pretzel crust.

MIX Jell-O and boiling water in a large bowl. Stir constantly for 2 minutes until gelatin is melted; keep moving so a layer doesn't stick to bottom of bowl. Stir in strawberries. Let cool slightly. Pour over cream cheese layer. Place baking dish in refrigerator for 3 hours or until firm.

Yield: 12-15 servings.