Are you looking for a cool and refreshing dessert to help celebrate our patriotic holidays? This no-bake dessert is a twist on the classic “Pretzel Salad,” one of my favorite summer desserts! This easy dessert is full of sweet and salty flavors, balanced by the buttery crunch of the pretzel crust, and the creamy cream cheese layer. Show your patriotic spirit, and serve this summertime delight at your next party!

**No-Bake Red, White and Blue Pretzel Dessert**

**Ingredients**

**Pretzel Crust**

* 3/4 cup of Challenge Unsalted Butter, melted
* ¼ cup of light brown sugar
* 2 cups of crushed salted pretzels
* 1/3 cup of chopped pecans

**Cream Cheese Filling**

* 8 ounces of Challenge Cream Cheese, softened
* 1 teaspoon of vanilla
* 1 cup of  powdered sugar
* 8 ounces of frozen whipped topping, thawed

**Berry Layer**

* 2 (0.75 ounce) packages of unflavored gelatin
* ½ cup of cold water
* 4 cups of your favorite clear soda, or clear fruit juice such as white grape juice
* 2 cups fresh blueberries
* 2 cups fresh raspberries
* 2 cups sliced fresh strawberries
* 1 apple, thinly sliced
* 1 tablespoon of fresh lemon juice added to 1 tablespoon of water

**Instructions**

1. Combine melted butter, brown sugar, pecans, and crushed pretzels in a large bowl. Press mixture into the bottom of 9 x 13 x 2 inch glass baking dish. Place in the freezer to firm while making the filling.
2. To make the Cream Cheese Filling, beat together softened cream cheese with powdered sugar and vanilla until creamy and smooth. Stir in whipped topping, then spread filling over chilled crust. Place in the fridge to set.
3. To make the Berry Layer, place gelatin in a large bowl and pour ½ cup cold water over gelatin, let it sit a few minutes to soften.
4. Heat 1 ¼ cups of clear liquid to the boiling and pour over gelatin, stir until the gelatin completely dissolved. Stir in remaining clear liquid and set aside to cool.
5. Arrange the berries over chilled cream cheese layer. Lightly press berries down into cream cheese to create a flat and level surface.
6. To create stars, using a small star shaped cookie cutter cut out stars. Dip the stars immediately with lemon juice and water mixture to prevent browning. Arrange the stars on top.
7. Gently pour room temperature gelatin over fruit layer. Don’t pour warm gelatin, it will melt cream cheese layer. I find it best to place baking dish in the refrigerator, then pour on gelatin to prevent spills. Make sure the stars are pushed down and covered by gelatin.
8. Refrigerate a few hours or overnight until the gelatin has completely set.

**Serves 12**