



Homemade Ice Cream

Photographed by Mike Buck

There are two categories of ice cream — French-style ice cream is custard-based, very creamy, smooth, and rich. It contains eggs, which act as stabilizers, so this is the method of choice if you intend to have leftovers to freeze. Italian gelato falls into this category, but its freezing process incorporates less air than the French style, resulting in an even denser dessert. Ice cream that is not cooked and does not contain eggs is known as Philadelphia, New York, or American-style ice cream, depending on where you're from; we're going to call it American ice cream. It produces a much lighter, fluffier product that really showcases the flavors of cream and vanilla, so make sure you use top-quality vanilla. It does not fare as well long-term in the freezer as its custard-based cousin, as it crystallizes when it freezes. ♦

Basic Recipes

French-Style Ice Cream

- 1 cup granulated sugar, in all**
- 1 large vanilla bean**
- 8 egg yolks**
- 2 cups whole milk**
- 2 tablespoons light corn syrup**
- 2 cups heavy cream, very cold**

Make an ice bath by placing a metal bowl big enough to hold 3 quarts inside a larger bowl, with ice cubes in between.

Measure ½ cup sugar into a mixing bowl. Split the vanilla bean in half lengthwise and scrape the pulpy interior and seeds into the sugar; reserve the skin. Use your fingers to work the vanilla pulp in to the sugar; this disperses the vanilla evenly (and makes your hands smell great).

Place egg yolks in a large mixing bowl. Slowly whisk vanilla-infused sugar into the yolks and set aside.

Place milk in a non-aluminum pot over medium heat. Stir remaining ½ cup sugar into the milk and heat until sugar is dissolved; add the reserved vanilla bean skin. Continue to heat until mixture bubbles around the edges; do not boil. Add corn syrup and stir to dissolve; remove from heat. Remove and reserve vanilla bean skin.

If you have a kitchen buddy, this would be the time to get a third hand involved; if you are solo, place the mixing bowl containing the egg yolk mixture on a damp kitchen towel to keep it from spinning around.

Vigorously whisk the yolk mixture and very slowly drizzle the hot milk into the eggs. Continue this until the milk is completely mixed in; return the reserved vanilla bean skin to the mixture.

Note: *This is where we come to the part of the process where people often turn this beautiful liquid into a scrambled-egg-disaster; pay attention. Transfer the mixture back into the pot and return to the stove over low heat; attach a candy thermometer. Use a rubber spatula to slowly, steadily scrape the bottom of the pot, taking care to work the entire surface.*

As the mixture warms, it will start to steam a bit and begin to thicken. Remove the pot from the heat when it gets to 170°F and stir in the cold cream. Transfer to the chilled bowl in the ice bath you made earlier; you want to cool the mixture as quickly as possible to keep it from scrambling. Gently stir until cool; transfer to an airtight container and refrigerate to chill. If time permits, it is best to let it rest overnight before freezing.

Remove and discard vanilla bean. Pour custard mixture into ice cream freezer prepared according to manufacturer's instructions. Freeze 20 to 30 minutes, until thickened. Serve at once for soft-serve consistency, or transfer to an airtight container and place in freezer for 2 hours to harden.

Makes about 1½ quarts.

Note: If you don't have easy access to whole vanilla beans, you can substitute up to 2 tablespoons of good vanilla extract or puréed vanilla bean in its place. Add it to taste when you add the cream.

Without a thermometer, the best way to judge when the custard is done is to pull the spatula out of the mixture and draw a line with your finger across the blade of the spatula. If the line stays and doesn't close up, it is done. Your custard has achieved a state-of-being called nap.



American Ice Cream

- 1½ cups whole milk, half & half, or a mixture**
- 1 scant cup granulated sugar**
- 3 cups heavy cream**
- 3 teaspoons Madagascar pure vanilla extract, or to taste**

Place milk and sugar in a mixing bowl and whisk together until sugar is completely dissolved. Stir in the cream and about 1½ teaspoons vanilla; taste and add more vanilla if desired. Pour mixture into an ice cream freezer and process according to manufacturer's directions until thickened; usually 20 to 25 minutes. It will be soft, so serve at once for soft-serve, or transfer to an airtight container and freeze for about 2 hours to firm it up a bit.

Makes about 1 quart.

Adding Fruit to Ice Cream

Who doesn't love strawberry ice cream? Or you-name-the-fruit ice cream? Problem is, fruit has a high water content, and that water crystallizes as it freezes, making for an unpleasantly crunchy eating experience. Some of the water has to be removed before the fruit is added to the ice cream. This method works for strawberries, blueberries, peaches, mangoes, figs, and other fruits with similar textures.

Fruit Reduction

- 2 cups fruit of choice**
- 1 cup firmly packed brown sugar**
- 1/8 teaspoon kosher salt**

Clean fruit as necessary; hull strawberries, peel peaches, etc. Coarsely chop. Place 2 cups water in a heavy saucepan with a tight-fitting lid. Bring to a low boil and stir in sugar to dissolve; add fruit and salt. Reduce heat and simmer for 10 minutes; mash thoroughly with a potato masher. Cover and continue simmering for 45 minutes to an hour, or until the mixture begins to caramelize; this depends on sugar and water content in the fruit. Add a little water as needed to keep the consistency of thick gravy. Remove from heat and cool to room temperature before refrigerating. Add it to ice cream mixture before freezing, or use as a topping for ice cream.

Makes about 2 cups.



Variations on a Theme

Fruity Ice Cream: Add about 1 cup of Fruit Reduction (more or less to taste) to your favorite vanilla ice cream recipe before freezing.

Chocolate Ice Cream Custard: Add 1/2 cup great-quality unsweetened cocoa powder to the milk, along with 1/2 cup sugar in the French-Style Ice Cream recipe.





Pop Rouge

AKA: Ping Pong

Widely enjoyed in the river country from Baton Rouge to New Orleans, Pop Rouge is known for having a nearly identical flavor profile to the popular nectar syrup once used to flavor sodas and that is now popular as a sno-ball. The carbonation creates volume and the sugar in the sweetened condensed milk crystallizes when it freezes, trapping air; the end result is an almost overflowing 4 quart canister of insanely delicious pink fluff. This also works with any soda; try root beer, vanilla cream soda, and orange or grape crush. Pop Rouge can be enjoyed a number of ways. Add some rum or other spirit of choice for an adult beverage, or freeze for several hours and it becomes scoopable, with a texture similar to sherbet.

- 1 can sweetened condensed milk**
- 1 2-liter bottle Barq's Red Cream soda**

Pour sweetened condensed milk into ice cream freezer. Add soda. Freeze according to manufacturer's instructions.

Makes about 4 quarts.

In the Event of Leftovers:

Blueberry Milk Shake: Put 2 scoops Blueberry Fruit Reduction Ice Cream in a blender with ½ cup of milk; blend, serve in a chilled glass, and think of the antioxidants.



Stout Beer Brownie Float: Put a brownie in the bottom of an ice cream float glass. Top with 2 scoops of your favorite ice cream and finish with a sweet stout beer. Really.





Choco Tacos: Soften your favorite ice cream slightly; stuff chocolate waffle tacos with ice cream, smooth edges, and immediately place in the freezer; allow to firm back up. Before serving, roll the edge of the taco in your choice of crushed nuts, candy sprinkles, toasted coconut, or whatever floats your boat.



Mint Chocolate Chip Cookie Ice Cream Sandwiches:

Before freezing leftover vanilla (or chocolate) ice cream, mince about a cup of mint milk chocolate and stir into about 1 quart of ice cream; freeze. The next day (or as long as you can wait), place a scoop of the ice cream on the bottom of a chocolate chip cookie (chewy-style cookies work best); flatten ice cream with a spatula and top with another cookie. Enjoy.



Personal Baked Alaskas

Using ice cream and cookie flavor combinations of choice, make an ice cream cookie sandwich for each serving. Freeze until ready to assemble.

Prepare Italian Meringue (recipe below); transfer to a pastry bag. Working one at a time, place an ice cream sandwich on a small chilled plate; mound in an igloo shape with more ice cream.

Pipe a generous layer of meringue over ice cream, making sure not to leave any gaps in coverage; the meringue acts as an insulator.

Using a kitchen torch, quickly brown the meringue., taking care not to burn; a little char adds to the overall flavor of the dessert but don't over do it. Once the surface of the meringue has been browned, transfer to freezer until ready to serve. They will keep for up to 8 hours.



Italian Honey Meringue

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup honey
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water
- 6 egg whites

Combine honey and water in a small saucepan and place over medium heat; bring to a low boil while stirring. Remove from heat until needed.

Place egg whites in the bowl of an electric mixer; beat on medium until whites form a soft peak. Carefully pour syrup into whisking meringue. Beat on medium until meringue has cooled completely, about 5 to 7 minutes, while stopping occasionally to scrape down sides. *(Note: this recipe first appeared in the January/February 2015 issue as part of Chef Jeffrey Hansell's feature.*



Sorbet

Sorbet is frozen in the same manner as ice cream; like the American version, it does not include dairy or eggs. At its simplest, it is frozen fruit juice.

Coconut Cinnamon Sorbet, à la Arnaud's Restaurant

- 1** 15-ounce can Coco Lopez Crème of Coconut
- 2** cups water
- 1** teaspoon lime zest
- ½** ounce freshly squeezed lime juice
- 3** cinnamon sticks

Place all ingredients in a medium saucepan over medium-high heat and bring to a simmer. Cover and remove from heat; allow to steep for 1 hour, then refrigerate overnight. Stir, then strain through a fine mesh strainer; pour into an ice cream maker and freeze according to manufacturer's instructions.

Makes about 1 quart.

Served here in a goblet rimmed with melted dark chocolate then dipped in unsweetened, toasted organic coconut. A choco waffle cone disk dipped in melted dark chocolate dusted with more unsweetened toasted organic coconut tops off this sub-tropical delight.

Crab Salad with Savory Tomato Sorbet

Crab Salad

- 1 large tomato**
- 1½ cups prepared guacamole**
- ¼ cup mayonnaise**
- 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard**
- 1 tablespoon diced pickles**
- hot sauce**
- ½ pound lump crab meat, picked over**
- Tomato Sorbet (recipe follows)**

Make a remoulade sauce by combining mayonnaise, mustard, pickles, and hot sauce; adjust taste with hot sauce and mustard. Gently fold in crab meat, taking care not to break up lumps.

To Assemble:

Slice tomato into 4 generous slabs and center a piece on each serving plate. Top with an appropriately-sized ring mold.

Spread ⅓ cup guacamole on top of each tomato slice.

Divide crab salad among the four molds; press down firmly and make a depression in the center to act as a cradle for the scoop of tomato sorbet. Garnish with minced green onion, if desired.

Makes 4 servings.



Tomato Sorbet

- 1 tablespoon olive oil**
- 2 pounds tomatoes, preferably grape or pear tomatoes**
- 4 cloves of garlic, crushed**
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme**
- 1 medium shallot, minced**
- 1 bay leaf**
- 3 generous tablespoons of light corn syrup**
- 1 small can tomato paste**
- 2 tablespoons olive oil**
- kosher salt**
- hot sauce**

Place olive oil in a sauté pan over high heat. Add whole tomatoes and sauté until skins begin to blacken. Add the garlic, thyme, and shallot and continue cooking until the shallot is transparent; remove from heat, carefully transfer to a blender, and purée.

Transfer purée to a saucepan; add the bay leaf, corn syrup, and tomato paste. Bring mixture to a simmer, lower heat and cook, covered, for 15 minutes. Remove and discard bay leaf; cool to room temperature, transfer to an airtight container, and refrigerate for at least 2 hours.

Taste and adjust seasoning with salt and hot sauce.

Makes about 2 cups.



How to Roll Your Own: **Waffle Cones**

Waffle Cone Batter

- 2¼ cups all-purpose flour**
- 2 sticks plus 1 tablespoon butter, room temperature**
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract**
- 2 cups powdered sugar**
- 7 egg whites**

Sift flour. Using a hand mixer, beat butter, powdered sugar, and vanilla together until smooth. Beat in flour ½ cup at a time, scraping bowl as necessary.

Beat in egg whites 1 at a time, scraping the bowl between each addition. Allow to rest 20 minutes.

Using ¼ cup batter per waffle, bake waffles in a waffle cone iron according to manufacturer's directions. Once each waffle is done, work quickly to shape and/or cut before it cools to prevent cracking.



For Chocolate Waffle Cones, deduct ½ cup flour; sift in ½ cup good quality cocoa powder with remaining 1¼ cups flour. Proceed as directed.

Equipment

The necessary equipment for freezing can come in many forms: There is the classic hand-cranked ice-and-rock salt version (they now have electric motors if you don't have a ready supply of children to turn the handle), and many table-top versions that cost anywhere from \$40 to as much as you're willing to pay. All of them are simple to use; let your wallet be your guide.



A word about waffle cone irons: like ice cream freezers, waffle cone irons are available at various price points. We achieved beautiful results with using a Chef's Choice Waffle Cone Express, available in the small appliance department of most home and department stores, and online.



Pour ¼ cup batter onto pre-heated waffle iron.



Allow waffle to cook for at least 1 minute before opening the iron to check for color. Carefully move hot waffle to a napkin; napkin acts as a hot pad to keep you from burning your fingers on the hot waffle as you roll it into shape.





A cone-shaped roller was included with our waffle cone iron. Crumpled aluminum foil shaped into a cone (or taco if your're making ice cream tacos) makes a fine substitute.



Allow waffle to cool before removing it from the shape. As the waffles cool they crisp up beautifully; if you're not shaping them, use cookie cutters to cut into desired shape while they're still hot.



Win

A Louisiana-Style

Tail Gate Party

Details pg. 43

Icy Hucklebucks

pg. 10

Destination: Opelousas

Dining Out Around the Square

Louisiana Kitchen

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July / August 2015

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Gulf Seafood

Issue

Homemade

Ice Cream

pg. 21

Zesty

Shrimp

Scampi

pg. 41

Ralph

Brennan's

Favorite

Burger

59

Recipes

Inside

\$5.97 U.S. & Canada

0 83

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