

Reflections at the Churn

Have you ever stopped for a moment, closed your eyes, and recalled the sensations that defined your youth? I walked out the door this morning juggling my briefcase, a cup of java, and a bagel sandwich. Before I got to the car I had to stop. For just an instant I was back to the summer of 1965 without a care in the world. The cicadas buzzed their summer song from the trees in the front yard, a warm breeze drifted through the wild flowers that border our road and the fragrance of fresh cut lawns came to me blended with the rich bouquet of corn fields just beginning to flower. Wow, what an incredible moment!

Having lived for years away from southwestern Ohio, I never really thought a lot about what I was missing until I came home in 1999. We have a lot to be thankful for but there is a hitch. You have to slow down enough to take notice.

Join me for a moment if you will and we will venture back to an age when we climbed trees rather than pruned them and the measure of a great finish to your day was how many lightning bugs you had collected in your Mason jar. One of the most exciting sounds you could experience was the unmistakable low growl of a hand turn ice cream churn slowing producing a treat like nobody's business.

Believe it or not, kids, our hearts raced and our eyes lit up without the assistance of any kind of high tech gaming device or 52-inch plasma television. (We also learned to spell, add, read, write and pray – but that's another story.)

The old-fashioned hand crank ice cream churn is back; I saw one the other day at Sam's Club. Along with it we have a super opportunity to gift our children with the experience of making their own ice cream. Now don't cut me off here with the "too much trouble" excuse. I know it's a whole lot easier to pick up a half-gallon at the market or take the kids to UDF or Graeter's. Why don't we call it a history lesson or a perfect opportunity to provide our young one's upper body exercise along with the accompanying sense of accomplishment?

I've watched modern day kids make ice cream and even if you have to press them to get the whole project started, guess what? They get just as excited as we did once they get into the swing of



things. Wouldn't it be great if in 2046 they told their grandchildren about when they made ice cream by hand?

Here are two recipes to give a try. One of them is the old traditional very rich egg cream custard style ice cream and the other is a simple but delicious recipe the kids can handle from start to finish.

Super Rich Vanilla Bean Ice Cream

(Makes one gallon)

10 cups heavy cream
5 cups whole milk
Pinch salt
3 cups sugar
3 vanilla beans
24 large egg yolks

Take your time when completing this recipe for best results. Combine the cream, milk, salt, and 2 cups of the sugar in a large heavy bottom pot. Split the vanilla beans down the middle lengthwise and scrape out the seeds with a paring knife. Add the seeds and the pods to the pot brings all up to a medium heat. Bring up to a slight simmer and stir with a wooden spoon to dissolve the sugar. When handled perfectly the temperature should reach 175°F or just below the scalding temperature to produce super smooth ice cream. All of this will take you approximately 15 minutes. Shut off the heat, cover the pot, and allow the cream mixture to steep for 15 minutes to further infuse the vanilla flavor.

Separately, combine the egg in a large mixing bowl and blend them lightly with a wire whisk, gradually adding the remaining 1 cup of sugar. Continue whisking until the sugar is completely dissolved. The egg mixture will appear thick and pale yellow. This should take about 6 minutes.

Using a large ladle, temper the eggs by gradually whisking in about 4 cups of the hot cream mixture. Return your cream and egg mixture back to the pot with the rest of the warm cream base and turn the heat to medium low. Stir constantly until the custard thickens and leaves a path on the back of your wooden spoon when you run your finger across it, about 10 to 12 minutes. Be absolutely sure not to bring your base up to boiling or it will be ruined.

Pour your base through a fine strainer into another pot and place the pot into a sink full of ice to quickly bring the temperature down to cold. This will take about an hour. Your best results will be accomplished if you then place the base into a refrigerator and chill it completely for about 8 hours. When freezing it use the base a quart at a time or in whatever volume your churn calls for and follow the directions that come with your churn. If served right from the churn it will be "soft serve" but if you then place the ice cream into the freezer in plastic sealable containers it will harden to a level more like that which you purchase from the store.

Simple Ice Cream for Kids

(Makes 6 to 8 servings; about one quart)

2 cups half-and-half
2 cups heavy cream
1 cup sweetened condensed milk
1 vanilla bean, split and scraped

In a large bowl, combine all the ingredients and mix well. Cover and refrigerate for 30 minutes to 1 hour to allow the flavors to blend. When you are ready to freeze, remove the vanilla bean pod from the base. Pour your liquid into an ice cream maker and freeze according to the manufacturers instructions. This is a perfect recipe for your young ones to use and it will yield outstanding results.

I hope you are all ready for an ice cream adventure and after a bit of work you'll be amazed at how much better your ice cream will taste. Let us know how everything comes out at 888-288-0668 or visit us on the web at www.winedog.com. We love hearing from you! Thanks for the great comments on the Mock Apple Pie last week. Cheers.