

We All Scream

Is there any food that surpasses ice cream in bringing out the “inner child” in all of us? Take a moment the next time you go into your favorite ice cream parlor and position yourself so that you can watch the faces of people waiting for that next dip to plop down on their sugar cones. It is absolutely priceless. The children waiting for their treats have nothing over on the 50-year-old carpenter who spent his day on someone’s roof.

I won’t bore you with the ancient history of ice cream but just know that it has been around for hundreds of years and it accounts for sales in the billions of dollars every year just in the United States. It was, in fact, an American woman in 1843 named Nancy Johnson who invented the ice cream freezer, which had worldwide impact on who could afford to enjoy ice cream. Prior to this invention, production was accomplished by shaking a container of cream mixture in a freezing ice and salt bath. It was a long, difficult process, which produced lumpy results.

Today there are many options when it comes to freezers ranging from one that looks a lot like the one our grandparents used all the way to the high tech offerings that use inserts that can be frozen in your icebox and reused rather than the old fashioned cracked ice and rock salt mix.

The mercury will be climbing higher and higher over the next few weeks with almost no relief. What better time than this to dust off your ice cream freezer and offer a serious “brain freeze” to those that you love?

To start with, you absolutely have to try *Gelato Siciliano*, Sicilian-style ice cream. It is made with neither eggs nor cream but due to the use of a little cornstarch in the base, you’ll instantly be blown away at the rich texture and dense, creamy flavor. Here’s our recipe for a homemade version:

Gelato Siciliano Chocolate

(serves 6 to 8)

3 cups milk (all types work well even 1%)

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar

2 tablespoons cornstarch

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup unsweetened cocoa

1. Bring 2 cups of milk to a simmer in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Remove from heat. Meanwhile, combine remaining 1 cup of milk with sugar, cornstarch, and cocoa and stir into the hot milk you started with.
2. Return saucepan to medium heat and cook until sugar and cocoa dissolve. Allow to cool, then cover with plastic and refrigerate overnight.
3. Process mixture in an ice cream maker according to manufacturer’s directions.

The statistics I've seen still name Vanilla as the most popular flavor sold in the United States so here's the Gelato Siciliano take on our first choice. This recipe is rare for Sicilian style ice cream in that it calls for egg yolk and heavy cream.



Gelato di Vaniglia

(serves 6 to 8)

- 2 ¼ cups whole milk
- ¾ cup heavy cream
- 1 vanilla bean, split lengthwise
- ¾ cup sugar
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- 1 egg yolk

1. Combine in a heavy saucepan 1 ¼ cups of your milk, the heavy cream and your vanilla bean and heat at medium until bubbles begin to appear around the edge of the pan and mixture should be just short of reaching a boil.
2. Place remaining cup of milk, sugar, and cornstarch in a small bowl and whisk until everything is well combined. Remove saucepan from heat and stir in your cornstarch mixture. Return your saucepan to the heat and cook, stirring frequently, until sugar is completely dissolved and the mixture thickens slightly, 8 to 10 minutes. Remove saucepan from the heat.
3. Put egg yolk in a medium bowl and whisk until slightly thickened. Pour 1 cup of the hot milk mixture into the yolk, whisking constantly, then gradually add mixture into the hot milk mixture in the saucepan, stirring with a wooden spoon. Set aside to let cool, stirring often, and then cover with plastic and refrigerate overnight. Remove and discard the vanilla bean.
4. Process in your ice cream maker according to manufacturer's directions.

It's generally believed that the first frozen desserts were more like sorbet or Italian ice, which is produced without the constant churning from ingredients that don't include dairy or egg yolks. A Spanish Granita is one style you can easily make at home even without an ice cream freezer. The term "granita" refers to the grainy, granular texture of this

dessert. If you prefer a smoother texture the finished results can be placed in your blender just before serving and the feel will be more like an actual sorbet.

Lemon Granita

(serves 4 to 6)

1 ½ cups fresh lemon juice (juice from 8 or 9 lemons)

½ cup sugar

1 cup room temperature water

1. Put lemon juice, sugar, and 1 cup water into a medium mixing bowl and stir with a wooden spoon until sugar dissolves completely, about 3 minutes.
2. Pour lemon juice mixture into a medium baking dish and place in a freezer. Using the tines of a fork, stir the mixture every 30 minutes, scraping edges and breaking up any chunks as the mixture freezes, until granita is slushy and frozen, about 4 hours.
3. Divide granitas into individual serving glasses or transfer into plastic containers. Cover and freeze to serve later for up to 4 days.

As you might imagine, this basic recipe works just as well with other fruit juice selections such as cranberry, apple, grape, orange, peach and mango. Use your imagination and enjoy!

During the holidays I always point out to friends how enjoyable red vineyard peach liqueur, *Weinbergpfirsich*, is and during the summer, over cracked ice, it is a real delight.

Many years ago in Germany, a small variety of peach was introduced mainly as a means of attracting bees into the vineyards to help with pollination. This peach was intensely rich, blood red, and fragrant beyond any other variety available. It became very popular for pastries but really found a niche as the base for this wonderful liqueur.

The deep red nectar is blended with fine Riesling alambic brandy and the result is fantastic. I love to make fresh peach tarts and drizzle a bit of the liqueur into them for good measure. Guests go nuts trying to figure out why they love those tarts!

Please let us know if you have any questions or if we can assist you in finding the peach liqueur. Our number is 888-288-0668 or we can be reached online at www.winedog.com. Cheers.