

Push the CHILL



Creamy ice cream tinted with coffee

Button

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Easy and delicious, homemade ice cream is the original warm weather comfort food.

Summer's

comfort

Tossing a carton of ice cream in your shopping cart might be second nature any time of year, but making your own is pure summer indulgence.



Strawberry ice cream pairs nicely with tart cherry sorbet

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Food

Tossing a carton of ice cream in your shopping cart might be second nature any time of year, but making your own is pure summer indulgence. If you're wondering if it's worth the effort, you've probably never tasted homemade ice cream.

Taste, pure and simple, is the best reason for making ice cream, but creativity comes a close second. For those willing to stray from a recipe, making it yourself can spark your imagination with endless possibilities. After all, ice cream is but a cool ivory canvas, waiting to be flavoured with your favourite ingredients.

You'll be happy to know electric ice cream makers transform chilled liquid into frozen dessert with a flick of a switch. The process is simple: a canister is placed in the freezer until frozen, then transferred to a chamber in the ice cream maker. A custard (for ice cream) or fruit juice (for sorbet) is poured into the canister, into which a paddle is inserted. The paddle—the workhorse of the operation—rotates, scraping the sides of the frozen canister, aerating the liquid, rendering it smooth and free of ice crystals. In 20 to 30 minutes, you've got summer in a frosty bowl.

You can, of course, make low-tech frozen desserts without any equipment whatsoever. It takes a bit more patience, but any custard, sweetened fruit purée or yogurt can be frozen in a shallow tray and agitated, now and then, until firm and frosty. Fruit purées are easily churned with a fork; creamy custards require a sturdy spoon and a bit more muscle. Both options are delicious, but an ice cream maker provides a much smoother texture.

If you opt for an ice cream machine (you can get a decent 2-quart model for about \$100), be warned, you'll be looking for excuses to plug it in: too many berries in the garden, last year's frozen peaches, leftover melon. It won't take much to dream up your own chilly concoctions. I'll pour just about anything into my ice cream maker: crème fraîche with candied ginger; pureed honeydew and cucumber with lime; grapefruit juice infused with rosemary; lemon yogurt and lavender; raspberries with chocolate truffles, coconut milk and mango; chai tea makes a great sorbet ... don't get me started!

I've included a recipe for a classic French ice cream, a rich egg custard base dyed pink with crushed strawberries, and another version tinted mocha with a potent coffee syrup. Cream is happy with any flavour, so use this base recipe as a starting point for your own creations.

Sorbets make light desserts and refreshing palate cleansers that only sound uppity. My recipe for a tart cherry sorbet is spiked with a splash of balsamic vinegar. Try serving sorbets and ice cream together—rich and creamy ice cream plays nicely with sharp and icy sorbet.

You can't have ice cream without cookies, so try your hand at one of the most delicate cookies imaginable: tuiles (pronounced tweel), meaning tile in French, a nod to its curved tile shape. The cookies are made by smearing a paper-thin batter onto a parchment-lined tray and baking until golden-edged. The cookies are then peeled off the parchment, piping hot, and rolled or draped onto a rolling pin or bottle until cool and crisp. After your first few tuiles, you'll learn to shape them without scorching your fingertips.

Making ice cream has been a treasured summer tradition for thousands of years, perhaps starting when an enterprising Persian mixed rosewater and snow for a tasty royal treat in 400 B.C. More recently, your great grandmother probably toiled with a hand-cranked wooden ice cream bucket. But today's machines make the job pure pleasure. Discover the flavour of pure, old-fashioned ice cream this summer. Your family will thank you.



French tuiles – the lightest cookies imaginable

Plan ahead: The custard must be thoroughly chilled before pouring into the frozen ice cream canister. If you have the freezer space, store the canister there so it's ready when you want it. (It takes about 24 hours to freeze the canister.)

For the Custard

1½ cups whole milk

1½ cups 35% cream

8 egg yolks

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar, plus more to taste if adding a tart fruit purée. Keep in mind that cold mutes flavours, so the custard will taste sweeter at room temperature.

A bowl of ice water

A strainer

Pour the milk and cream in a medium-sized saucepan until the mixture just begins to boil. Remove from heat.

In a medium bowl, whisk the egg yolks with the sugar. Add about $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of the warm milk and cream mixture to the egg yolks and whisk until well combined. Slowly pour the yolk mixture into the saucepan with the remaining milk and cream mixture and bring to a bare simmer, whisking continuously, being careful not to bring to a boil. The custard is ready when the mixture thickens and lightly coats the back of a spoon.

Pour the mixture through a strainer into a bowl or pitcher. To cool the mixture quickly, place the bowl or pitcher into a larger bowl filled with ice. Cover the custard with plastic wrap and place in the fridge until well chilled.

Pour the mixture into a frozen canister and freeze according to manufacturer's instructions.

For strawberry ice cream:

Flavour the custard with 2½ cups of strawberry purée, thoroughly chilled; 3½ cups of fresh strawberries; or 4 cups of frozen strawberries, which equals about 2½ cups of purée.

For coffee ice cream:

Pour ¼ cup of good quality instant coffee into a small bowl. Moisten the coffee with 1 Tbsp warm water, adding more water as necessary to create a syrup consistency. Strain the mixture. Flavour the custard with the coffee syrup to taste, a few teaspoons at a time. You won't need all the syrup, it is very concentrated. Leftover syrup keeps well in the refrigerator until you're ready to make your next batch.

Sour Cherry Sorbet

Plan ahead: The sweetened fruit juice must be thoroughly chilled before pouring into the frozen ice cream canister. This recipe calls for fruit juice but you can also use a fruit purée (which includes the flesh of the fruit).

2 cups sugar

2 cups water

2 cups cherry juice* from fresh or frozen sour cherries, thoroughly chilled

You will need about 3 pounds of cherries—if you don't have sour cherries, use sweeter varieties, adjusting the sugar accordingly

1 - 3 tsp balsamic vinegar

Note: Balsamic vinegar works well with sour cherries, but use it sparingly with other varieties.

In a small saucepan, completely dissolve the sugar in the water over medium-low heat. Cool the syrup, then transfer to the refrigerator until completely chilled. (You won't need all the syrup; leftover syrup can be stored in the refrigerator until the next time you make sorbet.)

Combine the chilled cherry juice with ¾ cup of the chilled syrup; add balsamic vinegar to taste, one teaspoon at a time. Adjust the syrup according to taste.

Pour the mixture into a frozen canister and freeze according to manufacturer's instructions.

* A potato ricer is a handy tool for extracting juice from pitted cherries. Just be sure you're not wearing white!

Tuile Cookies

Makes about 20 cookies, depending on the size.

4 oz powdered sugar

4 oz unsalted butter, room temperature

4 egg whites, room temperature

4 oz flour

Preheat oven to 360°F.

Prepare a baking sheet lined with parchment or a non-stick baking liner such as Silpat. The ingredients can be mixed by hand or with an electric mixer.

In a medium bowl, combine the softened butter with the powdered sugar and mix until smooth. Add the egg whites and stir until combined. Add the flour, mixing until a smooth batter is formed. Cover the bowl and refrigerate for 1 hour.

Using an offset spatula, smear six rounds, approximately 4 inches in diameter, onto a prepared baking sheet. (If you add too many at a time, you won't be able to shape them all while they are still hot and pliable.)

Bake until the tuiles are golden-edged, about 6 to 8 minutes. Again using an offset spatula, carefully peel the hot cookies off the baking sheet and drape them onto a rolling pin. With a clean tea towel (to protect your fingers) gently press and shape the warm cookie around the rolling pin. When the cookie has cooled, it will be crisp. Repeat with remaining batter.

Warm cookies can also be rolled like cigars or placed in empty muffin tins and shaped into edible containers.

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