

Refresh Your



Spirit

It is hot and humid by day, but our warm Southwest evenings are spectacular. This time of year, I enjoy getting re-acquainted with the neighbors, dining out on the patio or just sitting out in the yard, where it's peaceful at the end of the day. Add a bowl of homemade ice cream to this scene, and you have the perfect summer evening.

Cool, sweet treats are at the top of my list this summer. I have created four ice cream delights that are so easy, they're sure to become a traditional summer ritual. My goal was to create some light fruit refreshers, as well as recreating the "custard style" ice creams I remember as a kid. So take some time to refresh your spirit this summer with homemade treats that are simple and fun to make.

By Kelley Cleary Coffeen
Photography by Marty Snortum Studio

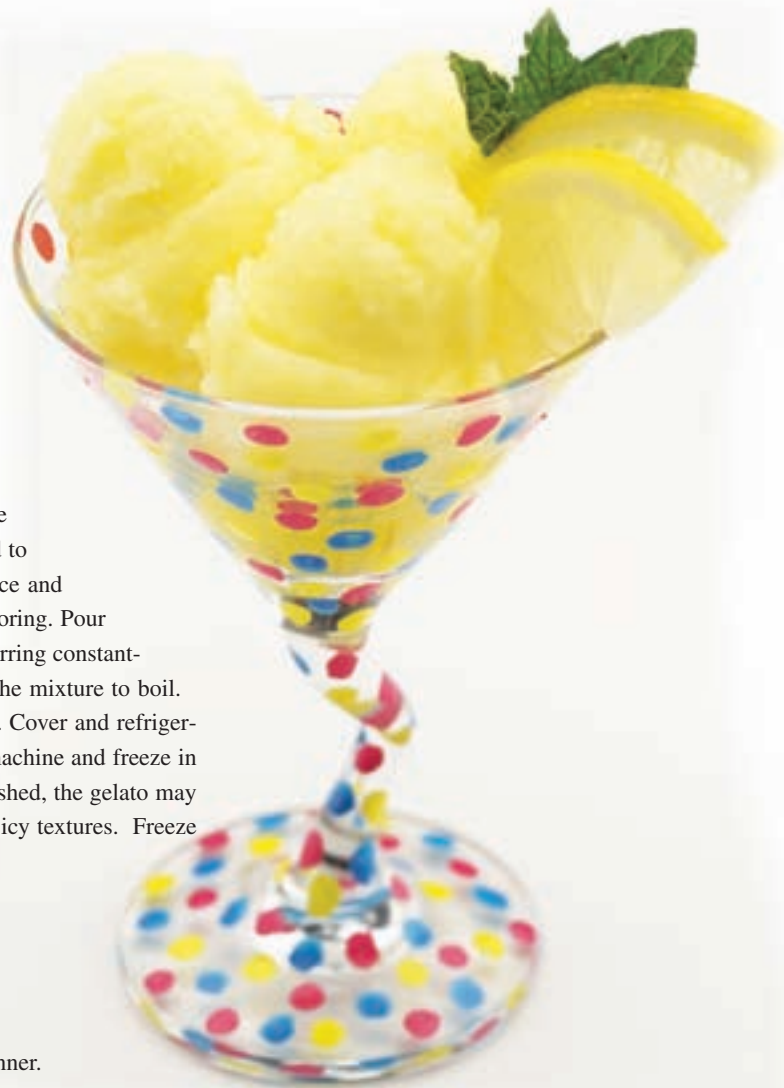
Fresh Lemon Gelato

Tangy and smooth gelato has a light, yet rich consistency. Scoop it up for the kids or dress it up for your friends in a fun martini glass.

(Serves 4 to 6)

3 cups water
1 cup sugar
1 egg white
¼ cup lemon juice
2 drops of yellow food coloring

Bring the water and sugar to a boil in a medium saucepan. In a large mixing bowl, whip one egg white with an electric mixer on high speed to a frothy consistency. Continue mixing on high speed. Add lemon juice and slowly pour in the hot sugar mixture and two drops of yellow food coloring. Pour mixture back into saucepan. Heat the lemon mixture over low heat, stirring constantly for 2 to 3 minutes until mixture thickens. Be careful not to allow the mixture to boil. Using a strainer, pour the heated mixture back into large mixing bowl. Cover and refrigerate. Pour lemon mixture into the freezer container of your ice cream machine and freeze in 1 to 2 batches, according to the manufacturer's instructions. When finished, the gelato may need to be stirred to a uniform consistency to blend the creamy and icy textures. Freeze in an air-tight container overnight for best results.



Watermelon Sorbet

This fresh-tasting sorbet is the perfect ending to a Southwest summer dinner. The sweet watermelon flavor will compliment any spicy Mexican fare.

(Serves 6 to 8)

1 cup sugar
3 cups water
8 cups fresh, ripe watermelon chunks, peeled and seeded
½ cup (4 ounces) pink lemonade concentrate
2 tablespoons fresh lime juice

Bring water and sugar to a boil in a medium saucepan over high heat, stirring until the sugar dissolves. Once the sugar has dissolved, remove from heat and allow to cool for a couple of hours. Process the sugar syrup and watermelon in small batches together, using a food processor or an electric blender, until smooth. Pour watermelon sugar mixture in a large mixing bowl and stir in lime juice and lemonade concentrate. Blend well. Cover and chill for at least 2 hours. Pour mixture into the freezer container of the ice cream machine and freeze according to the manufacturer's instructions. When finished, freeze in an air-tight container overnight for best results.

Cool Tips for Perfect Ice Cream

- **Before starting, make sure to read through the entire recipe, and read the directions on your ice cream freezer.**
- **Note the size of the freezing container in the ice cream machine. If it is smaller than a 1 ½ quart container, you should process your recipe in smaller batches.**
- **In order to speed up the process, place the freezing container of your ice cream machine in the freezer and chill for a couple of hours before filling it with the ice cream mixture to process.**
- **Before processing in ice cream machine, chill the ice cream mixture in the refrigerator for a couple of hours as well.**
- **After processing ice cream in your ice cream machine it will be soft and ready to eat. For a firmer ice cream, freeze overnight in an air-tight container.**



Back to Basics

Pure and simple, vanilla and chocolate ice cream speak for themselves. These ice creams are soft when done, and are best served as soon as they are made. For this recipe, I worked to get the vanilla to just the right balance of custard and cream, and the chocolate version has a strong cocoa flavor that chocolate lovers will surely enjoy. These are both good basic recipes that are easy to do, and can be kicked up a notch with some of your own flavors and mix-ins!

Simply Chocolate Ice Cream

(Serves 4 to 6, based on ½ cup servings)

- 1 cup sugar
- 3 large eggs
- ½ cup cocoa powder
- 1½ cups milk
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1 tablespoon pure vanilla extract

In a large bowl combine the sugar, eggs, and cocoa together with an electric mixer at medium speed until well blended. Bring the milk to a boil in a heavy, medium saucepan over medium heat, stirring constantly. While mixing the chocolate mixture with an electric mixer, slowly add the hot milk into the chocolate mixture. Beat until well blended. Pour the blended mixture back into the saucepan and place over low heat. Stir constantly with a wooden spoon until the custard thickens slightly, being careful not to scrape the bottom of the pan.

Do not allow the mixture to boil or the eggs will scramble! Remove from heat and pour the hot mixture through a strainer into a large clean bowl. Allow the custard to cool slightly. Cover and refrigerate overnight or until completely cold. Freeze in 1 to 2 batches in your ice cream machine, according to the manufacturer's instructions. When finished, the ice cream will be soft and ready to eat.

- Optional: Add in 1½ cups of your favorite mix-in (see pg.13), gently blending well. Serve immediately.

Very Vanilla Ice Cream

(Serves 4 to 6)

- 2 cups whole milk
- 2 large eggs
- 1 (14 ounce) can sweetened condensed milk
- 1 cup whipping cream
- 4 teaspoons pure vanilla extract

Bring the milk to a simmer in a heavy medium saucepan over medium heat, stirring constantly. In a large mixing bowl, beat the eggs on medium speed. While continuing to beat the eggs, slowly beat the hot milk into the eggs until well blended. Pour the entire mixture back into the pan and place over low heat. Stir constantly with a wooden spoon until the mixture thickens slightly, being careful not to scrape the bottom of the pan. Do not allow mixture to boil, or eggs will scramble! Using a strainer, pour the heated mixture back into large mixing bowl. Cool slightly. Next, add in the condensed milk, whipping cream and vanilla extract, mixing thoroughly with the electric mixer on medium high speed. Cover and chill for 2 to 3 hours. Freeze in 1 to 2 batches in your ice cream machine, according to the manufacturer's instructions. When finished, the ice cream will be soft and ready to eat.

- Optional: add in 1½ cups of your favorite mix-in (see pg.13), gently blending well. Serve immediately.

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Mix-Ins

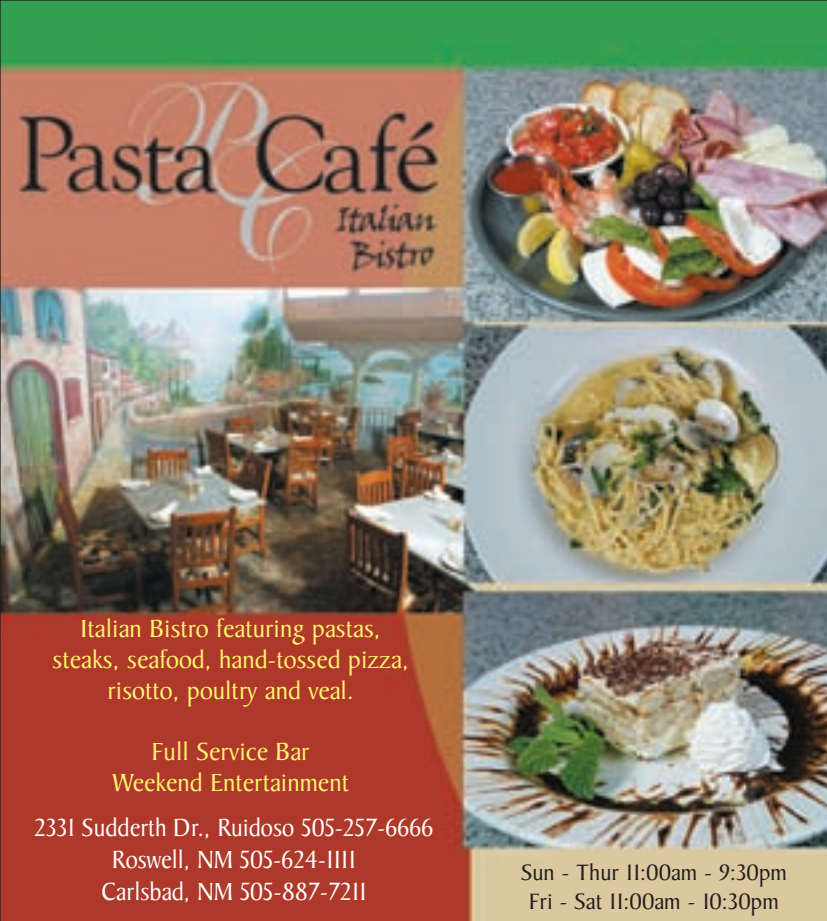
Customize your own chocolate and vanilla ice cream by mixing in your favorite crushed candies, cookies, coconut, dried fruits or nuts. Chill chocolate candies (like Reese's peanut butter cups or Snickers) in the refrigerator for an hour. Place on a cutting board and chop into desired pieces.

For toasted coconut and nuts, preheat your oven to 400 degrees. Arrange coconut and nuts in a thin layer on a baking sheet and bake for 5 to 10 minutes. Remove when nuts become fragrant and coconut starts turning a light golden brown. Remove and cool completely. For best results, add the mix-ins just after the ice cream is made (while it is still soft) and serve immediately.

Ice Cream Machines

Ice cream machines are essential for making good homemade ice creams. The machine churns the mixture while it freezes, adding air to the ice cream. This keeps you from getting a solid mass of cream and ice that cannot be scooped or enjoyed. Fortunately, there are many choices to select from. Be prepared to spend anywhere from \$24.95 to \$500 on a good one.

Electric ice cream makers that do not use ice are quick, virtually mess-free and can be made right on the kitchen counter. They produce a rich and dense ice cream by incorporating less air into the recipe, while churning. The drawback is the canister must be completely frozen before every batch goes in, which takes time. Ice cream makers that use rock salt and ice, create a lighter ice cream by incorporating more air into the recipe. This process takes more supervision and can be messy. I recommend doing this in the garage or on the back porch. Lastly, the "old fashioned" hand-cranked ice cream maker is making a big comeback these days, and keeps the whole process interactive. Again, it will produce a lighter ice cream, but can be a bit messy. All in all, it is a matter of personal taste. Check out www.cooking.com and www.chefscatalog.com for quick information on a variety of ice cream makers.



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