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How to Make Homemade Ice Cream - Any Flavor Using a Gel-container Ice Cream maker!



What's better than fresh picked fruit? Perhaps fresh premium ice cream? So let's take some fresh-picked fruit and make our own homemade ice cream! It is actually quite easy, and electric ice cream makers are inexpensive! You can make plain vanilla ice cream, strawberry ice cream, peach ice cream, raspberry, blackberry, blueberry, or many other flavors!

Ingredients and Equipment

- 2 cups whole milk
- 1 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup fat-free powdered milk
- 8 eggs (yolks only needed)
- 1 cup half-and-half OR light cream
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 3 cups of prepared fruit (strawberries, peaches, raspberries, mangoes, or whatever you have! See step 7 for details.
- 1 ice cream maker
- 1 large pot
- 1 wooden or plastic spatula



Instructions

Step 1 - Pre-Freeze your ice cream maker's gel container



Before you even think about making ice cream, you better get the gel container in the deep freeze and start it freezing up. Models vary, but generally the recommend the length of time needed to freeze the unit is between 6 hours and 22 hours. It depends on how cold your freezer is. If you have the room, just leave your freezer bowl in the freezer at all times. That way, you can take it out any time for immediate use.

To determine whether the bowl is completely frozen, just shake it. If you don't hear liquid moving, it's frozen! Before freezing the bowl, wash and dry the bowl, then place the freezer bowl in the back of your freezer where it is coldest. (Note: Your freezer should be set to 0°F for most foods, including ice cream!)

Step 2 - Heat the milk, sugar and powdered milk

In a large pot (4 quarts or larger) with a heavy bottom (for even heat distribution), mix the milk, sugar and powdered milk. Bring the mix to a low simmer over medium heat and stir to dissolve the sugar, then turn the heat down and just keep it warm.



Step 3 - Separate 8 egg yolks



Separate the egg yolks from 8 large eggs.



Step 4 - Whip the egg yolks until thickened



Put the egg yolks in a medium bowl and whisk until they are thickened (it only takes about 2 minutes. I use a hand mixer on low speed.



Step 5 - Slowly add 1 cup of the hot milk mixture to the egg yolks



While constantly whisking, slowly add 1 cup of the hot milk mixture and whisk until it is blended (a few seconds).

Step 6 - Pour the egg yolk mix into the pot of hot milk

Then pour the egg mixture back into the pot of hot milk and increase heat to medium. Stir the mixture constantly with a wooden or plastic spoon, until the mixture is thickened (like gravy) and registers between 170°F and 180°F (check with an instant-read thermometer, like the ones with a probe).



Step 7 - Add the light cream and vanilla and refrigerate



Stir in light cream (or half-and-half) and vanilla. Cover and pop into the refrigerator for at least 6 hours before continuing on to step 8. Overnight or even 24 to 48 hours is fine.

Step 8 - Prepare the fruit

Well, what kind of ice cream do you want? This is the time to decide! You can add almost any fruit you have! If you want vanilla, you already have it, just pop the mix into the maker. If you want chocolate, see this page!



For a fruit flavor, well, some fruit work better than others. You get best flavor if you puree the fruit first in your food processor or blender. So obviously, fruits like strawberries, raspberries, mangoes, figs and peaches are idea for this, while apples, coconuts and pomegranates might not be such a good choice.

To prepare the fruit just prepare it as you would for eating, then blend it in your food processor or blender for a few minutes.

Here are some tips:

- Peaches and nectarines: remove skins, pits and bruised areas
- Strawberries: remove the cap (the green parts)
- Raspberries: just wash them
- Blackberries: I like seedless, so I wash them and then run them through a Foley Food Mill to remove the seeds!
- Figs: Remove stems and bruises
- Mangoes: Peel, and cut the flesh off the stone.



Step 9 - Mix the milk/cream mix with the fruit



About 45 minutes before you want to serve the ice cream, stir the milk/cream mixture together with the pureed fruit. Stir it up well. Remove the freezer bowl and pour the milk/cream/fruit mixture from step 8 into the freezer bowl. Put the bowl in the cream maker.

Step 10 - Fire up the ice cream maker!



Turn the ice cream maker on and let the maker work until it is thickened, about 20 to 25 minutes.

You can tell when the ice cream is done, by simply checking the consistency through the opening on the top of the ice cream maker. You will also hear the motor straining, as the ice cream freezes. On some units, the directions with the maker tell you to let it work until the motor stalls and stops.



When it is done, the ice cream should have a soft, creamy texture. If you want firmer, harder ice cream, transfer the ice cream to an airtight container and place it in freezer for about 2 hours. Remove from freezer about 15 minutes before serving.

Step 11 - Enjoy!



Hey, once it reaches the consistency you like, it's time to eat! That's it! You make great homemade ice cream!