

Ice Creams & Sorbets

COOL RECIPES

LOU SEIBERT PAPPAS



PHOTOGRAPHS BY VICTORIA PEARSON

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By Lou Seibert Poppas
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CHRONICLE BOOKS
SAN FRANCISCO

*My advice to you is not to inquire why or whither, but just enjoy your ice cream while it's on your
plate*

—Thornton Niven Wilder

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INTRODUCTION

It's fascinating to consider the changes in ice cream over the years. My passion for this luscious, cool, sweet crystallized in childhood—I got to lick the dasher of the homemade vanilla bean, peppermint, chocolate, and fresh strawberry ice creams. Later with home refrigerator-freezers, we indulged in packaged ice creams, as churning the homemade version seemed old-fashioned and a bother working with ice and salt. Then many trips to Europe, sampling sorbets, gelati, and ices in Italy, France, and Scandinavia, reignited my love for making my own. Plus the new, small, electric ice cream freezers made it a breeze!

When I wrote a previous book in the nineties, the recipe collection drew on my best samples of trips abroad and in America. The recipes featured the pistachio, framboise, and cafe flavors from Berthillon, the Parisian shop that schoolchildren adore. They covered stellar citrus and berry sorbets from three-star Michelin restaurants and fresh fruit ices from Turkey, South Africa, and Malaysia. Gelati were Grand Marnier and rum raisin versions from Florence, and the treat from Tivoli in Scandinavia was ultracreamy almond praline.

Today frozen desserts are in the spotlight, with endless complexity in their flavors and presentations and the great delight they offer.

Yet what is really fun is to create your own. You can achieve silky, satiny ice cream unadorned with additives. You can turn out healthful, pure fruit ices and sorbets flaunting the fresh peak-of-season taste.

We are blessed with a wealth of products not widely available a short time ago. Lavender, basil, lemongrass, ginger, rosemary, blood orange, papaya, and exotic melons enhance this collection. Honey red wine, and liqueurs lend an intriguing flavor and an appealing spoonable consistency to the products. In the toppings, balsamic vinegar uplifts berries and caramelized spiced nuts provide a teasing sugary crunch.

There is such a joy in turning seasonal bounty into an almost instant treat. The mix goes together readily in advance for chilling. With today's efficient equipment, ice cream can be churned in a quarter of an hour or so. Sorbets and ices can be easily frozen without a machine. So indulge. One luscious taste calls for another.

—*Lou Seibert Pappas*

THEORY AND TECHNIQUES

Ice cream is basically a liquid mixture that is stabilized by freezing much of the liquid and creating a very fine crystalline structure. The proportion of the ingredients and the preparation technique determine the quality. To achieve a fine consistency several factors are important. Proper agitation is one. Others are rapid freezing and the amount of air incorporated.

It is useful to understand the science behind the freezing process. Harold McGee, in his book *On Food and Cooking*, explains that sugar lowers the freezing point of the solution from 32°F to around

27°F The dissolved sugar gets in the way of the water molecules that would bond together to form ice crystals. At this temperature the water molecules have slowed enough so that their attraction becomes stronger than the disruptive influence of the sugar. As they crystallize, water molecules are subtracted from the mixture, the remaining solution gets more concentrated with sugar, and the freezing point is lowered further. Even when ice cream is frozen it will still contain some liquid at 0°F The desirable temperature for serving is 10°F as the proportion of liquid will then yield a semisolid consistency

Therefore, to achieve a fine-quality product, ice creams, sorbets, and ices must have many well-dispersed tiny ice crystals. Otherwise, a few large crystals would yield an icy, coarse product. Though ice creams, sorbets, ices, and still-frozen desserts are considered to be “frozen,” they are not completely so. Instead, tiny ice crystals are suspended in a binding syrup of sugar, with or without fat and/or protein. While much of the water in the mixture freezes, the concentration of sugar and other substances prevents the dessert from fully solidifying. Cream, milk, and eggs work as buffers to separate tiny crystals from one another. Alternatively liquor, liqueurs, wine, honey and corn syrup lower the freezing point of the mixture, so frozen desserts made with them will usually be softer. These additions are advantageous in homemade ice cream and sorbets, which sometimes get harder than commercial ice creams that have added emulsifiers.

Another influence on the ultimate texture is the amount of air whipped in. When the mixture churns in an ice cream maker, air beaten in helps keep the crystals apart and makes the texture smooth. Once the ice cream begins to thicken and becomes viscous, it starts to retain air well. As home freezers churn, the majority of the aeration happens toward the end of the processing time, producing tiny air pockets.

With ice cream, rapid cooling of the custard during stirring develops many small “seed” ice crystals and helps to distribute them evenly. If the mixture is also stirred while freezing, the ice masses are interfered with and the remaining ice will be in the form of tiny crystals. Ultimately, the more agitation provided, the slower the freezing process, and the tinier the ice crystals.

Granite are an exception to the goal of agitation, as large ice crystals are desired and so stirring is of short duration.

Three stages are involved in the preparation of frozen desserts. They include preparing the mix, freezing it, and ripening or firming it after the freezing process.

FREEZING ICE CREAM

After being frozen in an ice cream maker, ice cream is usually placed in the freezer for 2 hours to firm up, or “ripen.” This allows the flavors to blend. Ideally ice cream should be stored at fairly low temperatures, between -10° and 0°F, to maintain its fine texture and flavor. Cover it tightly so it doesn’t pick up off odors and so that moisture does not settle onto its surface, forming large crystals. A sheet of plastic wrap pressed onto the surface of the ice cream is a good idea. The gradual coarsening of texture during freezing is due to repeated partial thawing when serving or from fluctuations in the temperature of the freezer.

Ice crystals grow during storage because whenever ice cream is warmed slightly the smallest crystals melt. When the temperature drops again, the additional water is taken up by the surviving crystals, which get larger and larger. The effect is commonly known as “freezer bum.” The lower the average storage temperature of the freezer, the less change takes place.

SERVING TIPS

Sorbets, ice creams, ices, and frozen yogurts should be allowed to warm to about 10°F before serving for the best flavor and texture. This allows them to achieve a slightly creamy consistency rather than a solid one. If ice cream is firmly frozen, transfer it to the refrigerator for 20 to 30 minutes before scooping and serving, but don't let it thaw too much as repeated thawing and refreezing will degrade its texture. Frozen products with honey corn syrup, liqueur, or other alcohol as an ingredient will initially freeze to a softer consistency and may be spoonable directly from the freezer.

It is helpful to dip your ice cream scoop in a bowl of hot water before each scoop to make neat balls when scooping many servings of ice cream or sorbet.

Granite should be served slightly thawed and slushy. They are best served the day they are made, since the ice crystals will get larger as granite are stored.

GLOSSARY

Gelato (plural *gelati*): Italian ice cream, characterized by intense flavor and often served semifrozen. In Italy, each cafe often makes its own gelati with fresh fruits and other pure ingredients. The word *gelato* refers to various styles of ice cream, from light to rich versions.

Glace: The French word for ice cream

Granita (plural *granite*; French: *granite*): A type of Italian ice that is coarse in texture and often less intensely flavored than sorbetto. Minimal stirring during freezing characterizes the preparation of granite.

Ice: A coarsely textured frozen mixture of water, sugar, and liquid flavoring such as fruit juice, wine, coffee, or tea. Ices in this book are a cross between sorbets and granite.

Ice cream: A frozen confection made from milk and/or cream, sugar or another sweetener, and a flavoring such as chocolate, nuts, fruit, or spices. By FDA standards, packaged ice cream must contain a minimum of 10 percent butterfat (8 percent for some flavors), 16 to 20 percent milk solids, and not more than 50 percent overrun. Premium ice creams and French-style ice creams usually have a cooked egg custard base.

Semifreddo: An Italian ice cream lightened with whipped cream, custard, or beaten egg yolks or whites and often a sugar syrup. The word means “half-frozen.”

Sorbet: The French word for a frozen mixture that is finer in texture and usually more intensely flavored than an ice. Sorbets are usually made from fruit purees, water, and sugar.

Sorbetto (plural *sorbetti*): Italian sorbet

Plan to serve homemade ices, sorbets, and frozen yogurts within 1 to 2 days from the time they are made. Then they are at their best consistency. With longer storage, the smooth texture develops larger ice crystals. However, ice cream made with a cooked egg custard will keep longer, for several days or up to a week.

TYPES OF FROZEN DESSERTS

Sorbet and ice

Sorbet is basically fruit puree enhanced with sugar syrup, while ice is typically made of flavored liquid and sugar. They both work very well when frozen in a pan just until solid and then whipped to a frothy state in an electric mixer or food processor fitted with the metal blade. Be careful to not let the mixture thaw thoroughly in the process of whipping in the air.

Granita

The Italian word *granita* refers to the rough, grainy texture of this frozen dessert. Often it has minimal sugar. ~~No machine is required to prepare this coarsely textured ice, since its uneven texture is best achieved by simply freezing in a pan and stirring several times with a fork to separate the largest ice crystals.~~

Ice cream

Custard that includes egg yolks is often the basis for ice cream. It is important to prepare an ice bath in a bowl or large pan to have ready before starting to cook the custard. Cook the mixture in the top of the double boiler over steaming water just until the custard coats the back of a spoon in an opaque layer, about 10 minutes. Once it has been cooked, it should be cooled immediately in the ice bath, to prevent curdling. Then refrigerate it to cool to 40°F. Once cream is added, stirring before freezing should be minimal as the fat particles could turn to flecks of butter. Add any liqueur during the last minute of churning as it retards freezing and softens the consistency. Sauces that are meant to swirl should be cooled thoroughly and blended in at the end of churning. Additives such as nuts should be room temperature or cooler and should be incorporated in the last 15 seconds.

Gelato

This Italian-style ice cream is characterized by intense flavor and a denser consistency than traditional ice cream because it contains less air. It is often served semifrozen. Gelato is made in an ice cream maker in the same fashion as ice cream.

Semifreddo

Semifreddo is Italian for “partially frozen.” Sugar syrup beaten into egg yolks creates the especially airy mousselike texture of this frozen dessert.

INGREDIENTS

Many commercial ice cream manufacturers use emulsifiers and stabilizers to improve the texture of their ice cream. This is not necessary in homemade ice cream prepared in small quantities with top-quality ingredients. Following is a summary of the ways in which many ice cream ingredients work to create a particular texture or flavor.

Note: These recipes were tested with whole milk, large eggs, and unsalted butter.

Note: A medium bowl works well for combining ingredients, unless otherwise specified.

Cream

The butterfat in heavy (whipping) cream is responsible for the rich, smooth texture of ice cream. Using all cream, however, increases the chance of producing ice cream flecked with butter, and too much fat can give the dessert a sticky, heavy texture. Using some milk or half-and-half lightens the texture.

Eggs

Egg yolks act as emulsifiers in a custard base and keep the fat globules in the cream from clumping together. They also create a rich texture and add an attractive yellow color to lighter colored ice

creams. Because of current cholesterol concerns, the number of egg yolks used here is scaled back slightly from classic recipes of previous years.

Fruit

Most fruits contain pectin and fiber, which help keep milk fat and water molecules in an even suspension.

Half-and-half or milk

Milk fat forms small globules and helps keep the water molecules dispersed.

Sugar

Water in which sugar (or honey or corn syrup) has dissolved has a freezing point below 32°F. Because of the sugar, not all the water in the mixture freezes and the ice cream does not become completely solid.

Lavender, rosemary, and ginger

These herbs are steeped in liquid or sugar syrup to infuse their flavor, strained, and the liquid added to the dessert base.

Nuts, candies, wine, and liqueurs

These ingredients add flavor and sometimes texture. In churned desserts, nuts and candies are best added when the mixture is almost frozen, and any alcoholic ingredients should be added at the end of the freezing cycle because they retard the [freezing process](#).

ICE CREAM MAKERS

Manufacturers offer ice cream makers to suit every budget. If the ice cream maker is the type packed with ice and salt, rock salt is preferred to table salt for several reasons. It is cheaper, it is less likely to sift through the ice and fall to the bottom, and it dissolves more slowly lowering the temperature more gradually. A brine that is too cold will produce a coarse ice cream with too little incorporated air. A good proportion of ice to rock salt is 8 parts ice to 1 part salt, by measure.

Ice cream should be made according to the manufacturer's instructions for the ice cream maker. When filling an ice cream maker with ice cream mixture, allow an ample head space of 2 to 3 inches as the mixture will expand during freezing when air is whipped in. This aeration, called "overrun" or "loft," improves the texture of the ice cream and prevents it from becoming a solid block of ice. Commercial freezers can pump in compressed air at the end of the freezing cycle, resulting in up to a 50 to 100 percent overrun. They also freeze at very low temperatures in minutes. Home freezers generally have only a 25 percent overrun.

One of the best freezers for the price is the Cuisinart ice cream maker, an electric machine with a cylindrical container that must be prefrozen. A compact (and stylish) design, it produces up to 1 ½ quarts of excellent, smooth ice cream in 15 to 20 minutes. A transparent lid with an ingredient spout makes it easy to add ingredients at the end of the cycle.

QUICK ICE CREAM FLAVORS

Almond Toffee Ice Cream: Finely chop 4 ounces almond toffee or Almond Roca candy. Soften 1 quart vanilla ice cream, sprinkle the candy pieces over, and fold in. Freeze 2 hours, or until firm.

Biscotti Cookie Bar Ice Cream: Finely chop two 2-ounce chocolate-almond biscotti. Soften 1 quart vanilla or coffee ice cream, sprinkle the biscotti pieces over, and fold in. Freeze 2 hours, or until firm.

Brownie Ice Cream: Crumble enough brownies to make 1 ¼ cups large crumbs. Soften 1 quart vanilla, coffee, or chocolate ice cream, sprinkle the brownie pieces over, and fold in. Freeze 2 hours, or until firm.

Candied Chestnut Ice Cream: Drain one 8-ounce jar whole chestnuts in syrup, reserving the syrup. Chop the chestnuts into pieces the size of hazelnuts. Fold them into 1 quart softened vanilla or egg nog ice cream. Freeze 2 hours, or until firm. Heat the syrup with 2 tablespoons cognac and serve scoops of ice cream with the warm syrup.

Candied Orange Peel Ice Cream: Chop candied orange peel to make ⅔ cup. Soften 1 quart coffee or chocolate ice cream, sprinkle the orange peel over, and fold in. Freeze 2 hours, or until firm.

Chocolate Cherry Ice Cream: Soften 1 quart vanilla or chocolate ice cream and fold in 2 tablespoons kirsch and ⅔ cup chocolate-covered dried cherries. Freeze 2 hours, or until firm.

Peppermint Candy Ice Cream: Finely chop 4 ounces peppermint candies or candy canes.

Soften 1 quart vanilla ice cream, sprinkle the candy pieces over, and fold in. Freeze 2 hours, or until firm.

The De'Longhi ice cream maker from Italy is an expensive compact compressor machine with a built-in freezer. It features a double paddle that mixes thoroughly and prepares frozen desserts in 20 to 40 minutes. The anodized aluminum bowl removes for serving and hand washing.

The Rolls Royce of ice cream makers is the stainless steel KitchenAid Pro Line Frozen Dessert Maker, an ultraexpensive electric machine with self-contained refrigeration that produces up to 2 quarts of ice cream in about 30 minutes. A built-in funnel and pusher simplify adding main ingredients as well as mix-ins.

The traditional White Mountain hand-cranked wooden ice cream bucket is still on the market, as it has been for over a century. It is also available in an electric version. Both kinds come in a range of sizes.

In addition to the currently available ice cream makers, many home kitchens have older machines in the pantry. The Donvier manual model and its clones use a cylinder container that must be frozen ahead. It requires hand cranking every few minutes during churning.

The Vitantonio Gelato model is a manual maker with a cylinder container that must be frozen ahead and hand cranked every 4 or 5 minutes during the freezing time. An electric model is available by the same brand.

The Simac II Gelataio Magnum is a high-end electric machine with a self-contained refrigeration system. The unit is more difficult to wash than most models.

The Rival electric ice cream maker has a metal canister and a lightweight wooden bucket that uses ice and salt like old-fashioned makers.

EQUIPMENT

- Double boiler, preferably 2-quart size but 3 quart size works well
- Electric [ice cream freezer](#)
- One-quart plastic container for refrigerating the ice cream: Plastic works well because if you are in a hurry you can put it in the freezer briefly to chill. This container is also perfect for freezing the ice cream when churned. Optionally smaller 1 pint or ½ pint containers are useful if you are serving just two persons.
- Rasp-style grater for zesting citrus
- Silicone spatula that handles heat up to 500°F: A silicone spatula is ideal for stirring the custard as it cleans the sides of the pan neatly Or, you can use a metal or black-coated spoon depending on the surface of your double boiler

ICE CREAMS

THIS TANTALIZING COLLECTION ENCOMPASSES A WEALTH of flavors, from old-fashioned classics such as vanilla bean, strawberry, and bittersweet chocklate, to contemporary delights incorporating ingredients like lavender, black currant tea, almond fudge, and liqueurs such as Strega.

Classic Vanilla Bean Ice Cream

This is one of the most versatile ice cream flavors—ideal as a topping on chocolate soufflé cake, fruit pies, and cobblers. Or mingle tiny scoopfuls in a tall glass with bittersweet chocolate and coffee ice creams or fruit sorbet. Flecks of vanilla bean imbue this creamy ice cream with an exotic flavor that surpasses vanilla extract alone.

One 4-inch vanilla bean

$\frac{2}{3}$ cup sugar

2 cups half-and-half or milk

1 cup heavy (whipping) cream

4 large egg yolks

Prepare a large bowl or pan of ice water.

Split the vanilla bean in half lengthwise and scrape the black seeds into the top of a double boiler. Add the vanilla bean and half-and-half, and heat over simmering water until steaming. In a bowl, whisk the egg yolks until blended, then whisk in the sugar. Whisk in about half of the hot half-and-half and pour the yolk mixture into the pan of half-and-half. Stir and cook over simmering water until the custard coats the back of a silicone spatula or spoon, about 10 minutes. Immediately place the custard pan in the ice bath and stir the custard occasionally until it cools to room temperature. Transfer to a container and stir in the cream. Cover and refrigerate until thoroughly chilled, about 3 hours.

When you are ready to freeze the mixture, remove the vanilla bean with a fork. Freeze the mixture in an ice cream maker according to the manufacturer's instructions. Transfer to a container, cover, and freeze until firm, about 2 hours.

MAKES ABOUT 1 QUART

Note: You may substitute 2 teaspoons vanilla extract for the vanilla bean. Stir it into the custard with the cream.



Mexican Chocolate-Cinnamon Swirl Ice Cream

A cinnamon candy swirl weaves a web throughout this creamy chocolate ice cream, tantalizing the palate with its spicy heat.

2 cups half-and-half or milk
2 cinnamon sticks or 1½ teaspoons ground cinnamon
3 large egg yolks
⅔ cup sugar
1 teaspoon instant espresso powder
4 ounces bittersweet chocolate, chopped
1 ounce unsweetened chocolate, chopped
1 cup heavy (whipping) cream

CINNAMON SWIRL

¼ cup packed dark brown sugar
¼ cup light corn syrup
2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
¼ cup half-and-half
1 tablespoon unsalted butter

Prepare a large bowl or pan of ice water.

In the top of a double boiler, heat the half-and-half and cinnamon over simmering water until steaming. Remove from the heat and steep for 15 minutes if using sticks, 5 minutes if using ground cinnamon. In a bowl, whisk the egg yolks until blended, then whisk in the ⅔ cup sugar and espresso powder. Whisk in about half of the hot half-and-half and pour the yolk mixture into the pan of half-and-half. Cook and stir over simmering water until the custard coats the back of a silicone spatula or spoon, about 10 minutes. Stir in the chocolates until they melt. Immediately place the custard pan in the ice bath and stir the custard occasionally until it cools to room temperature. Strain the custard into a container and discard the cinnamon sticks. Stir in the cream, cover, and refrigerate until thoroughly chilled, about 3 hours.

To make the Cinnamon Swirl: In a small saucepan, combine the sugar, corn syrup, and cinnamon. Bring to a boil and boil 2 minutes. Remove from the heat and stir in the half-and-half and butter. Pour into a container and let cool.

Freeze the custard in an ice cream maker according to the manufacturer's instructions. When the ice cream is almost frozen, pour in the Cinnamon Swirl and churn until blended in, about 15 seconds more. Transfer to a container, cover, and freeze until firm, about 2 hours.

MAKES ABOUT 1 QUART

Mocha-Hazelnut Crunch Ice Cream

Toasted buttery hazelnuts are marvelously crunchy in both the ice cream base and the caramelized praline that gilds the scoopfuls of this mocha ice cream. Try substituting almonds, walnuts, or pecans and using complementary liqueurs.

¾ cup (4 ounces) hazelnuts
2 cups half-and-half or milk
4 large egg yolks
⅔ cup plus 2 teaspoons sugar, divided
¼ cup unsweetened cocoa
1 teaspoon instant espresso powder
4 ounces bittersweet chocolate, chopped
1 ounce unsweetened chocolate, chopped
1 cup heavy (whipping) cream
½ teaspoon vanilla extract
1 teaspoon unsalted butter, plus extra for greasing
1 tablespoon Frangelico or other liqueur (optional)

Prepare a large bowl or pan of ice water.

Preheat the oven to 350°E Place the nuts on a baking sheet with sides and bake until lightly toasted, about 8 to 10 minutes. Turn out the nuts onto a tea towel and rub together to remove their papery skins. Let cool. In a food processor or blender, blend ½ cup of the nuts until very finely ground and they start to release their oil. Chop the remaining nuts and set aside. Place the ground nuts in the top of a double boiler with the half-and-half and heat over simmering water until steaming. Remove from the heat and steep for 15 minutes.

In a bowl, whisk the egg yolks until blended, then whisk in the ⅔ cup sugar, cocoa, and espresso powder. Whisk in about half of the hot half-and-half and pour the yolk mixture into the pan of half-and-half. Stir and cook over simmering water until the custard coats the back of a silicone spatula or spoon, about 10 minutes. Stir in the chocolates until they melt. Immediately place the custard pan in the ice bath and stir the custard occasionally until it cools to room temperature. Transfer to a container and stir in the cream and vanilla. Cover and refrigerate until thoroughly chilled, about 3 hours.

Meanwhile, in a small skillet, melt the butter and add the reserved chopped nuts. Sprinkle with the remaining 2 teaspoons sugar and cook over medium heat, stirring until the nuts are caramelized, about 2 minutes. Remove to a buttered sheet of aluminum foil and let cool. When cool, grind the praline in a food processor or blender until chunky. Store in an airtight container until needed.

Freeze the custard in an ice cream maker according to the manufacturer's instructions. When the ice cream is almost frozen, spoon in the liqueur, if desired, and churn until blended in, about 1 minute more. Add in the hazelnut praline and churn until blended in, about 15 seconds more, or reserve it to sprinkle on top of the ice cream. Transfer to a container, cover, and freeze until firm, about 2 hours.

MAKES ABOUT 1 QUART



Mint Chocolate Chip Ice Cream

Use a high-quality bar of bittersweet chocolate to embellish this old-fashioned favorite. I like to use a chef's knife for shredding the chocolate bar into neat morsels, but you could also grate it on the large holes of a box grater. Or, chop the chocolate to make larger chunks in the ice cream.

2 cups half-and-half or milk

4 large egg yolks

½ cup sugar

1 cup heavy (whipping) cream

2 teaspoons peppermint extract

3 ounces bittersweet chocolate, shredded (about ⅔ cup)

Prepare a large bowl or pan of ice water.

In the top of a double boiler, heat the half-and-half over simmering water until steaming. In a bowl, whisk the egg yolks until blended, then whisk in the sugar. Whisk in about half of the hot half-and-half and pour the yolk mixture into the pan of half-and-half. Stir and cook over simmering water until the custard coats the back of a silicone spatula or spoon, about 10 minutes. Immediately place the custard pan in the ice bath and stir the custard occasionally until it cools to room temperature. Transfer to a container and stir in the cream and extract. Cover and refrigerate until thoroughly chilled, about 3 hours.

Freeze in an ice cream maker according to the manufacturer's instructions. When the ice cream is almost frozen, add the chocolate and churn until blended in, about 15 seconds more. Transfer to a container, cover, and freeze until firm, about 2 hours.

MAKES ABOUT 1 QUART



Chocolate Kiss Ice Cream

In Italy the chocolate hazelnut candy called *Bad* (which means “kiss” in Italian) makes addictive bitefuls. It is easy to replicate the flavor using the hazelnut spread Nutella as a shortcut. This makes an intensely dense ice cream, putting one in mind of chilled chocolate fudge.

2 cups half-and-half or milk
4 large egg yolks
½ cup plus 2 teaspoons sugar, divided
¼ cup unsweetened cocoa
1 tablespoon instant espresso powder
4 ounces bittersweet chocolate, chopped
1 cup heavy (whipping) cream
½ cup Nutella or other chocolate-hazelnut spread
⅓ cup (1½ ounces) hazelnuts
1 teaspoon unsalted butter plus extra for greasing
1 tablespoon Frangelico or Amaretto (optional)

Prepare a large bowl or pan of ice water.

In the top of a double boiler, heat the half-and-half over simmering water until steaming. In a bowl, whisk the egg yolks until blended, then whisk in the ½ cup sugar, cocoa, and espresso powder. Whisk in about half of the hot half-and-half and pour the yolk mixture into the pan of half-and-half. Stir and cook over simmering water until the custard coats the back of a silicone spatula or spoon, about 10 minutes. Stir in the chocolate until it melts. Immediately place the custard pan in the ice bath and stir the custard occasionally until it cools to room temperature. Transfer to a container and stir in the cream and Nutella. Cover and refrigerate until thoroughly chilled, about 3 hours.

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Place the nuts on a baking sheet with sides and bake until lightly toasted, about 8 to 10 minutes. Turn out the nuts onto a tea towel and rub together to remove their papery skins. Let cool and finely chop.

In a small skillet, melt the butter and add the chopped nuts. Sprinkle with the remaining 2 teaspoons sugar and cook over medium heat, stirring until the nuts are caramelized, about 2 minutes. Remove to a buttered sheet of aluminum foil and let cool. When cool, grind the praline in a food processor or blender until chunky. Store in an airtight container until needed.

Freeze the custard in an ice cream maker according to the manufacturer’s instructions. When the ice cream is almost frozen, spoon in the liqueur, if desired, and churn until blended in, about 1 minute more. Add the hazelnut praline and churn until blended in, about 15 seconds more. Transfer to a container, cover, and freeze until firm, about 2 hours.

MAKES ABOUT 1 QUART

Bittersweet Chocolate Ice Cream

A top-quality bittersweet chocolate lends an intense flavor to this ice cream. You can experiment with several brands and enjoy the subtle differences.

2 cups half-and-half or milk

3 large egg yolks

$\frac{2}{3}$ cup sugar

6 ounces bittersweet chocolate, chopped

1 ounce unsweetened chocolate, chopped

1 cup heavy (whipping) cream

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Prepare a large bowl or pan of ice water.

In the top of a double boiler, heat the half-and-half over simmering water until steaming. In a bowl, whisk the egg yolks until blended, then whisk in the sugar. Whisk in about half of the hot half-and-half and pour the yolk mixture into the pan of half-and-half. Stir and cook over simmering water until the custard coats the back of a silicone spatula or spoon, about 10 minutes. Stir in the chocolate until they melt. Immediately place the custard pan in the ice bath and stir the custard occasionally until it cools to room temperature. Transfer to a container and stir in the cream and vanilla. Cover and refrigerate until thoroughly chilled, about 3 hours.

Freeze in an ice cream maker according to the manufacturer's instructions. Transfer to a container, cover, and freeze until firm, about 2 hours.

MAKES ABOUT 1 QUART

Mocha Almond Fudge Ice Cream

Try this coffee-flavored ice cream with biscotti on the side, just as you would with the mocha almond cappuccino that inspired this treat.

2/3 cup (3 ounces) chopped almonds

2 cups half-and-half or milk

6 tablespoons coffee beans or 3 tablespoons instant coffee powder

4 large egg yolks

2/3 cup sugar

1 cup heavy (whipping) cream

CHOCOLATE FUDGE

2 tablespoons sugar

2 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa

1/4 cup light corn syrup

2 tablespoons half-and-half

1 tablespoon unsalted butter

1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract

Prepare a large bowl or pan of ice water.

Preheat the oven to 350°E Place the nuts on a baking sheet with sides and bake until lightly toasted, about 8 to 10 minutes. Set aside to cool.

In the top of a double boiler, heat the half-and-half and coffee beans over simmering water until steaming. Remove from the heat and steep for 40 minutes, or until the coffee flavor is pronounced to your liking. (If using the coffee powder, mix it into the hot half-and-half until dissolved.)

In a bowl, whisk the egg yolks until blended, then whisk in the sugar. Whisk in about half of the hot half-and-half and pour the yolk mixture into the pan of half-and-half. Stir and cook over simmering water until the custard coats the back of a silicone spatula or spoon, about 10 minutes. Immediately place the custard pan in the ice bath and stir the custard occasionally until it cools to room temperature. Strain the custard into a container and discard the beans. Stir in the cream, cover, and refrigerate until thoroughly chilled, about 3 hours.

Meanwhile, prepare the Chocolate Fudge: In a small saucepan, combine the sugar and cocoa. Stir in the com syrup and half-and-half. Stirring constantly heat over medium heat until the mixture comes to a boil. Reduce heat. Simmer 2 minutes and stir in the butter and vanilla. Let cool to room temperature.

Freeze the custard in an ice cream maker according to the manufacturer's instructions. When the ice cream is almost frozen, spoon in the Chocolate Fudge and the toasted almonds and churn until blended in, about 15 seconds more. Transfer to a container, cover, and freeze until firm, about 2 hours.

MAKES ABOUT 1 QUART

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