

Enjoy Ice Cream on National Ice Cream Day July 15

The third Sunday of July is the observance of National Ice Cream Day. It is usually celebrated on the third Sunday in July as part of National Ice Cream Month which was proclaimed in 1984 by President Ronald Reagan.

Ice cream can be a treat enjoyed occasionally and is a good source of calcium, Vitamin D and other nutrients. It can be added sugars and fats, but can be enjoyed in moderation.

Thousands of years ago, people in Persia would put snow in a bowl, pour grape-juice over it and eat it as a treat. They did this when the weather was hot and used the ice that was taken from the remaining snowfall at the top of the mountains. Often the snow was saved in cool underground chambers known as “yakhchal”

The United States was introduced to ice cream by the Quaker colonists who brought ice cream recipes with them. Their ice cream was sold at shops in New York and other cities.

- Benjamin Franklin, George Washington and Thomas Jefferson enjoyed ice cream.
- 1813 First Lady Dolley Madison served ice cream at the inaugural ball.
- 1832 African American confectioner, Augustus Jackson, created many ice cream recipes as well as techniques to manufacture ice cream.
- 1843 Philadelphian, Nancy Johnson, received the first U.S. patent for a small-scale hand-cranked ice cream freezer.
- 1920 – Harry Burt puts the first ice cream trucks on the streets.

While the ingredients can vary from recipe to recipe or brand to brand, ice cream whether homemade or commercial must include at least three ingredients: milk and/or cream, sweeteners and flavorings. Commercially made ice creams also include stabilizers and emulsifiers.

The main ingredients in ice cream come from milk and the most important part of that is milkfat, which gives ice cream its smoothness and creamy texture. In order for it to be called ice cream, the USDA requires it to contain at least 10 percent milkfat.

For sweeteners ingredients can include cane or beet sugar or even honey. Stabilizers that are gums such as guar gum are sometimes used to prevent the formation of ice crystals and to give the ice cream its smooth texture. Emulsifiers such as egg yolks keep fat and water together and makes ice cream more uniform as it freezes.

The flavorings and mix-ins is what makes the ice cream taste great. It can be anything from vanilla to green tea, there is not a limit to what you can flavor your ice cream with.

You might prefer other frozen dairy treats as well.

- Soft serve includes the same ingredients as ice cream, but the soft serve machine adds air while freezing, which makes it “softer” than ice cream.

- Frozen custard, like ice cream, needs to contain 10 percent milkfat and also has 1.4 percent egg yolk solids.
- Sherbets contain an minimal amount of milkfat, usually 1 to 2 percent. Sorbets, however, don't contain any dairy ingredients.
- Frozen yogurt is similar to ice cream, but the ingredients have been cultured.
- Gelato, Italian style ice cream, contains less fat and is churned slowly, which results in a denser taste.

Sources: National Day Calendar and National Dairy Council