

The perfect summertime treat: Homemade ice cream sundae

By **GRETCHEN MCKAY**
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Ice cream is the best of desserts any time of year, but it really hits the spot on a warm and balmy summer evening.

Cool and creamy, it's both decadent and nostalgic, whether it's piled high on an ice cream cone or — my favorite way — scooped into a crispy waffle bowl and drenched with spoonful after spoonful of homemade hot fudge.

When I was a kid, my siblings and I spent many nights churning ice cream in a hand-cranked ice cream maker. (Whew — but, eventually, so worth it!) Today's plug-in versions are much easier on the hands and shoulders, with an electric motor doing all the grunt work by rotating the metal canister that holds the ice cream base in a slurry of ice and salt. If you keep the canister at the ready in the freezer, and have heavy cream and eggs in the refrigerator, you can have fresh ice cream in less than an hour in any flavor your heart desires. It's that easy.

This sundae recipe features what I swear is one of the best chocolate fudge sauces I've ever tasted — that of Pittsburgh food blogger Michelle Lettrich, who runs the popular site Brown Eyed Baker. It's so delicious, you might want to hide any leftovers under your bed, like my little sister, Posie, used to do with the Cool Whip. (Just kidding — you should hide it in the back of the fridge.)

I made the sundaes with coffee ice cream because that's what I love best, but you could easily substitute vanilla, cinnamon, strawberry or whatever flavor of ice cream rocks your world.

The sauce can be stored in a covered container in the fridge for up to 2 weeks. To reheat, microwave for 30 seconds to 1 minute until it's pourable but still thick.



This sundae recipe includes a chocolate fudge sauce from Pittsburgh food blogger Michelle Lettrich, who runs the popular site Brown Eyed Baker.

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HOMEMADE COFFEE FUDGE SUNDAES

For ice cream
2 cups half and half
1 cup sugar
Pinch of salt
4 egg yolks
1 cup heavy cream
1½ - 2 tablespoons instant coffee or espresso powder

For hot fudge sauce
2/3 cup heavy or whipping cream
1/2 cup light corn syrup or honey
1/4 cup dark brown sugar
1/4 cup cocoa powder
1/4 teaspoon fine or table salt
1 cup semi- or bittersweet chocolate chips, divided
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

For sundaes
Whipped cream, for garnish
Maraschino cherries and crushed nuts, for garnish
Make ice cream: Warm half and half, sugar and salt in a medium saucepan over medium heat, whisking to dissolve sugar.

Beat egg yolks in a small mixing bowl, add 1/2 cup of the warm mixture to the egg yolks and whisk to combine. Then add that mixture to the half and half on the stovetop. Whisk in coffee granules until dissolved.

Cook over medium-low heat stirring constantly until the mixture thickens slightly — just barely sticking to the back of a spatula or until it reaches 170 degrees.

Place the heavy cream into a bowl with a fine mesh strainer on top of the bowl. Strain the custard into the heavy cream. Discard what is left on the strainer. Add vanilla extract, and stir to combine.

Transfer to an airtight container and cool completely in the fridge (preferably overnight).

Pour mixture into an ice cream maker and churn until frozen (about 30-40 minutes). Transfer to an airtight container and freeze completely, about 4 hours.

When ready to make sundaes, prepare hot fudge: In a 2-quart saucepan over medi-

um-high heat, bring the cream, corn syrup, brown sugar, cocoa powder, salt and half of the chocolate chips to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium-low or low (enough to maintain a low simmer), and cook for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Remove from the heat and stir in the remaining chocolate chips, butter and vanilla extract, stirring until smooth. Let cool for 20 to 30 minutes before using (it will thicken as it cools). Store in a jar or airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks. To reheat, microwave for 30 seconds to 1 minute until it's pourable but still thick.

Assemble sundaes: Place 3 scoops of ice cream in a sundae cup or bowl. Spoon hot fudge on top, and garnish with whipped cream and a maraschino cherry. Crushed nuts are optional. Serve immediately.

Makes enough ice cream for at least eight sundaes.

— Adapted from browneyedbaker.com

Tips for effective summer hydration

Mayo Clinic News Network

DEAR MAYO CLINIC: I am prone to kidney stones, so I know it's important for me to stay hydrated while I exercise. But do I need to change what I drink in the summer? A friend mentioned that I might be better with a sports drink versus water. I'm also wondering how much I should drink. Can you provide any advice?

ANSWER: Staying hydrated during exercise is important. You can become dehydrated if you take in too little fluid, especially during the hot summer months. Conversely, consuming too much fluid can be problematic. Some people are known to experience what is known as exercise-induced low sodium, or hyponatremia. Finding a balance is important.

The purpose of drinking fluid — whether water or electrolyte-containing beverages — is to rehydrate the body and put fluid back into your system so your organs can function properly.

How much to drink and when depends on your situation. Generally, it's recommended that you should consume at least two liters of water or other beverages per day.

The general rule of thumb among health care professionals is to drink to thirst. Although guidelines speak to hydration before, during and after exercise, I always tell people to look and listen to your body as the best indicator when you need hydration. That said, thirst isn't always a helpful indicator of hydration status, particularly when exercising. If you're exercising and thirsty, you are already well on your way to becoming dehydrated, compared to if you were resting and thirsty.

You will need to take in more fluid than usual at times. During the summer months, for instance, when weather is hotter and more humid, it is important to drink more fluid, especially if you are exercising outdoors.

As far as what to drink, for most people, water is the best place to start. Depending on how extensively you exercise, having a beverage

that includes electrolytes also is important to replace nutrients and electrolytes lost during sweating, such as sodium and chloride.

Sodium is important because it helps you absorb glucose and water. Aim for about 450 milligrams of sodium per 24 ounces of sports drink. Avoid salt tablets, as they do not include all the electrolytes you need and you can easily use too much. You also can look for a drink with some carbohydrates, since they provide fuel for your working muscles.

It is best to consume about half your fluid intake in water and half in a beverage that contains electrolytes. Mind the amount of sugar intake, though. While sugar is important, especially for endurance athletes, too much sugar can cause gastrointestinal issues, including bloating, cramping or diarrhea. One recommendation is to keep sugar below 30 grams per 24 ounces of a sports drink.

The best rule of thumb is when you exercise, drink to thirst, and hydrate your body with plain water and, as needed, a sports beverage. In the summer, also be mindful about how you feel as you exercise.

I find that many people do not drink enough water daily, so they may feel better after increasing hydration, no matter the source. In addition, avoid drinking alcohol when you are outdoors because alcohol is a diuretic. This means alcohol will cause your body to lose water, leading to dehydration much faster.

As you spend time outdoors, be aware of symptoms of dehydration, which can include:

- Extreme thirst.
- Less frequent urination.
- Dark-colored urine.
- Fatigue.
- Dizziness.
- Confusion.

Also, if you experience cramps or headache while exercising, it is best to stop, hydrate and potentially seek medical attention. It is important to rule out other warm-weather issues, including heat exhaustion.

— Dr. Brittany Beel, Emergency Medicine, Mayo Clinic, Jacksonville, Florida

DORY

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Early on we lived in the country so as a small girl child I was allowed to wear trousers which were then called slacks, the boys wearing jeans or overalls. By school age, though, I had to wear dresses to school, town, or church regardless of the weather or the season. There was

no closet in the bedroom for hanging dresses so my dad got out his tools, a few boards, and a wooden rod, and soon we had a place for the dresses on hangers. Then my mother hung a length of material across the opening to keep off the dust. When we moved, I believe the make-do closet was removed.

By the time I was in my teens, we had lived in nine different houses in La

Grande, once to Island City and back. We lived in one of them twice and each time it was a process of moving the heavy metal of kitchen range and heating stove in pieces from one house to the next and reassembled in a day's time. The hanging of pull-down blinds and lace curtains, along with laundry equipment could take an extra day.

Yes, the cupboards on the walls always went with

us along with the heating and cooking equipment, but strong helping hands of family and friends always made it possible.

The job of moving didn't end at this point, though, for the houses had to be thoroughly cleansed, both before moving in and again after moving out, so we always lived in clean quarters and so did whomever moved in after our leaving. Both houses had to be

swept out and mopped. The last thing was to finish the floors to a high shine on hands and knees to spread a coat of liquid wax on the linoleum; then mamas would take a last look to be sure everything was to her satisfaction.

Why we, and everyone

else, seemed to move so often I have no idea, but I remember that even on moving day supper was always on the table by evening.

■ Dorothy Swart Fleshman is the author of *Dory's Diary* occasionally published in *The Observer and Baker City Herald*. She is a resident of La Grande.

FLOWERS

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Next, there are the normal types of herbs that have distinct reasons to deadhead, but not just the blossoms. For perennial varieties you intend to harvest, the essential oil that gives that plant its scent is strongest when harvested just before the blossoms open. Once the blos-

soms are allowed to open, the oils won't be as strong. Good herbs to think of here are oregano and garden sage — very hardy and they thrive in our climate.

Annual herbs, such as sweet basil or dill, have very little essential oil in their leaves when dried. Many gardeners retain the flavor of basil by processing the leaves in water then freezing them. The resulting

“basil cubes” add that flavor you won't get with the dried leaves. Basil reseeds readily. Dill seeds are also highly flavorful. Always try to harvest in the mornings and it's fine to wash the leaves if they are dirty.

Grandma is done with this one, now it's time to trim and deadhead some houseplants!

■ Jennie Hagen is a native Oregonian who has spent 40 years gardening

east of the Cascades. She is a member of the Garden Writers Association and has previously written for the Home & Garden section of *The Oregonian*, and for the *La Grande Observer*, the *Baker City Herald*, and the *Burns Times Herald*.

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