

Basic Vanilla

- 2 cups heavy cream
- 2 cups milk
- 1 ½ cups sugar
- 2-4 egg yolks
- 2 inches vanilla bean

In a heavy bottomed sauce pan scald milk and cream with vanilla bean. Beat together the sugar and egg yolks. Temper yolks and sugar with hot cream a little at a time before adding the yolks to the saucepan. Cook the mix slowly, stirring constantly, until it evenly coats the back of a spoon. Remove from heat and strain into another container. The vanilla bean may be slit open and the grains scraped into the mix for effect. Vanilla bean should be reserved for further use.

Churn freeze when cooled. Best if made the day before freezing so that it is thoroughly chilled before freezing.

This also makes terrific egg nog. Add freshly grated nutmeg and relax the sugar a bit if you don't want it too sweet, and if it won't be frozen.

If you want to mimic the stuff sold by the food giants, substitute corn syrup for sugar and gelatin or guar gum for egg yolks.

These additives and stabilizers will indeed incorporate more air and use less cream without sacrificing “creaminess”. It will also give your dessert that cloying residue in the mouth that people have come to love.

But if you want to live long and enjoy refreshing iced cream, try flavoring with maple syrup or honey. Of course the sugar equivalencies need to be worked out. Syrups will give a smoother finish than granular sugar, and aid in air incorporation. Chocolate can be added to the basic recipe as cocoa in the blending of the sugar and yolks or as melted chocolate after the yolks have been tempered (one tablespoon cocoa or one square chocolate for 2 cups mix). Fruit and nuts are best added after churning and removal of the dasher, before hardening. Swirls are easily folded in by pouring the ice cream to a container for hardening and adding the swirl at that time.

Hardening of ice cream is best accomplished in an old fashioned freezer without a fan or auto defrost. An old chest freezer at 0 F or lower is best. Professional ice cream makers measure weight vs. volume to maximize yield. Since ice cream is sold by volume one would generally suppose that the half gallon of ice cream which is heaviest is the best value. But of course it also depends on the quality of the ingredients.

Ice Cream Making



*Home Dairy Craft
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My family always made ice cream for special family events, holidays and picnics... The ice cream making took place while the crowd was assembling and it got the men “out of the kitchen” where they were “in the way”. Instead of cocktails we cracked ice and turned the crank. It was our practice that my mother prepared an ice cream mix the day before the event. The flavor was “vanilla” and since Viola was a frugal woman it was truly ice milk, not too much sugar, not too many eggs and a greater quantity of milk than cream. After cooking the mix it was left “to ripen” and cool but generally not refrigerated since there was no room in the refrigerator the day before a family picnic and it was going to be frozen anyway.

The churning crew was particular in its practices. Uncle Charlie generally presided, always in coat and tie. My father would do the work deferring to Charlie’s greater experience as an ice cream maker. They insisted upon very cold, very hard ice crushed into a nice blend of small chunks and shavings and used a great quantity of salt to achieve an effective freezing action from the brine. They were exceptionally careful that no brine should contaminate the product.

The ice cream freezer was a large wooden staved bucket with a hole below the rim to regulate the level of the brine and a tall tinned cylinder within, which held a tinned and wooden dasher that agitated the mix. The cover of the ice cream cylinder fit snugly under the casting which held the crank that spanned

the top of the wooden ice bucket. Once a good brine had formed the churning was rather easy until the mix thickened. Every kid who wanted usually got to turn the crank. The grown-ups would tell you whether or not you were keeping the correct pace. My father and Uncle Charlie would generally agree when the cranking difficulty had reached the right degree, which determined whether we were finished. Then the crank and cover were removed. One of the kids was sent for a spoon and a bowl. Uncle Charlie held the ice cream cylinder in place as my father removed the dasher, scraping it and then allowing everyone a taste of the ice cream that clung to it before it melted into the bowl. The cover was returned to the cylinder. A cork was placed into the hole out of which the dasher had protruded, and the whole apparatus was packed with more ice and salt before a blanket was placed over all to harden the ice cream until after our dinner or picnic when it would be served, usually with pies. When this ice cream was served an hour or so later it was so cold it gave you a headache “right in the front of your head”. It was not hard at that point, smooth with a little graininess and iciness. It was definitely homemade and not like the stuff from the store. Once it had thoroughly hardened in the refrigerator freezer it was as hard as a rock and nearly impossible to scoop. When I received training in ice cream making from world renowned Chef Albert Kumin-creator of the entremets for the original Four Seasons Restaurant and Chef/Professor at the Culinary Institute at Hyde Park-I learned why our homemade ice cream lacked the refinement of professional manufacturers. Most homemade ice cream suffers from over churning. Once the

maximum amount of air has been incorporated into the ice cream churning should cease or it will collapse or even turn to butter, depending on the cream content. A good rule of thumb is not to churn for over 20 minutes. If using a brine freezer establish effective freezing action quickly by adding a little water to the brine so that no time is spent churning without freezing. Since most home makers churn until the crank cannot move they have generally gone too far and the product will not scoop when fully hardened.

Of course the recipe/formula also makes a difference. The key ingredients of fine ice cream are the cream/milk, sugar and egg yolk. The cream is the stuff into which air is whipped and which thickens with agitation. It carries all the flavor and goodness and any flavorings must agree with it. The sugar acts as an anti-freeze and must be in the proper proportions so that the ice cream will scoop, remain smooth, in essence remain a liquid. It prevents the iced cream from becoming a solid (12 oz. granulated sugar for every 32 oz cream/milk or for sorbets and sherberts enough sugar added to the solution that an egg in the shell floats or the shell rises slightly from the surface). The egg yolks are a stabilizer so that once air has been whipped into the mix it will remain there. The yolks need to be cooked to the proper degree, when the mix will coat the back of a spoon evenly, it is done.

Clifford Hatch, Upinngil, 2007