

Our Queen of Hearts Suggests Cool Items For Steaming Days

By Faith Gillespie

It is entirely possible that the day on which you read this will be unseasonably cold, Michigan climate being what it is. The day I am writing this, however, is quite another matter. It is unseasonably warm, and the air is burdened with 99.44 per cent humidity.

I have been loath to boil water for iced tea, for fear that the added steam will cause it to rain in my kitchen, and then I should have to iron the curtains.

What I do at times like this is, I make a desperate effort, before my brain turns to warm tapioca, to Think Cool Thoughts. I conjure up images of all the cool things in the world, starting with icicles, and snow drifts in howling blizzards, and water-melons.

Let's think on the Great Polar Ice Cap, which leads directly to polar bears and penguins and Alaskan huskies and Eskimos. And igloos.

Ski slopes are cool, and avalanches, and so, I have been told, is Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

Cucumbers, cool as Jellied consommé. Ice cubes, pop-sicles, lime sherbet, strawberry sodas, ice cream.

There is ice cream. Lovely stuff. A brilliant invention, a boon, a blessing to mankind, the greatest hot-weather hostess-saver of all time. (Good in cool weather, too.) The thing I have been working up to all this time is easy ways to make ice cream elegant, when the occasion calls for easy elegance.

Ice Cream Towers, I call these, and I can't remember whether I made them up or read about them years ago. They make a terrific impression, and it's almost a pity how simple they are. Almost.

Use a half-gallon brick of good vanilla ice cream. Soften it just a little by letting it stand at room temperature for a few minutes, and then, working quickly, press spoonfuls into cone-shaped paper cups. Pop each one back into the freezer, fast. The warmth of your hand will loosen the ice cream so the paper cone can be removed when the time comes.

Another method, in lieu of cone-shaped paper cups, is the use of a pillbox glass or any conical glass or cup. In that case, you run a table knife around inside each glass so that the ice cream slides out immediately. Then wrap each tower loosely in wax paper and put it into the freezer.

You can do all this in advance, of course; indeed, you should, so that the towers get good and hard again. Then at serving time, you need to have on hand about a dozen pecan halves for each one. Unwrap them, and press the pecans around sort of artistically, or at least firmly, so they don't fall off.

Then stand each one on a dessert plate (on a paper doily, for the last word in elegance). Pass one of these sauces, or both, and graciously accept the delighted compliments of your guests.

HOT FUDGE SAUCE

Melt over hot water: 2 squares unsweetened chocolate, 1 tablespoon butter.

Blend well and add: 1/2 cup boiling water.

Stir well and add: 1 cup sugar, 2 tablespoons corn syrup, dash of salt. Place your saucepan directly on the burner and boil fairly rapidly for 5 minutes. If you like the good old kind that hardens when it hits the ice cream, boil it for about 8 minutes instead of 5. Reheat over boiling water at serving time. You may add a teaspoon of vanilla while it heats. This is delicious with coffee ice cream, too.

BUTTERSCOTCH SAUCE

Boil to the consistency of heavy syrup: 1/2 cup white corn syrup, 1/2 cup plus 2 tablespoons brown sugar, 2 tablespoons butter, dash of salt.

Cool these ingredients and add: 1/2 cup evaporated milk or light cream. Reheat in double boiler for hot sauce.

Think what you could do with these pretties at

Christmas, with red cinnamon drops wreathed round, with the chocolate sauce, and maybe silver shot with the buttercream. (Ah, there's a cool thought.)

There's that word again, it would be more effective to think of very hot things and feel comfortable in comparison: steam baths, blue blazes, blast furnaces, Sophie Tucker, tin roofs, two-dollar pits.

This will never do. Let's go back to icicles and snow drifts and howling blizzards. And ice cream...

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