

Homemade is 'The Ultimate Ice Cream'

See related story on Taste front. Recipes are from "The Ultimate Ice Cream Book" by Bruce Weinstein, William Morrow and Co., Inc., New York, 1999, \$18.

CHEESECAKE ICE CREAM

- 1 cup sugar
 - 4 ounces cream cheese, a room temperature
 - 1 large egg
 - 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
 - 3/4 cup milk
 - 2 teaspoons grated fresh lemon or orange zest
 - 1 1/2 cups heavy cream
 - 3 graham crackers
- Beat the sugar and the cream cheese together until smooth and creamy. Beat in the egg and vanilla. Set aside.
- Bring milk to a boil in a heavy medium saucepan. Slowly beat hot

milk into cheese mixture. Pour entire mixture back into pan and place over low heat. Stir constantly with a whisk or wooden spoon until custard thickens slightly. (Do not let mixture boil or egg will scramble.)

Remove from heat and pour hot cheese custard through a strainer into a large, clean bowl. Cool slightly, then stir in lemon zest and cream. Cover and refrigerate until cold or overnight.

Stir chilled custard, then freeze in one or two batches in your ice cream machine according to manufacturer's instructions, adding the crumbled graham crackers when ice cream is semifrozen. Allow the machine to mix in the crackers. When finished, the ice cream will be soft but ready to eat. For firmer ice cream, transfer to a freezer-safe container and freeze at least

two hours.

Variation: For Cherry Cheesecake Ice Cream, gently swirl 3/4 cup canned cherry pie filling into finished ice cream. Do not over-swirl. Streaks of cherry "sauce" should be visible. Serve immediately or freeze until firm.

HONEYDEW SORBET

- 1 small honeydew melon
- 1/4 cup white grape juice
- 3/4 cup superfine sugar
- 2 tablespoons melon liqueur or syrup
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

Remove rind and seeds from melon. Cut flesh into 1/2-inch cubes. You should have about two heaping cups of fruit. Place cut-up melon in blender with grape juice, sugar, liqueur, and salt. Blend until melon is pulsed and sugar has dissolved, about 30 seconds.

Cover and refrigerate until cold.

Stir the chilled mixture, then freeze in one or two batches in your ice cream machine according to the manufacturer's instructions. When finished, the sorbet will be soft but ready to eat. For firmer sorbet, transfer to a freezer-safe container and freeze at least two hours.

Variation: For Honeydew Lemon Drop Sorbet, add 1/2 cup vodka and the grated zest of one lemon to the blender along with the fruit.

KEY LIME ICE CREAM

- 1 1/2 cups heavy cream
- 6 large egg yolks
- One 15-ounce can sweetened condensed milk
- 1/2 cup key lime juice (fresh from eight to 10 medium

limes or use bottled)

Bring cream to a simmer in a heavy medium saucepan. Slowly beat hot cream into egg yolks in a medium mixing bowl. Pour mixture back into the pan and place over low heat. Stir constantly with a whisk or wooden spoon until the custard thickens slightly. (Do not let the mixture boil or the eggs will scramble.)

Remove from heat and pour custard through a strainer into a large, clean bowl. Cool slightly, then stir in sweetened condensed milk and key lime juice. Cover and refrigerate until cold or at least two hours.

Stir the cold custard well, then freeze in one or two batches in your ice cream machine. When finished, the ice cream will be soft but ready to eat. For firmer ice

cream, transfer to a freezer-safe container and freeze at least two hours.

Variation: For Daiquiri Ice Cream, add 1/2 cup gold rum before freezing.

BLACK COW ICE CREAM SODA

- 1 1/2 tablespoons chocolate syrup
- 8-10 ounces of root beer
- 2 scoops premium vanilla ice cream

Place the chocolate syrup in the bottom of a chilled 16-ounce glass. Add four ounces of root beer and stir until well blended. Add one scoop of ice cream. Fill the glass with remaining root beer. Top with remaining scoop of ice cream, pressing it firmly onto the rim of the glass to prevent it from falling in.

Cooking cherries doesn't have to be the pits

By DANA JACOBI
SPECIAL WRITER

From now through August, while deep, dark Bing and rosy-cheeked, golden Rainier cherries are in season, nearly every day I find myself buying a few generous, stem-dangling handfuls of the glistening, plump fruit I see at local markets. At this time of year, I carry a plastic bag in my pocket so I have a place to neatly store the pits that accumulate as I munch on this sugar-sweet fruit while moving around town.

Until recently, I viewed cooking with fresh cherries with considerably less enthusiasm. In fact, I avoided it because getting the pits out of the fruit was, frankly, the pits. Preparing the jam for this column, I discovered an easy way to pit fresh cherries. The trick, in a word, is freezing them.

Simply rinse the fruit, stems and all, and dry it thoroughly. Place about 3 cups of ripe, dry cherries, in a self-sealing, quart-

size plastic bag, and pop it in the freezer. Leave them there just overnight, or for up to 12 months.

Thirty minutes before you want to use them, take the bag from the freezer and let it sit at room temperature. While the fruit is still partly frozen, pull it apart with your fingers and flip the pit right out.

Granted, using this method to pit a couple of pounds of cherries remains a meditative experience, or something to do while watching TV, but it takes a fraction of the time required to pry the pits from heart of never-frozen fruit using a knife. Or punching out the pits with the plunger-style gizmo that gives you blisters.

Defrosted cherries are as flavorful as they were before freezing. They look luscious in fruit salad and cook perfectly in jams, chutneys and dessert sauces. Using the freeze-and-pit method, it takes barely half an hour to cook up and bottle this

jam once the cherries have been pitted and left to sit until the sugar is melted. With less cooking, it makes a luscious, cherry-studded syrup.

GINGER CHERRY JAM

- 2 pounds fresh or defrosted frozen sweet cherries, stemmed and pitted
- 3 cups sugar
- Juice of 1 lemon
- Three 1/2-inch slices fresh ginger, peeled

This will make 3 cups or half-pint jars.

Cover the bottom of a deep, heavy 6-quart pot with one-third of the cherries. Cover the fruit with 1 cup of the sugar. Repeat, ending with the third cup of sugar.

Let sit until the sugar has dissolved, about 1 hour if using frozen cherries, longer if the fruit is fresh.

Add the lemon juice and ginger.

Over medium-low heat, bring the cherries and sugar to a boil. Use a candy thermometer in the pot, if you have one. If not, put a plate in the freezer.

After the pot comes to a boil, keep it gently boiling until the thermometer registers 220° F. Otherwise, after the jam cooks 20 minutes, spoon about a teaspoon of it onto the cold plate and replace it in the freezer.

Wait 1 minute. When the juices on the plate gel when chilled, the jam is done. Spoon it into sterilized glass jars and cover. Cool to room temperature, then store the jam in the refrigerator.

Nutrition information: Each tablespoon of jam contains 62 calories and less than one gram of fat.

Written for the American Institute for Cancer Research by Dana Jacobi, author of "The Best of Clay Pot Cooking" and "The Natural Kitchen: SOY!"

Bean salads simply delicious

(AP) — These vegetarian recipes use canned beans as their source of nutrition — protein, fiber, vitamins and minerals. That means they are easy-to-make dishes. With very little actual cooking time, there's a minimum of time spent over a hot stove on a fine summer day.

HAWAIIAN BEAN SALAD

- 1/4 cup lime juice
- 2 tablespoons orange juice
- Two 15-ounce cans dark red kidney beans, drained and rinsed (see note)
- 15-ounce can black beans, drained and rinsed (see note)
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 red bell pepper, diced
- 1 cup crushed pineapple, drained
- 1 small green chili pepper, chopped
- 2 scallions, diced
- 1/2 teaspoon allspice
- 1 tablespoon chopped mint
- Salt and pepper to taste

Combine juices, oil and garlic in a medium bowl. Toss in the beans.

Add remaining ingredients and let stand at room temperature for 30 minutes. Serve immediately or refrigerate. Makes 4 to 6 servings.

QUICK AND EASY PINTO BEANS

Two 15-ounce cans pinto beans, drained and rinsed (see note)

- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 medium white onion, chopped
- 1 red bell pepper, chopped
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 2 tablespoons ground cumin
- 3/4 cup salsa
- Salt to taste

Heat oil in a medium saucepan. Add onion, bell pepper, garlic and cumin and saute 3 to 5 minutes or until the onion is transparent. Add the beans and salsa and heat thoroughly. Serve over rice or in tortillas. Makes 4 to 6 servings.

Note: Other varieties of beans, such as navy, pinto or cranberry, may be substituted and combined as desired.

Recipes from: Michigan Bean Commission.

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