

COOKING SKILLS

Cooking Skills: Ice Cream 2

Gelato, granita, semifreddo, ice cream cakes, sauces, cones, shakes and a frozen dessert table.

8 Chapters | Philip Osztromok | Generated with Claude

COOKING SKILLS: ICE CREAM 2

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Cooking Skills: Ice Cream 2

Chapter 1 · Gelato

SKILL GOAL

Make gelato with a cornflour base and a custard base and serve it soft for the best flavour.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

Gelato is the Italian way of making ice cream: **more milk, less cream, less air, and served a little warmer**. It is churned slowly so it stays dense and silky, and the flavour is clean and strong. This course assumes the ice cream science from Cooking Skills: Ice Cream 1, chapter 1: small crystals come from fat, sugar, air, speed and stirring.



Figure 1. Gelato is milk-led, dense and served soft. The flavour does the talking.

Gelato and ice cream compared

	ICE CREAM	GELATO
Fat	Higher: lots of cream	Lower: mostly milk (roughly)
Air	More whipped in	Less: churned slowly
Texture	Light, fluffy	Dense, smooth, silky
Served	Colder	A little warmer and softer

	ICE CREAM	GELATO
Keeps	Weeks	A few days

These differences are general (the exact figures vary by recipe and country); the point is how the style feels.

The two bases

- **Cornflour base:** milk, cream, sugar and cornflour simmered until thick. No egg and the cleanest milk flavour (fior di latte).
- **Custard base:** milk, cream, yolks and sugar cooked to coat the spoon (crema). Richer and more yellow.
- **Chill overnight** in both: a very cold base freezes with smaller crystals.
- **Churn slowly** in a machine (20 to 25 minutes), or beat by hand as it freezes. The by-hand version will be denser and slightly less smooth.

HOT MILK, EGGS, NUTS AND KEEPING

Cornflour base: the cornflour must be mixed with cold milk first, then simmered for about 2 minutes while stirring, or it tastes chalky. Stir right into the corners of the pan so it doesn't catch and burn.

Cooking a custard base: stir constantly over a low heat until it coats the back of a spoon, about **75 to 80°C**, and never above about 85°C or it scrambles (general guidance; see Cooking Skills: Ice Cream 1, chapter 3). Cool it quickly in iced water and chill overnight. Check current FSA advice if serving to pregnant women or other vulnerable people.

Nuts: pistachios, almonds and other nuts (and pastes made from them) are serious allergens, and some products are made in factories that handle other nuts. Never serve them to a guest without asking, and make a nut-free swap when anyone has an allergy.

Keeping gelato: gelato is made to be eaten fresh. Keep it covered at -18°C and eat within about 3 to 4 days (general guidance), as it turns icy faster than higher-fat ice cream. Stand it for 10 minutes before serving.

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

Fior di latte (milk gelato)

30 minutes plus chilling and churning | 4 portions | making a cornflour-thickened gelato base with no egg

'Flower of milk': the purest gelato, tasting of clean, sweet milk. A little cornflour gives the body that egg yolks would, so it is the simplest gelato base to make.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

500 ml	whole milk, divided
100 ml	double cream
120 g	caster sugar
25 g	cornflour
1 pinch	salt

1. Whisk the cornflour with 100 ml of the cold milk to a smooth slurry.
2. Heat the rest of the milk with the cream, sugar and salt, stirring, until steaming and the sugar has dissolved. Whisk in the slurry.
3. Keep stirring over a medium heat for **2 to 3 minutes** until it thickens and bubbles lightly. Cool in iced water, stirring, then chill for at least 4 hours.
4. Churn in an ice cream machine for 20 to 25 minutes, or freeze in a shallow tub, beating every 30 minutes for about 4 hours. Freeze for 1 hour to firm up.

HOT MILK, FREEZER AND ALLERGENS

Cornflour base: the cornflour must be mixed with cold milk first, then simmered for about 2 minutes while stirring, or it tastes chalky. Stir right into the corners of the pan so it doesn't catch and burn.

Hot sugar syrup and custard: sugar syrup is much hotter than boiling water and sticks to skin, so keep the pan handle turned in and don't touch it. Don't let anything boil over, and keep children away from the hob.

Keeping gelato: gelato is made to be eaten fresh. Keep it covered at -18°C and eat within about 3 to 4 days (general guidance), as it turns icy faster than higher-fat ice cream. Stand it for 10 minutes before serving.

> **Allergens:** ice cream usually contains milk (cream, condensed milk), and often egg, nuts, peanuts, soy (in some chocolate and cookies) and wheat (cookies and cones). Check labels, and never serve a nut-containing ice cream to someone with a nut allergy without telling them. Coconut cream or oat cream can replace dairy cream in some recipes, but the texture changes.

LEVEL 2 · CUSTARD

Vanilla gelato (crema)

45 minutes plus chilling and churning | 4 portions | making a custard-based gelato

'Crema' means cream: a custard gelato. Compared with the custard in Cooking Skills: Ice Cream 1, chapter 3, it has more milk and less cream, which keeps it lighter and lets the vanilla show.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

500 ml	whole milk
100 ml	double cream
4	Lion-marked egg yolks
110 g	caster sugar
1	vanilla pod, split and scraped (or 2 tsp vanilla paste)
1 pinch	salt

1. Heat the milk, cream and vanilla until just steaming. Whisk the yolks, sugar and salt until pale.
2. Pour the hot milk onto the yolks a little at a time, whisking. Return to the pan and stir over a low heat for **5 to 8 minutes** until it coats the spoon.
3. Strain, cool in iced water and chill overnight. Churn for 20 to 25 minutes, or beat by hand as it freezes.

CUSTARD, EGGS AND ALLERGENS

Cooking a custard base: stir constantly over a low heat until it coats the back of a spoon, about **75 to 80°C**, and never above about 85°C or it scrambles (general guidance; see Cooking Skills: Ice Cream 1, chapter 3). Cool it quickly in iced water and chill overnight. Check current FSA advice if serving to pregnant women or other vulnerable people.

Eggs: use eggs with the British Lion mark and wash your hands after handling raw egg. This course never serves raw egg: custards are cooked, and the no-churn and sorbet recipes have none. Pregnant women, babies, older people and anyone unwell should check current FSA advice before eating egg dishes, even cooked custard.

Hot sugar syrup and custard: sugar syrup is much hotter than boiling water and sticks to skin,

so keep the pan handle turned in and don't touch it. Don't let anything boil over, and keep children away from the hob.

Keeping gelato: gelato is made to be eaten fresh. Keep it covered at -18°C and eat within about 3 to 4 days (general guidance), as it turns icy faster than higher-fat ice cream. Stand it for 10 minutes before serving.

LEVEL 2 · FLAVOUR

Chocolate gelato

40 minutes plus chilling and churning | 4 portions | adding chocolate to a gelato base without lumps

A dark, dense, deeply chocolatey gelato. Whisk the cocoa with the sugar before it goes in the milk to avoid lumps, and melt the chocolate into the hot base.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

1 batch	fior di latte base (increase the sugar to 140 g)
40 g	cocoa powder, sifted
80 g	dark chocolate (about 70%), finely chopped
1 tsp	vanilla extract

1. Mix the cocoa with the sugar, then whisk in the cold slurry of cornflour and milk until smooth. Add the rest of the milk and the cream and heat, stirring, until thick (about 3 minutes).
2. Take off the heat, add the chopped chocolate and vanilla and stir until completely smooth. Strain.
3. Cool, chill overnight and churn or freeze with beating.

HOT BASE, ALLERGENS AND FREEZER

Cornflour base: the cornflour must be mixed with cold milk first, then simmered for about 2 minutes while stirring, or it tastes chalky. Stir right into the corners of the pan so it doesn't catch and burn.

Allergens: ice cream usually contains milk (cream, condensed milk), and often egg, nuts, peanuts, soy (in some chocolate and cookies) and wheat (cookies and cones). Check labels, and never serve a nut-containing ice cream to someone with a nut allergy without telling them. Coconut cream or oat cream can replace dairy cream in some recipes, but the texture changes.

Keeping gelato: gelato is made to be eaten fresh. Keep it covered at -18°C and eat within about 3 to 4 days (general guidance), as it turns icy faster than higher-fat ice cream. Stand it for 10 minutes before serving.

LEVEL 3 · NUT

Pistachio gelato

50 minutes plus chilling and churning | 4 portions | blending a nut paste into a gelato base

The classic gelato flavour. Real pistachio paste gives a pale brownish-green gelato with a deep roasted taste: bright green gelato usually means colouring. Whisk the paste into the hot custard until smooth, and strain to remove any gritty bits.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

1 batch	vanilla gelato custard (leave out the vanilla)
100 g	100% pistachio paste, unsalted (or 100 g shelled unsalted pistachios, ground very fine)
1 pinch	salt
1 tbsp	chopped pistachios, to serve

1. Make the custard as for the vanilla gelato (without the vanilla).
2. While it is still hot, whisk in the pistachio paste and salt until smooth. Strain through a fine sieve.
3. Cool in iced water, chill overnight and churn or freeze with beating. Scatter with chopped pistachios to serve.

> **NUTS, CUSTARD AND EGGS**
>
> **Nuts:** pistachios, almonds and other nuts (and pastes made from them) are serious allergens, and some products are made in factories that handle other nuts. Never serve them to a guest without asking, and make a nut-free swap when anyone has an allergy.
>
> **Cooking a custard base:** stir constantly over a low heat until it coats the back of a spoon, about **75 to 80°C**, and never above about 85°C or it scrambles (general guidance; see Cooking Skills: Ice Cream 1, chapter 3). Cool it quickly in iced water and chill overnight. Check current FSA advice if serving to pregnant women or other vulnerable people.
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> **Eggs:** use eggs with the British Lion mark and wash your hands after handling raw egg. This course never serves raw egg: custards are cooked, and the no-churn and sorbet recipes have none. Pregnant women, babies, older people and anyone unwell should check current FSA advice before eating egg dishes, even cooked custard.

> **Nut-free swap:** make fior di latte instead and serve it with a fruit sauce.

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

Fat level

Milk only or milk and cream.

1. Make two small batches of fior di latte, one with all milk and one with the cream as written. Freeze both.

Look for: The all-milk batch is lighter and icier; the creamier batch is silkier. Gelato sits between the two, so this shows why the cream is kept small.

EXPERIMENT

Serving temperature

Straight from the freezer or after standing.

1. Serve the same gelato straight from the freezer and after 10 minutes at room temperature.

Look for: Straight from the freezer it is hard and tastes of little. After standing it is soft, silky and much more flavourful. This is why gelato is served warmer.

EXPERIMENT

Cornflour or egg

Two bases.

1. Make small batches of vanilla gelato with the cornflour base and the custard base. Taste side by side.

Look for: The cornflour base is cleaner and whiter with a pure milk taste; the custard base is richer and more eggy. Neither is wrong.

EXPERIMENT

Machine or by hand

Churned or beaten.

1. If you have a machine, churn one batch and beat another by hand. Compare.

Look for: The machine batch is denser and smoother; the hand-beaten one is slightly icier. By hand is a good second best.

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Fior di latte				
Vanilla gelato				
Chocolate gelato				
Pistachio gelato				
Fat level				
Serving temperature				
Cornflour or egg				
Machine or hand				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Chalky taste	Cornflour not cooked enough	Simmer for 2 to 3 minutes while stirring
Lumpy base	Cornflour or cocoa not mixed smooth	Make a slurry with cold milk; strain
Icy gelato	Base not cold, or stored too long	Chill overnight; eat within a few days
Scrambled custard	Too hot	Cook lower; strain; whisk hard
Gritty pistachio	Paste not smooth	Whisk into hot custard and strain
Too hard	Straight from the freezer	Stand 10 minutes before serving

HOT MILK, EGGS, NUTS AND ALLERGENS

Cornflour base: the cornflour must be mixed with cold milk first, then simmered for about 2 minutes while stirring, or it tastes chalky. Stir right into the corners of the pan so it doesn't catch and burn.

Cooking a custard base: stir constantly over a low heat until it coats the back of a spoon, about **75 to 80°C**, and never above about 85°C or it scrambles (general guidance; see Cooking Skills: Ice Cream 1, chapter 3). Cool it quickly in iced water and chill overnight. Check current FSA advice if serving to pregnant women or other vulnerable people.

Nuts: pistachios, almonds and other nuts (and pastes made from them) are serious allergens, and some products are made in factories that handle other nuts. Never serve them to a guest without asking, and make a nut-free swap when anyone has an allergy.

Allergens: ice cream usually contains milk (cream, condensed milk), and often egg, nuts, peanuts, soy (in some chocolate and cookies) and wheat (cookies and cones). Check labels, and never serve a nut-containing ice cream to someone with a nut allergy without telling them. Coconut cream or oat cream can replace dairy cream in some recipes, but the texture changes.

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

☐ I can explain how gelato differs from ice cream.

☐ I can make a cornflour base and a custard base.

☐ I chill a base overnight before freezing.

☐ I serve gelato soft, not straight from the freezer.

☐ I can say which recipes contain nuts.

NEXT CHAPTER

Cooking Skills: Ice Cream 2, chapter 2 is Granita and Shaved Ice: light, icy crystals scraped with a fork.

Cooking Skills: Ice Cream 2

Chapter 2 · Granita and Shaved Ice

SKILL GOAL

Freeze and scrape four granitas and balance sugar and flavour so the crystals stay light.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

A granita is a **flavoured ice, scraped into crystals**. Unlike ice cream or sorbet it is not churned or blended smooth: it is frozen in a shallow tin and scraped with a fork, which makes a light, coarse, sparkling texture. It is simple and cheap and needs no machine.

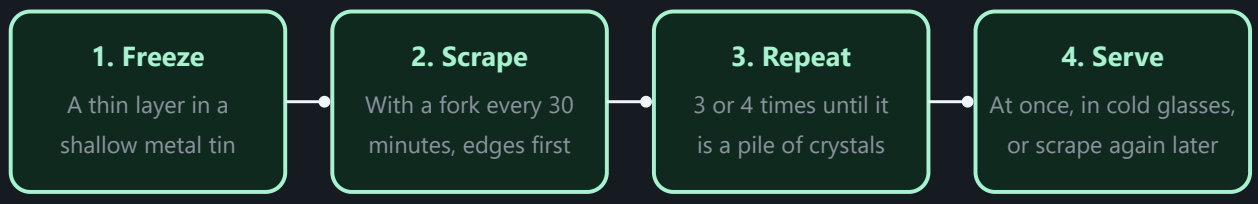


Figure 2. A granita is scraped, not churned. The fork makes the crystals.

The method

- **Use a shallow metal tin:** a thin layer (about 2 cm) freezes quickly and scrapes easily.
- **Sweeten it:** the sugar lowers the freezing point so the crystals stay light and not rock hard. About 100 g sugar to 500 ml of liquid is a good start.
- **Scrape every 30 minutes**, pulling the frozen edges into the middle with a fork.
- **Serve at once,** in cold glasses: a granita left alone turns into a block.
- **Strong flavours work best:** lemon, coffee, watermelon and mint hold up to freezing.

GRANITA	LIQUID	SUGAR (ROUGH GUIDE)	ACID
Lemon	100 ml juice and 400 ml water	100 g	Already sharp
Coffee	300 ml strong coffee	60 g	None needed
Watermelon	600 g fruit, blended	40 g	2 tbsp lime juice
Mint and lime	400 ml water, 100 ml lime juice	100 g	Lime juice

HOT SYRUP, FRUIT AND KEEPING

Sugar syrup: stir equal weights of sugar and water in a pan over a low heat until the sugar dissolves and simmer for 1 minute, then cool completely. Keep the pan handle turned in: hot syrup scalds badly.

Fruit: wash fresh fruit before use. If you use frozen fruit, check the pack: frozen berries should be heated until boiling and simmered for a minute before using cold (general UK advice).

Keeping granita: granita is at its best the day it is made and goes into a solid block if stored. It keeps for up to about 2 days in a covered tin at -18°C: scrape it up again with a fork before serving.

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

Lemon granita

20 minutes plus about 3 hours freezing | 4 portions | freezing and scraping a thin layer into crystals

A granita is the lightest of all frozen desserts: a pile of sweet, icy crystals, sharp and refreshing. A syrup is simply sugar dissolved in water, as for the sorbets in Cooking Skills: Ice Cream 1, chapter 4, but here it is scraped, not churned.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

100 ml	lemon juice (about 3 lemons)
100 g	caster sugar
400 ml	water, divided
1	strip of lemon zest

1. Heat the sugar with 100 ml of the water and the zest until dissolved, then simmer for 1 minute. Cool completely and take out the zest.
2. Stir in the lemon juice and the rest of the water. Taste: it should be sweet and sharp. Pour into a shallow tin so it is about 2 cm deep.
3. Freeze for **30 minutes**, until ice has formed at the edges. Scrape the edges into the middle with a fork. Return to the freezer.
4. Scrape every 30 minutes, 3 or 4 times in all (about **2 to 3 hours**), until you have a pile of fluffy crystals. Serve at once.

HOT SYRUP, THE TIN AND KEEPING

Sugar syrup: stir equal weights of sugar and water in a pan over a low heat until the sugar dissolves and simmer for 1 minute, then cool completely. Keep the pan handle turned in: hot syrup scalds badly.

The tin: use a shallow metal or freezer-safe plastic tin (a baking dish about 5 cm deep). Don't put a glass dish straight from the hot hob into the freezer, because it can crack.

Keeping granita: granita is at its best the day it is made and goes into a solid block if stored. It

keeps for up to about 2 days in a covered tin at -18°C: scrape it up again with a fork before serving.

LEVEL 1 · CLASSIC

Coffee granita

15 minutes plus about 3 hours freezing | 4 portions | scraping a granita from a dark, sweetened liquid

A Sicilian summer classic: bitter-sweet coffee ice with a spoonful of cream. Dissolve the sugar in the hot coffee, cool it fully, then freeze and scrape.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

300 ml	strong freshly made coffee (decaf if you like)
60 g	caster sugar
100 ml	double cream, softly whipped, to serve (optional)

1. Stir the sugar into the hot coffee until dissolved and cool completely. Taste: it should be a little too sweet.
2. Pour into a shallow tin, freeze for 30 minutes and scrape with a fork. Repeat every 30 minutes for about **3 hours**.
3. Serve in cold glasses with a spoonful of lightly whipped cream.

HOT COFFEE, CAFFEINE AND KEEPING

Coffee: use decaffeinated coffee for children and for evening dessert.

The tin: use a shallow metal or freezer-safe plastic tin (a baking dish about 5 cm deep). Don't put a glass dish straight from the hot hob into the freezer, because it can crack.

Keeping granita: granita is at its best the day it is made and goes into a solid block if stored. It keeps for up to about 2 days in a covered tin at -18°C: scrape it up again with a fork before serving.

LEVEL 2 · FRUIT

Watermelon granita

20 minutes plus about 3 hours freezing | 4 portions

using a watery fruit and balancing it with sugar and acid

Watermelon is mostly water, so it freezes into big, hard ice crystals unless it is sweetened and stirred. A little sugar and lime juice improve both taste and texture.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

600 g	ripe seedless watermelon flesh, cubed
2 tbsp	lime juice
40 g	caster sugar
3 tbsp	water

1. Heat the sugar with the water until dissolved. Cool. Blend the watermelon until completely smooth and press through a sieve to remove any seeds.
2. Stir in the cooled syrup and lime juice and taste. Pour into a shallow tin.
3. Freeze, scraping with a fork every 30 minutes for about **3 hours**.

> **FRUIT, HOT SYRUP AND KNIVES**
>
> **Fruit:** wash fresh fruit before use. If you use frozen fruit, check the pack: frozen berries should be heated until boiling and simmered for a minute before using cold (general UK advice).
>
> **Sugar syrup:** stir equal weights of sugar and water in a pan over a low heat until the sugar dissolves and simmer for 1 minute, then cool completely. Keep the pan handle turned in: hot syrup scalds badly.
>
> **Knife safety:** cut on a stable board (a damp cloth underneath) and tuck your guiding fingertips back (the claw). Cut a banana or mango in a way that gives a flat side to rest on.
>
> **Keeping granita:** granita is at its best the day it is made and goes into a solid block if stored. It keeps for up to about 2 days in a covered tin at -18°C: scrape it up again with a fork before serving.

LEVEL 3 · INFUSION

Mint and lime granita

30 minutes plus about 3 hours freezing | 4 portions | infusing a herb into the syrup

Mint steeped in hot syrup tastes clean and fresh with sharp lime. Infuse for 10 minutes only, then strain, or the mint turns bitter.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

1 handful	mint sprigs (about 10)
100 g	caster sugar
400 ml	water
100 ml	lime juice (about 4 limes)
1	lime, in thin slices, to serve

1. Heat the sugar and 200 ml of the water until dissolved. Take off the heat, add the mint, push it under and leave for **10 minutes**. Strain and cool.
2. Stir in the lime juice and the rest of the water. Taste and adjust.
3. Freeze in a shallow tin, scraping every 30 minutes for about **3 hours**. Serve with a slice of lime.

HOT SYRUP AND KEEPING

Sugar syrup: stir equal weights of sugar and water in a pan over a low heat until the sugar dissolves and simmer for 1 minute, then cool completely. Keep the pan handle turned in: hot syrup scalds badly.

The tin: use a shallow metal or freezer-safe plastic tin (a baking dish about 5 cm deep). Don't put a glass dish straight from the hot hob into the freezer, because it can crack.

Keeping granita: granita is at its best the day it is made and goes into a solid block if stored. It keeps for up to about 2 days in a covered tin at -18°C: scrape it up again with a fork before serving.

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

Sugar amount

Too little, right, too much.

1. Make three small batches of lemon granita with 50 g, 100 g and 150 g of sugar to the same amount of liquid. Freeze and scrape each the same way.

Look for: The low-sugar granita freezes into hard, coarse ice. The high-sugar one stays slushy. The middle makes light crystals. Write down what you prefer.

EXPERIMENT

Scraping frequency

Often or rarely.

1. Scrape one tin every 30 minutes and another only once after 2 hours.

Look for: The often-scraped granita is a light pile of crystals. The rarely scraped one is a hard block with a few big crystals. Scraping makes granita.

EXPERIMENT

Tin shape

Shallow or deep.

1. Freeze the same liquid in a shallow tin (2 cm) and in a deep bowl (6 cm). Scrape both.

Look for: The shallow tin freezes faster and scrapes into fine crystals. The deep bowl is still liquid in the middle for hours. Make the layer thin.

EXPERIMENT

Juice or purée

Clear or thick.

1. Make watermelon granita with strained juice and with purée left unstrained. Compare.

Look for: Clear juice makes clear, sparkling crystals. The purée gives a thicker, slushier, more fruity result. Both are good, in different ways.

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Lemon granita				
Coffee granita				
Watermelon granita				
Mint and lime granita				
Sugar amount				
Scraping frequency				
Tin shape				
Juice or purée				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Solid block	Not scraped, or left too long	Scrape every 30 minutes; or break up and fork it before serving
Slushy and won't freeze	Too much sugar	Add more liquid or lemon juice; refreeze

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Hard, coarse ice	Too little sugar	Add sugar next time
Bland flavour	Too weak or not enough acid	Use stronger juice and add lemon or lime
Bitter mint	Infused too long	Infuse for 10 minutes and strain
Cracked dish	Hot glass in the freezer	Cool the liquid first; use a metal tin

HOT SYRUP, COFFEE, FRUIT AND KEEPING

Sugar syrup: stir equal weights of sugar and water in a pan over a low heat until the sugar dissolves and simmer for 1 minute, then cool completely. Keep the pan handle turned in: hot syrup scalds badly.

Coffee: use decaffeinated coffee for children and for evening dessert.

Fruit: wash fresh fruit before use. If you use frozen fruit, check the pack: frozen berries should be heated until boiling and simmered for a minute before using cold (general UK advice).

Keeping granita: granita is at its best the day it is made and goes into a solid block if stored. It keeps for up to about 2 days in a covered tin at -18°C: scrape it up again with a fork before serving.

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

- ☐ I can freeze and scrape a granita.
- ☐ I can balance sugar so the crystals stay light.
- ☐ I can infuse mint or other herbs in a syrup.
- ☐ I serve granita at once in cold glasses.
- ☐ I know why a shallow tin matters.

NEXT CHAPTER

Cooking Skills: Ice Cream 2, chapter 3 is Semifreddo and Frozen Mousses: frozen desserts that need no churning.

Cooking Skills: Ice Cream 2

Chapter 3 · Semifreddo and Frozen Mousses

SKILL GOAL

Make four frozen desserts with a cooked meringue and whipped cream, with no churning and no raw egg.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

Semifreddo means **half cold**. It is a frozen dessert made without churning: **whipped cream folded into a cooked meringue**, then frozen in a tin. The air in the meringue and the cream stays in the mix as it freezes, so it never goes hard and icy, and it slices neatly.

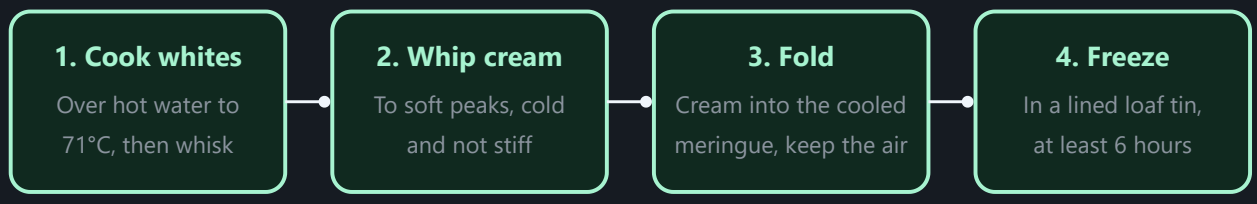


Figure 3. Semifreddo means half cold: a cooked meringue and whipped cream hold enough air to freeze soft without churning.

The method

- **Cook the whites** with the sugar over simmering water to about 71°C, so there is no raw egg. A thermometer is the easy way to be sure.
- **Whisk until stiff and cool** before folding: warm meringue melts the cream.
- **Whip the cream to soft peaks only,** so it folds in easily.
- **Fold gently** in thirds, keeping the air.
- **Line the tin** and freeze for at least 6 hours, then slice with a hot knife.

DESSERT	BASE	FREEZING TIME	SERVE
Semifreddo	Meringue and cream	6 hours	Sliced
Frozen mousse	Chocolate, cream, meringue	4 hours	In glasses
Parfait	Layers of semifreddo and fruit	4 hours	In glasses

COOKED MERINGUE, MELTED CHOCOLATE AND KEEPING

Cooked meringue: raw egg white is not used. Whisk the whites and sugar in a clean heatproof bowl over a pan of barely simmering water (the bowl must not touch the water) until the sugar has dissolved and the mixture reaches about **71°C** on a thermometer (general guidance), then whisk off the heat until stiff and cool. Use Lion-marked eggs, a spotlessly clean bowl, and keep steam and hot water away from your hands. Check current FSA advice if serving to pregnant women or other vulnerable people.

Melted chocolate: melt it gently in a bowl over (not touching) barely simmering water, or in short microwave bursts, stirring each time. Don't let water or steam get in or it seizes into a grainy lump, and let it cool until just warm before folding into cream.

Keeping: semifreddo and frozen mousse keep covered at -18°C for up to about 2 weeks (general guidance). Slice with a knife dipped in hot water, and serve after 5 to 10 minutes' standing. Don't refreeze what has melted.

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

Vanilla semifreddo

30 minutes plus 6 hours freezing | 6 portions | folding cream into a cooked meringue

'Half cold': a frozen dessert of cooked meringue and whipped cream that needs no churning. The meringue is heated until safe, so there is no raw egg, and the air in it keeps the semifreddo light and sliceable.

INGREDIENTS (6 PORTIONS)

3	Lion-marked egg whites
100 g	caster sugar
300 ml	double cream, well chilled
1 tsp	vanilla paste or extract
1	900 g loaf tin, lined

1. Line the tin (see the box). Put the whites and sugar in a clean heatproof bowl over a pan of barely simmering water and whisk until the sugar dissolves and the mixture reaches about **71°C**.
2. Take off the heat and whisk (an electric whisk helps) for 4 to 5 minutes until stiff, glossy and cool.
3. Whip the cream and vanilla to soft peaks. Fold a spoonful into the meringue to loosen it, then fold in the rest gently.
4. Pour into the tin, cover and freeze for **at least 6 hours** or overnight. Lift out and slice with a knife dipped in hot water.

COOKED MERINGUE, HOT WATER AND KEEPING

Cooked meringue: raw egg white is not used. Whisk the whites and sugar in a clean heatproof bowl over a pan of barely simmering water (the bowl must not touch the water) until the sugar has dissolved and the mixture reaches about **71°C** on a thermometer (general guidance), then whisk off the heat until stiff and cool. Use Lion-marked eggs, a spotlessly clean bowl, and keep steam and hot water away from your hands. Check current FSA advice if serving to pregnant women or other vulnerable people.

Lining the tin: line a 900 g loaf tin with two sheets of cling film or baking parchment, leaving the ends hanging over so you can lift the dessert out.

Keeping: semifreddo and frozen mousse keep covered at -18°C for up to about 2 weeks (general guidance). Slice with a knife dipped in hot water, and serve after 5 to 10 minutes' standing. Don't refreeze what has melted.

LEVEL 2 · RIPPLE

Raspberry ripple semifreddo

45 minutes plus 6 hours freezing | 6 portions | rippling a sauce through a light mixture

A thick, cold raspberry sauce rippled through the semifreddo gives pink streaks and a sharp contrast. As with ice cream, the sauce must be thick and chilled, and the ripple must be gentle.

INGREDIENTS (6 PORTIONS)

1 batch	vanilla semifreddo mixture
200 g	raspberries
2 tbsp	caster sugar

1. Simmer the raspberries and sugar for 5 to 6 minutes until thick, press through a sieve and chill for at least 1 hour.
2. Make the vanilla semifreddo mixture. Pour a third into the lined tin, drizzle over a third of the sauce, and repeat twice.
3. Draw a knife through the layers **once or twice**. Cover and freeze for at least 6 hours.

COOKED MERINGUE, HOT FRUIT AND KEEPING

Cooked meringue: raw egg white is not used. Whisk the whites and sugar in a clean heatproof bowl over a pan of barely simmering water (the bowl must not touch the water) until the sugar has dissolved and the mixture reaches about **71°C** on a thermometer (general guidance), then whisk off the heat until stiff and cool. Use Lion-marked eggs, a spotlessly clean bowl, and keep steam and hot water away from your hands. Check current FSA advice if serving to pregnant women or other vulnerable people.

Hot sugar syrup and custard: sugar syrup is much hotter than boiling water and sticks to skin, so keep the pan handle turned in and don't touch it. Don't let anything boil over, and keep children away from the hob.

Keeping: semifreddo and frozen mousse keep covered at -18°C for up to about 2 weeks (general guidance). Slice with a knife dipped in hot water, and serve after 5 to 10 minutes' standing. Don't refreeze what has melted.

LEVEL 2 · CHOCOLATE

Chocolate frozen mousse

40 minutes plus 4 hours freezing | 6 portions | folding melted chocolate into cream and meringue

A dense, creamy, deeply chocolatey frozen mousse. The chocolate must have cooled to just warm before folding in, or it melts the cream.

INGREDIENTS (6 PORTIONS)

150 g	dark chocolate (about 70%), chopped
250 ml	double cream, well chilled
2	Lion-marked egg whites
60 g	caster sugar
1 tsp	vanilla extract
1 pinch	salt

1. Melt the chocolate gently and cool until just warm. Make a cooked meringue from the whites and sugar and whisk until stiff and cool.
2. Whip the cream and vanilla to soft peaks. Fold a third of the cream into the chocolate to loosen it, then fold in the rest of the cream and then the meringue gently.
3. Spoon into six small glasses or ramekins and freeze for **at least 4 hours**. Stand for 5 minutes before serving.

CHOCOLATE, MERINGUE AND ALLERGENS

Melted chocolate: melt it gently in a bowl over (not touching) barely simmering water, or in short microwave bursts, stirring each time. Don't let water or steam get in or it seizes into a grainy lump, and let it cool until just warm before folding into cream.

Cooked meringue: raw egg white is not used. Whisk the whites and sugar in a clean heatproof bowl over a pan of barely simmering water (the bowl must not touch the water) until the sugar has dissolved and the mixture reaches about **71°C** on a thermometer (general guidance), then whisk off the heat until stiff and cool. Use Lion-marked eggs, a spotlessly clean bowl, and keep steam and hot water away from your hands. Check current FSA advice if serving to pregnant women or other vulnerable people.

Allergens: ice cream usually contains milk (cream, condensed milk), and often egg, nuts,

> peanuts, soy (in some chocolate and cookies) and wheat (cookies and cones). Check labels, and never serve a nut-containing ice cream to someone with a nut allergy without telling them. Coconut cream or oat cream can replace dairy cream in some recipes, but the texture changes.

LEVEL 3 · LAYERS

A layered frozen parfait

40 minutes plus 4 hours freezing | 4 portions | building layers that freeze cleanly

Layers of crushed biscuit, berries and semifreddo in a glass: a quick, impressive dessert. Freeze each glass for an hour between layers if you want clean stripes.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

1 batch	vanilla semifreddo mixture, or raspberry ripple mixture
8	plain biscuits (such as digestives), crushed
200 g	mixed berries, washed (or cooked and cooled)
1 tbsp	caster sugar
4	tall glasses

1. Toss the berries with the sugar and leave for 10 minutes. Put a spoonful of biscuit crumbs in the bottom of each glass.
2. Add a layer of semifreddo mixture, then berries, then more mixture. Freeze for 1 hour between layers if you want sharp lines.
3. Top with a few crumbs and a berry. Freeze for at least **4 hours**, then stand for 5 minutes before serving.

> **COOKED MERINGUE, FRUIT, ALLERGENS AND SMALL CHILDREN**
>
> **Cooked meringue:** raw egg white is not used. Whisk the whites and sugar in a clean heatproof bowl over a pan of barely simmering water (the bowl must not touch the water) until the sugar has dissolved and the mixture reaches about **71°C** on a thermometer (general guidance), then whisk off the heat until stiff and cool. Use Lion-marked eggs, a spotlessly clean bowl, and keep steam and hot water away from your hands. Check current FSA advice if serving to pregnant women or other vulnerable people.
>
> **Fruit:** wash fresh fruit before use. If you use frozen berries, heat them until boiling and simmer for a minute before using them cold, as is usual UK advice for frozen berries (general guidance: check the pack).
>
> **Allergens:** ice cream usually contains milk (cream, condensed milk), and often egg, nuts, peanuts, soy (in some chocolate and cookies) and wheat (cookies and cones). Check labels, and never serve a nut-containing ice cream to someone with a nut allergy without telling them.

> Coconut cream or oat cream can replace dairy cream in some recipes, but the texture changes.
>
> **Small children:** hard lumps, frozen fruit pieces and nuts can be a choking risk for very young children, so keep pieces small and sit with them while they eat.

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

Meringue temperature

Warm or cool when folded.

1. Fold the cream into a meringue straight after whisking while still slightly warm, and into one that has cooled completely.

Look for: The warm meringue melts the cream and makes a thinner, heavier mixture. The cool one stays light and fluffy. Always cool it.

EXPERIMENT

Folding speed

Gentle or hard.

1. Fold one batch gently with a spatula and stir another vigorously.

Look for: The gently folded batch is tall and airy; the stirred one is flat, dense and wet. Fold, don't stir.

EXPERIMENT

Freezing time

4, 6 or 12 hours.

1. Test a small portion of the semifreddo after 4, 6 and 12 hours.

Look for: At 4 hours it is soft and won't slice; at 6 it slices; at 12 it is firm and best stood a few minutes. Plan overnight freezing.

EXPERIMENT

Slicing temperature

Cold knife or hot.

1. Slice the semifreddo with a dry cold knife and with one dipped in hot water and wiped dry.

Look for: The hot knife makes a clean, smooth cut; the cold one drags and cracks. Dip and wipe between slices.

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Vanilla semifreddo				
Raspberry ripple				
Chocolate frozen mousse				
Layered parfait				
Meringue temperature				
Folding speed				
Freezing time				
Slicing				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Flat, heavy semifreddo	Over-mixed or warm meringue	Cool the meringue; fold gently

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Icy	Whisked too little, or stored too long	Whisk until stiff; eat within 2 weeks
Grainy chocolate	Chocolate seized	Keep water away; start again with fresh chocolate
Meringue won't whip	Greasy bowl or yolk in the whites	Use a spotless bowl; separate carefully
Hard to slice	Too cold or a cold knife	Stand 5 to 10 minutes; use a hot knife
Sauce disappeared	Too thin or warm	Thicken and chill; ripple once or twice

COOKED MERINGUE, CHOCOLATE AND KEEPING

Cooked meringue: raw egg white is not used. Whisk the whites and sugar in a clean heatproof bowl over a pan of barely simmering water (the bowl must not touch the water) until the sugar has dissolved and the mixture reaches about **71°C** on a thermometer (general guidance), then whisk off the heat until stiff and cool. Use Lion-marked eggs, a spotlessly clean bowl, and keep steam and hot water away from your hands. Check current FSA advice if serving to pregnant women or other vulnerable people.

Melted chocolate: melt it gently in a bowl over (not touching) barely simmering water, or in short microwave bursts, stirring each time. Don't let water or steam get in or it seizes into a grainy lump, and let it cool until just warm before folding into cream.

Keeping: semifreddo and frozen mousse keep covered at -18°C for up to about 2 weeks (general guidance). Slice with a knife dipped in hot water, and serve after 5 to 10 minutes' standing. Don't refreeze what has melted.

Allergens: ice cream usually contains milk (cream, condensed milk), and often egg, nuts, peanuts, soy (in some chocolate and cookies) and wheat (cookies and cones). Check labels, and never serve a nut-containing ice cream to someone with a nut allergy without telling them. Coconut cream or oat cream can replace dairy cream in some recipes, but the texture changes.

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

☐ I can cook egg whites and sugar to a safe temperature.

☐ I can whip cream to soft peaks and fold it in gently.

☐ I can fold melted chocolate into a mousse.

☐ I can line a tin and slice a frozen dessert cleanly.

☐ I know there is no raw egg in these recipes.

NEXT CHAPTER

Cooking Skills: Ice Cream 2, chapter 4 is Ice Cream Cakes and Frozen Bakes: layered cakes, a frozen cheesecake and baked Alaska.

Cooking Skills: Ice Cream 2

Chapter 4 · Ice Cream Cakes and Frozen Bakes

SKILL GOAL

Build four layered frozen desserts, unmould them cleanly and seal a baked Alaska with a cooked meringue.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

Ice cream cakes are **layered frozen desserts**: biscuit or sponge, ice cream, sauce and sometimes meringue, built in a tin and frozen. The skills are building in layers, freezing hard between them, and unmoulding cleanly. The ice cream itself comes from Cooking Skills: Ice Cream 1.

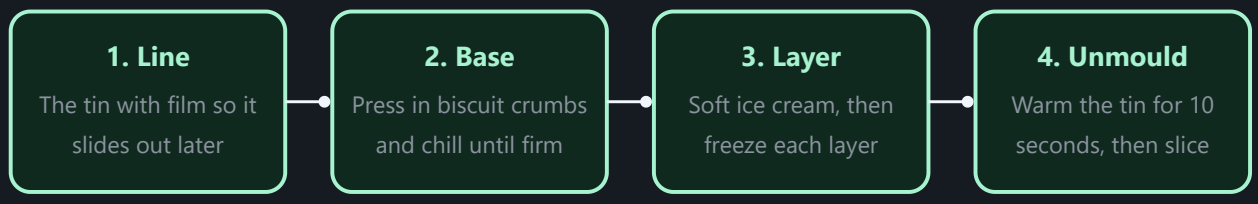


Figure 4. Ice cream cakes are built in layers and frozen hard between each one.

The rules

- **Line the tin** with cling film so the cake lifts out.
- **Soften the ice cream** for 10 to 15 minutes, spread it quickly and put it back in the freezer. Work in small batches so it doesn't melt.
- **Freeze between layers** (30 to 60 minutes) so they don't blend.
- **Chill a crumb base until hard** before adding ice cream.
- **Slice with a hot, dry knife,** wiping it between cuts.

DESSERT	BASE	FREEZE	KEEPS
Sandwich cake	Biscuits and ice cream	4 hours	About 2 weeks
Biscuit-base cake	Buttery crumbs	6 hours	About 2 weeks
Frozen cheesecake	Crumbs and cream cheese	6 hours	About 2 weeks
Baked Alaska	Sponge, ice cream, meringue	4 hours then bake	Serve at once

SOFTENING, UNMOULDING, HOT OVEN AND KEEPING

Softening ice cream: stand it out of the freezer for 10 to 15 minutes until it is spreadable but not melted, and use it straight away. Don't refreeze ice cream that has melted completely, and keep the rest in the freezer.

Unmoulding frozen desserts: run a thin knife round the edge, then hold the outside of the tin in a bowl of hot water or wrap a hot, wrung-out cloth round it for 10 to 15 seconds. Don't use boiling water or a naked flame, and keep your fingers away from the knife blade.

Hot oven: use oven gloves, open the door away from your face, and don't leave the oven unattended while the meringue browns: it goes from golden to burnt in under a minute. Don't use a cracked or very cold glass dish in a hot oven.

Keeping: ice cream cakes and frozen cheesecake keep well wrapped at -18°C for up to about 2 weeks (general guidance). Slice with a hot knife and put the rest back at once. Don't refreeze what has melted. Baked Alaska is best served within minutes of baking and cannot be stored.

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

Ice cream sandwich cake

25 minutes plus 4 hours freezing | 8 slices | layering softened ice cream and biscuits

The easiest ice cream cake: layers of biscuit and two flavours of softened ice cream in a loaf tin, frozen until firm. Build it a layer at a time, and press down gently.

INGREDIENTS (8 PORTIONS)

12	plain or chocolate sandwich biscuits or thin wafers
750 ml	ice cream (two flavours, softened)
100 ml	chocolate sauce (optional)
1	900 g loaf tin, lined with cling film

1. Line the tin with two sheets of cling film, leaving the ends overhanging. Soften the first flavour (see the box) and spread half in the bottom of the tin.
2. Add a layer of biscuits, pressed down gently. Freeze for **30 minutes** if the ice cream is soft.
3. Add the second flavour and another layer of biscuits, then the rest of the first flavour, drizzling over the chocolate sauce. Smooth the top and cover with film.
4. Freeze for **at least 4 hours**. Lift out by the film, remove it and slice with a hot, dry knife.

SOFTENING ICE CREAM, UNMOULDING AND KEEPING

Softening ice cream: stand it out of the freezer for 10 to 15 minutes until it is spreadable but not melted, and use it straight away. Don't refreeze ice cream that has melted completely, and keep the rest in the freezer.

Unmoulding frozen desserts: run a thin knife round the edge, then hold the outside of the tin in a bowl of hot water or wrap a hot, wrung-out cloth round it for 10 to 15 seconds. Don't use boiling water or a naked flame, and keep your fingers away from the knife blade.

Keeping: ice cream cakes and frozen cheesecake keep well wrapped at -18°C for up to about 2 weeks (general guidance). Slice with a hot knife and put the rest back at once. Don't refreeze what has melted. Baked Alaska is best served within minutes of baking and cannot be stored.

Allergens: ice cream usually contains milk (cream, condensed milk), and often egg, nuts, peanuts, soy (in some chocolate and cookies) and wheat (cookies and cones). Check labels, and

never serve a nut-containing ice cream to someone with a nut allergy without telling them. Coconut cream or oat cream can replace dairy cream in some recipes, but the texture changes.

LEVEL 2 · CRUMB BASE

A biscuit-base ice cream cake

35 minutes plus 6 hours freezing | 10 slices | making a crisp base and unmoulding a tall cake

A buttery biscuit base under a deep layer of ice cream, topped with sauce. Chill the base until it is hard before adding the ice cream, or it will turn soft.

INGREDIENTS (10 PORTIONS)

200 g	digestive biscuits, crushed
90 g	butter, melted
1 litre	ice cream (a favourite flavour), softened
150 ml	chocolate or caramel sauce, chilled
1	20 cm springform tin, lined

1. Mix the crushed biscuits with the melted butter and press firmly into the base of the lined springform tin. Chill for 30 minutes until hard.
2. Soften the ice cream for 10 to 15 minutes and spread evenly over the base, smoothing the top. Freeze for 1 hour.
3. Spread the chilled sauce over the top. Cover and freeze for **at least 6 hours**.
4. To unmould, run a knife round the edge, warm the outside of the tin with a hot cloth for 10 seconds and release the clip.

SOFTENING, SPRINGFORM TIN AND KEEPING

Softening ice cream: stand it out of the freezer for 10 to 15 minutes until it is spreadable but not melted, and use it straight away. Don't refreeze ice cream that has melted completely, and keep the rest in the freezer.

Springform tins: line the base and sides, and run a hot knife round the edge before unclipping. Don't force the clip: a warm cloth round the tin loosens it.

Unmoulding frozen desserts: run a thin knife round the edge, then hold the outside of the tin in a bowl of hot water or wrap a hot, wrung-out cloth round it for 10 to 15 seconds. Don't use boiling water or a naked flame, and keep your fingers away from the knife blade.

Keeping: ice cream cakes and frozen cheesecake keep well wrapped at -18°C for up to about 2

> weeks (general guidance). Slice with a hot knife and put the rest back at once. Don't refreeze what has melted. Baked Alaska is best served within minutes of baking and cannot be stored.

LEVEL 2 · CHEESECAKE

Frozen berry cheesecake

40 minutes plus 6 hours freezing | 8 slices | folding whipped cream into a cream cheese base

A no-bake cheesecake you freeze instead of chilling. It is richer and denser than ice cream and slices well. Beat the cream cheese smooth before folding in the cream.

INGREDIENTS (8 PORTIONS)

150 g	digestive biscuits, crushed
70 g	butter, melted
300 g	full-fat cream cheese
150 g	sweetened condensed milk
250 ml	double cream, whipped to soft peaks
1 tsp	lemon juice
200 g	berries, simmered with 1 tbsp sugar for 5 minutes and cooled

1. Mix the crushed biscuits and butter, press into a lined 20 cm tin and chill for 30 minutes.
2. Beat the cream cheese, condensed milk and lemon juice until smooth. Fold in the whipped cream gently.
3. Pour onto the base, then spoon over the cooled berry sauce and ripple once with a knife. Cover and freeze for **at least 6 hours**.
4. Stand for 10 minutes before slicing with a hot knife.

CREAM CHEESE, HOT FRUIT, UNMOULDING AND KEEPING

Cream cheese: use full-fat cream cheese straight from the fridge for a firm set. Check the label for allergens (milk) and check any added ingredients.

Hot sugar syrup and custard: sugar syrup is much hotter than boiling water and sticks to skin, so keep the pan handle turned in and don't touch it. Don't let anything boil over, and keep children away from the hob.

Unmoulding frozen desserts: run a thin knife round the edge, then hold the outside of the tin in a bowl of hot water or wrap a hot, wrung-out cloth round it for 10 to 15 seconds. Don't use

boiling water or a naked flame, and keep your fingers away from the knife blade.

Keeping: ice cream cakes and frozen cheesecake keep well wrapped at -18°C for up to about 2 weeks (general guidance). Slice with a hot knife and put the rest back at once. Don't refreeze what has melted. Baked Alaska is best served within minutes of baking and cannot be stored.

LEVEL 3 · BAKED

Baked Alaska

50 minutes plus 4 hours freezing | 6 slices | sealing ice cream in meringue and browning it quickly

Ice cream under a hot oven: the meringue is a thick insulator and browns in minutes, so the ice cream stays frozen. The meringue must cover every gap, and the ice cream must be frozen rock hard. Make the meringue from cooked whites.

INGREDIENTS (6 PORTIONS)

1	thin sponge or plain cake base, about 18 cm across
500 ml	firm ice cream, frozen hard (for example vanilla, or vanilla and raspberry)
4	Lion-marked egg whites
200 g	caster sugar
1	heatproof plate or baking tray lined with parchment

1. Shape the ice cream into a dome slightly smaller than the sponge, using a lined bowl. Freeze solid for **at least 4 hours**. Put the sponge on the plate and the frozen ice cream on top, then return to the freezer.
2. Make a cooked meringue from the whites and sugar (see the box) and whisk until stiff and glossy.
3. Heat the oven to 220°C (200°C fan). Take the dessert from the freezer and cover completely with meringue, right down to the plate, with no gaps. Make swirls with a spoon.
4. Bake for **3 to 4 minutes**, until the peaks are golden. Serve at once, slicing with a hot knife.

COOKED MERINGUE, HOT OVEN AND SERVING

Cooked meringue: raw egg white is not used. Whisk the whites and sugar in a clean heatproof bowl over a pan of barely simmering water (the bowl must not touch the water) until the sugar has dissolved and the mixture reaches about **71°C** on a thermometer (general guidance), then whisk off the heat until stiff and cool. Use Lion-marked eggs, a spotlessly clean bowl, and keep steam and hot water away from your hands. Check current FSA advice if serving to pregnant women or other vulnerable people.

Hot oven: use oven gloves, open the door away from your face, and don't leave the oven

unattended while the meringue browns: it goes from golden to burnt in under a minute. Don't use a cracked or very cold glass dish in a hot oven.

Keeping: ice cream cakes and frozen cheesecake keep well wrapped at -18°C for up to about 2 weeks (general guidance). Slice with a hot knife and put the rest back at once. Don't refreeze what has melted. Baked Alaska is best served within minutes of baking and cannot be stored.

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

Layer freezing time

Freeze between layers or not.

1. Build two small layered cakes, freezing each layer for 30 minutes in one and building the other in one go.

Look for: The layered cake has clean stripes; the other blends into a marbled mess. Freezing between layers keeps them neat.

EXPERIMENT

Base crispness

More or less butter.

1. Press crumb bases with 50 g, 90 g and 120 g of butter per 200 g of biscuits, chill and add ice cream.

Look for: Too little butter crumbles; too much goes greasy and hard. About 90 g to 200 g holds and stays crisp.

EXPERIMENT

Unmoulding

Warm or cold.

1. Unmould one cake by warming the tin with a hot cloth for 10 seconds, and try to lift another straight from the freezer.

Look for: The warmed one slides out cleanly. The cold one sticks and tears. A short warming makes all the difference.

EXPERIMENT

Meringue sealing

Full or gappy.

1. Cover one small baked Alaska completely with meringue and leave a gap in another. Bake both for 3 minutes.

Look for: The sealed one keeps its ice cream firm. The gappy one leaks melted ice cream from the gap. Cover every part.

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Sandwich cake				
Biscuit-base cake				
Frozen cheesecake				
Baked Alaska				
Layer freezing				
Base crispness				
Unmoulding				
Meringue sealing				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Layers blend together	Not frozen between layers	Freeze 30 to 60 minutes between layers
Soggy base	Base not chilled before the ice cream	Chill the crumbs until hard
Stuck in the tin	Not lined or not warmed	Line with film; warm briefly with a hot cloth
Melted ice cream in Alaska	Not frozen hard, or meringue gaps	Freeze solid; cover completely
Soft cheesecake	Not frozen long enough	Freeze for at least 6 hours
Crumbly slices	Cut with a cold knife	Use a hot, dry knife

HOT OVEN, COOKED MERINGUE AND KEEPING

Hot oven: use oven gloves, open the door away from your face, and don't leave the oven unattended while the meringue browns: it goes from golden to burnt in under a minute. Don't use a cracked or very cold glass dish in a hot oven.

Cooked meringue: raw egg white is not used. Whisk the whites and sugar in a clean heatproof bowl over a pan of barely simmering water (the bowl must not touch the water) until the sugar has dissolved and the mixture reaches about **71°C** on a thermometer (general guidance), then whisk off the heat until stiff and cool. Use Lion-marked eggs, a spotlessly clean bowl, and keep steam and hot water away from your hands. Check current FSA advice if serving to pregnant women or other vulnerable people.

Unmoulding frozen desserts: run a thin knife round the edge, then hold the outside of the tin in a bowl of hot water or wrap a hot, wrung-out cloth round it for 10 to 15 seconds. Don't use boiling water or a naked flame, and keep your fingers away from the knife blade.

Keeping: ice cream cakes and frozen cheesecake keep well wrapped at -18°C for up to about 2 weeks (general guidance). Slice with a hot knife and put the rest back at once. Don't refreeze what has melted. Baked Alaska is best served within minutes of baking and cannot be stored.

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

☐ I can build a layered frozen dessert and freeze between layers.

☐ I can make a crisp crumb base.

☐ I can unmould a frozen cake cleanly.

☐ I can make a cooked meringue and seal it round ice cream.

☐ I slice frozen desserts with a hot, dry knife.

NEXT CHAPTER

Cooking Skills: Ice Cream 2, chapter 5 is Sauces, Brittle and Toppings: cooking sugar to the right stage.

Cooking Skills: Ice Cream 2

Chapter 5 · Sauces, Brittle and Toppings

SKILL GOAL

Cook four toppings, from a simple fruit sauce to a true caramel, and read the stages of sugar.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

A great sauce or crunchy topping turns a scoop into a dessert. The skill in this chapter is **cooking sugar to the right stage**: a simple fruit sauce, a gently simmered chocolate sauce, a toasty butterscotch, and a true caramel set into brittle. Each step up gets hotter, and the colour of the sugar tells you where you are.



Figure 5. Sugar changes fast: the colour is the clock, and a few seconds is the difference between amber and burnt.

The method

- **Use a heavy-based pan** so the sugar cooks evenly and doesn't scorch in one spot. A pale pan lets you see the colour.
- **Watch the colour, not the clock.** Sugar goes from amber to burnt in seconds, and carries on cooking in the pan after it comes off the heat.
- **Have everything ready first:** the warm cream, the lined tray, the nuts. There is no time to hunt for things once the sugar is ready.

- **Add warm cream slowly, off the heat,** and stand back, because caramel spits.
- **Taste at the end.** A pinch of salt makes caramel taste sweeter and deeper.

TOPPING	COOKED TO	TEXTURE	BEST ON
Raspberry coulis	A simmer, then sieved	Thin, sharp, runny	Vanilla, semifreddo, cheesecake
Hot fudge	A gentle simmer	Thick, glossy, sets a little	Vanilla, nut or coffee ice cream
Butterscotch	Toffee-brown, then cream	Soft, runny, sticky	Banana, vanilla, chocolate
Brittle and praline	Deep amber, set hard	Hard, crunchy shards	Any smooth ice cream

HOT SUGAR, CREAM AND CHILDREN

Caramel is the hottest thing in the kitchen: melted sugar reaches well over 160°C, far hotter than boiling water, and it sticks to skin and burns badly. Use a heavy-based pan, keep the handle turned in, stand back when adding cream (it spits and bubbles up hard), and keep a bowl of cold water nearby to run over any burn. Nothing leaves the pan until it has cooled, and children should not help with this chapter's sugar work.

Adding cream: warm the cream in a small pan or the microwave first and pour it in slowly, with the pan off the heat. Cold cream makes the caramel seize into a lump and spit; if it does, return it to a low heat and stir until it melts again.

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

Raspberry coulis

15 minutes plus cooling | 6 portions | cooking and sieving a fruit sauce

A coulis is a smooth, sharp fruit sauce, the simplest and brightest topping for any ice cream, semifreddo or cake. No sugar-boiling is needed, just gentle heat and a sieve.

INGREDIENTS (6 PORTIONS)

250 g	raspberries (fresh, or frozen and boiled as in the box)
3 tbsp	icing sugar, or to taste
1 tsp	lemon juice

1. Simmer the raspberries with 2 tablespoons of the sugar and 2 tablespoons of water for **5 minutes**, until they collapse.
2. Press through a fine sieve into a bowl with the back of a spoon, scraping the underside, and throw away the seeds.
3. Stir in the lemon juice and taste. Add more sugar a teaspoon at a time. Cool, then chill. It thickens as it cools.

> **HOT FRUIT AND KEEPING**
>
> **Fruit:** wash fresh fruit before use. If you use frozen berries, heat them until boiling and simmer for a minute before using them cold, as is usual UK advice for frozen berries (general guidance: check the pack).
>
> **Hot sugar syrup and custard:** sugar syrup is much hotter than boiling water and sticks to skin, so keep the pan handle turned in and don't touch it. Don't let anything boil over, and keep children away from the hob.
>
> **Keeping:** cooled sauces keep in a clean, covered jar in the fridge for about a week (coulis for about 3 days) (general guidance). Reheat gently until warm, not boiling, and use a clean spoon each time.

LEVEL 2 · CHOCOLATE

Hot fudge sauce

15 minutes | 6 portions | melting sugar, cream and chocolate into a smooth sauce

A glossy, thick chocolate sauce that sets slightly on cold ice cream. It is made by simmering rather than caramelising, so it is easier than butterscotch, but still hot.

INGREDIENTS (6 PORTIONS)

100 g	dark chocolate (about 70%), chopped
150 ml	double cream
2 tbsp	golden syrup
50 g	light brown sugar
20 g	butter
1 pinch	salt

1. Put the cream, golden syrup, brown sugar, butter and salt in a small heavy pan and stir over a low heat until the sugar dissolves.
2. Simmer gently for **3 minutes**, stirring, without letting it boil hard.
3. Take off the heat, add the chocolate and stir until completely smooth. Serve warm.

HOT SUGAR, CHOCOLATE AND KEEPING

Caramel is the hottest thing in the kitchen: melted sugar reaches well over 160°C, far hotter than boiling water, and it sticks to skin and burns badly. Use a heavy-based pan, keep the handle turned in, stand back when adding cream (it spits and bubbles up hard), and keep a bowl of cold water nearby to run over any burn. Nothing leaves the pan until it has cooled, and children should not help with this chapter's sugar work.

Keeping: cooled sauces keep in a clean, covered jar in the fridge for about a week (coulis for about 3 days) (general guidance). Reheat gently until warm, not boiling, and use a clean spoon each time.

Allergens: ice cream usually contains milk (cream, condensed milk), and often egg, nuts, peanuts, soy (in some chocolate and cookies) and wheat (cookies and cones). Check labels, and

never serve a nut-containing ice cream to someone with a nut allergy without telling them. Coconut cream or oat cream can replace dairy cream in some recipes, but the texture changes.

LEVEL 2 · CARAMEL

Butterscotch sauce

20 minutes | 6 portions | cooking butter and sugar to a deep colour, then adding cream

Butterscotch is brown sugar cooked with butter, then loosened with cream. Because brown sugar already has colour, watch the smell and the bubbles more than the colour: it should smell toasty, not burnt.

INGREDIENTS (6 PORTIONS)

100 g	light brown sugar
50 g	butter
150 ml	double cream
1 tbsp	golden syrup
1 tsp	vanilla extract
1 pinch	sea salt

1. Warm the cream in a small pan and keep it nearby. Melt the butter, brown sugar and golden syrup together in a heavy pan over a low heat, stirring until smooth.
2. Let it bubble gently for **3 to 4 minutes** without stirring much, until it smells of toffee and darkens slightly.
3. Take the pan off the heat, stand back and pour in the warm cream slowly, stirring. Stir in the vanilla and salt and cool a little before serving.

HOT CARAMEL, CREAM AND KEEPING

Caramel is the hottest thing in the kitchen: melted sugar reaches well over 160°C, far hotter than boiling water, and it sticks to skin and burns badly. Use a heavy-based pan, keep the handle turned in, stand back when adding cream (it spits and bubbles up hard), and keep a bowl of cold water nearby to run over any burn. Nothing leaves the pan until it has cooled, and children should not help with this chapter's sugar work.

Adding cream: warm the cream in a small pan or the microwave first and pour it in slowly, with the pan off the heat. Cold cream makes the caramel seize into a lump and spit; if it does, return it to a low heat and stir until it melts again.

Keeping: cooled sauces keep in a clean, covered jar in the fridge for about a week (coulis for

about 3 days) (general guidance). Reheat gently until warm, not boiling, and use a clean spoon each time.

LEVEL 3 · HOT SUGAR

Nut brittle and praline

30 minutes plus cooling | 10 portions | cooking sugar to a caramel and setting it hard

A true caramel: sugar and water cooked until amber, mixed with toasted nuts and poured thin to set hard. Broken in shards it tops sundaes; crushed fine it is praline, to fold into ice cream (see Cooking Skills: Ice Cream 1, chapter 6).

INGREDIENTS (10 PORTIONS)

150 g	caster sugar
50 ml	water
100 g	unsalted nuts (for example almonds or hazelnuts), toasted
1 pinch	salt
1	baking tray lined with baking parchment

1. Toast the nuts in a dry pan until golden and lightly fragrant, tip onto a plate, and have the lined tray ready beside the hob.
2. Put the sugar and water in a heavy pan over a medium heat. Stir **only until the sugar dissolves**, then stop and swirl the pan gently, with no stirring.
3. Cook for **6 to 8 minutes** until it turns a deep amber. Take it off the heat at once, stir in the nuts and salt in two or three strokes and pour onto the tray.
4. Tilt to spread thin if needed. Leave it to set for at least 30 minutes, untouched. Break into shards, or crush with a rolling pin for praline.

VERY HOT CARAMEL, NUTS AND KEEPING

Caramel is the hottest thing in the kitchen: melted sugar reaches well over 160°C, far hotter than boiling water, and it sticks to skin and burns badly. Use a heavy-based pan, keep the handle turned in, stand back when adding cream (it spits and bubbles up hard), and keep a bowl of cold water nearby to run over any burn. Nothing leaves the pan until it has cooled, and children should not help with this chapter's sugar work.

Don't stir sugar and water: once the sugar has dissolved, leave the pan alone and swirl it gently. Stirring can make the sugar crystallise into a grainy mass. Brush down the sides of the pan with a wet pastry brush if crystals form.

Nuts: pistachios, almonds and other nuts (and pastes made from them) are serious allergens, and some products are made in factories that handle other nuts. Never serve them to a guest without asking, and make a nut-free swap when anyone has an allergy.

Nut-free swap: make the brittle with pumpkin and sunflower seeds instead of nuts (check the labels for nut traces and sesame), or use plain caramel poured thin and broken into shards. Praline is only for nut-eaters.

Brittle and praline: once cold and hard, store in an airtight tin with a sheet of baking parchment between layers: damp air makes brittle sticky. It keeps for about 2 weeks. Break it with a rolling pin inside a tea towel, and keep the pieces small for small children, as sharp shards and nuts are a choking risk.

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

Cooking time and colour

Pale, amber or dark.

1. Make three tiny batches of the butterscotch, cooked for 2, 4 and 6 minutes before adding the cream. Taste each when cool.

Look for: The short one is mild and milky; the middle one is toffee-rich; the long one is dark and slightly bitter. Write down which you prefer, and how the smell changed.

EXPERIMENT

Cream hot or cold

Warm cream, then cold.

1. Add warm cream to one small batch of caramel and cold cream to another, off the heat, standing back.

Look for: The warm cream goes in smoothly; the cold cream makes the caramel spit and seize into a lump. This is why the cream is warmed first. Take extra care with this test.

EXPERIMENT

Sauce thickness

Hot, warm and cold.

1. Spoon the same fudge sauce onto ice cream when hot, when warm and after it has chilled.

Look for: Hot, it melts the ice cream into a puddle; warm, it coats well; cold, it is thick and stiff. Warm is usually best.

EXPERIMENT

Brittle thickness

Thin or thick.

1. Pour one tray of brittle as thin as you can and another thick, and break both when set.

Look for: The thin brittle snaps into crisp, light shards; the thick one is hard to bite and can be tooth-breaking. Thin is better on ice cream.

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Raspberry coulis				
Hot fudge				
Butterscotch				
Brittle and praline				
Cooking time and colour				
Cream hot or cold				
Sauce thickness				

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Brittle thickness				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Grainy sugar	Stirred after it dissolved, or crystals on the pan	Swirl, don't stir; brush the sides with water
Burnt, bitter caramel	Cooked too long	Start again; take it off at deep amber
Caramel seized into a lump	Cold cream	Warm the cream; return to a low heat and stir
Sauce too thin	Under-reduced, or served hot	Simmer a minute longer or chill it
Sauce too thick	Over-cooked or cold	Warm gently with a spoonful of cream
Sticky brittle	Damp air	Store airtight with parchment; make on a dry day

HOT SUGAR, NUTS AND KEEPING

Caramel is the hottest thing in the kitchen: melted sugar reaches well over 160°C, far hotter than boiling water, and it sticks to skin and burns badly. Use a heavy-based pan, keep the handle turned in, stand back when adding cream (it spits and bubbles up hard), and keep a bowl of cold water nearby to run over any burn. Nothing leaves the pan until it has cooled, and children should not help with this chapter's sugar work.

Nuts: pistachios, almonds and other nuts (and pastes made from them) are serious allergens, and some products are made in factories that handle other nuts. Never serve them to a guest without asking, and make a nut-free swap when anyone has an allergy.

Keeping: cooled sauces keep in a clean, covered jar in the fridge for about a week (coulis for about 3 days) (general guidance). Reheat gently until warm, not boiling, and use a clean spoon each time.

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

☐ I can make a coulis and sieve it smooth.

☐ I can tell caramel stages by colour and smell.

☐ I always warm the cream and stand back.

☐ I can set brittle thin and store it dry.

☐ I know children should not help with hot sugar.

NEXT CHAPTER

Cooking Skills: Ice Cream 2, chapter 6 is Cones, Cups and Wafers: edible containers to put it all in.

Cooking Skills: Ice Cream 2

Chapter 6 · Cones, Cups and Wafers

SKILL GOAL

Make four edible containers and shape thin wafers before they set.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

The vessel is part of the dessert. This chapter makes **edible containers**: a chocolate shell, a crisp meringue nest, a lacy tuile cup and a rolled waffle cone. The same two ideas turn up in every one: **thin and even**, and **shape it before it sets**.

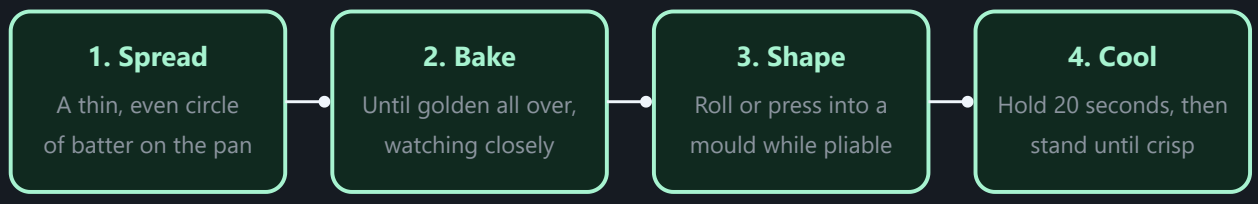


Figure 6. A wafer is soft for only a few seconds: spread thin, bake golden, shape quickly, cool in the mould.

The method

- **Spread thin.** A thick patch stays soft and a thin patch burns, so make every wafer an even circle.
- **Bake until golden all over.** A pale wafer goes soft; a dark one tastes bitter.
- **Work fast, and bake a few at a time**, so each is still pliable when you shape it.
- **Cool in the mould,** so the shape sets crisp as the wafer cools.
- **Fill at the last moment,** with cold cups and very cold ice cream.

CONTAINER	MADE FROM	METHOD	FILL WITH
Chocolate cup	Melted chocolate	Painted in a case, chilled	Mousse, ice cream, berries
Meringue nest	Cooked meringue	Baked low and slow	Ice cream, fruit, coulis
Tuile cup	Batter of egg white, sugar, flour	Baked thin, moulded warm	Sorbet, gelato
Waffle cone	Batter of egg, sugar, flour	Baked thin, rolled warm	A scoop of anything

HOT WAFERS, HOT IRON AND KEEPING

Hot wafers burn fingers: a freshly baked wafer is much hotter than it looks and is very soft for only a few seconds. Use a clean, dry tea towel or oven gloves to hold it, wait about 20 seconds so it is cool enough to touch, then shape it quickly. Never press it with bare fingers straight from the pan, and keep children away from the hot iron or pan.

Waffle iron or pan: a waffle iron, a pizzelle iron or a non-stick frying pan all work. Heat gets very high, so keep the lead and the iron away from the edge of the worktop and out of reach of children, and never put your hand inside while it is hot. Wipe the surface with a little oil on kitchen paper held in tongs, not your fingers.

Keeping: once completely cold, store cones, cups and tuiles in an airtight tin with baking parchment between them. Cones and tuiles soften within a day in damp air, so crisp them again for 5 minutes in a low oven. Fill chocolate cups and wafers only just before serving.

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

Chocolate cups

25 minutes plus chilling | 8 cups | painting a thin, even chocolate shell

A chocolate shell is the easiest edible container: melted chocolate painted inside a paper case and chilled until hard. Two thin coats are stronger than one thick one.

INGREDIENTS (8 PORTIONS)

150 g	dark chocolate (about 70%), chopped
8	paper cake cases (a muffin tin helps)
1	small pastry brush or teaspoon

1. Melt the chocolate gently and let it cool until just warm. Put the paper cases in a muffin tin to hold their shape.
2. Brush or spoon a thin coat inside each case, going right up the sides. Chill for **10 minutes**.
3. Add a second coat, covering any thin patches, and chill for **at least 30 minutes** until firm. Peel away the paper gently and fill just before serving.

MELTED CHOCOLATE, ALLERGENS AND FILLING

Melted chocolate: melt it gently in a bowl over (not touching) barely simmering water, or in short microwave bursts, stirring each time. Keep water and steam out of the bowl or it will seize into a grainy lump.

Filling: a scoop of very cold ice cream melts quickly in a warm cup. Chill the cups and serving plates in the freezer for 10 minutes, and fill at the last moment.

Allergens: ice cream usually contains milk (cream, condensed milk), and often egg, nuts, peanuts, soy (in some chocolate and cookies) and wheat (cookies and cones). Check labels, and never serve a nut-containing ice cream to someone with a nut allergy without telling them. Coconut cream or oat cream can replace dairy cream in some recipes, but the texture changes.

LEVEL 2 · MERINGUE

Meringue nests

35 minutes plus 1 hour baking and cooling | 6 nests | baking a cooked meringue slowly until crisp

Meringue nests are crisp outside and a little chewy within, a classic holder for ice cream, fruit and sauce. The cooked-meringue method keeps them safe and glossy. Bake low and slow: they should dry, not brown.

INGREDIENTS (6 PORTIONS)

3	Lion-marked egg whites
150 g	caster sugar
1 tsp	cornflour
1 tsp	white wine vinegar or lemon juice

1. Heat the oven to 100°C (80°C fan). Make a cooked meringue from the whites and sugar (see the box) and whisk off the heat until very stiff, glossy and cool. Fold in the cornflour and vinegar.
2. Spoon or pipe six mounds onto a lined tray, and make a hollow in the middle of each with the back of a spoon.
3. Bake for **1 hour**, then turn the oven off and leave them inside to cool completely, with the door shut.

COOKED MERINGUE, LOW OVEN AND KEEPING

Cooked meringue: raw egg white is not used. Whisk the whites and sugar in a clean heatproof bowl over a pan of barely simmering water (the bowl must not touch the water) until the sugar has dissolved and the mixture reaches about **71°C** on a thermometer (general guidance), then whisk off the heat until stiff and cool. Use Lion-marked eggs, a spotlessly clean bowl, and keep steam and hot water away from your hands. Check current FSA advice if serving to pregnant women or other vulnerable people.

Hot oven: use oven gloves, open the door away from your face, and don't leave the oven unattended while the meringue browns: it goes from golden to burnt in under a minute. Don't use a cracked or very cold glass dish in a hot oven.

Keeping: once completely cold, store cones, cups and tuiles in an airtight tin with baking

> parchment between them. Cones and tuiles soften within a day in damp air, so crisp them again for 5 minutes in a low oven. Fill chocolate cups and wafers only just before serving.

LEVEL 2 · WAFER

Tuile cups

40 minutes | 8 cups | baking thin wafers and moulding them quickly

A tuile is a thin, crisp, lacy biscuit that is soft for a moment out of the oven, long enough to drape over a glass and set into a cup. Bake only two or three at a time so you can shape them all.

INGREDIENTS (8 PORTIONS)

2	Lion-marked egg whites
100 g	icing sugar, sifted
50 g	plain flour
50 g	butter, melted and cooled
1 tsp	vanilla extract
1	upturned small glasses or a muffin tin

1. Heat the oven to 180°C (160°C fan). Whisk the whites and icing sugar just until combined, then stir in the flour, butter and vanilla until smooth. The raw batter is not eaten: it is baked straight away.
2. Spoon 2 tablespoons onto a lined tray and spread thin into a 10 cm circle. Make only 2 or 3 per tray.
3. Bake for **5 to 7 minutes**, until golden brown at the edges. Take out, wait 15 to 20 seconds, then lift with a palette knife and drape over an upturned glass or press into a muffin tin hollow. Cool for a few minutes until crisp.

HOT WAFERS, HOT OVEN, ALLERGENS AND KEEPING

Hot wafers burn fingers: a freshly baked wafer is much hotter than it looks and is very soft for only a few seconds. Use a clean, dry tea towel or oven gloves to hold it, wait about 20 seconds so it is cool enough to touch, then shape it quickly. Never press it with bare fingers straight from the pan, and keep children away from the hot iron or pan.

Hot oven: use oven gloves, open the door away from your face, and don't leave the oven unattended while the meringue browns: it goes from golden to burnt in under a minute. Don't use a cracked or very cold glass dish in a hot oven.

Allergens: ice cream usually contains milk (cream, condensed milk), and often egg, nuts, peanuts, soy (in some chocolate and cookies) and wheat (cookies and cones). Check labels, and never serve a nut-containing ice cream to someone with a nut allergy without telling them. Coconut cream or oat cream can replace dairy cream in some recipes, but the texture changes.

Keeping: once completely cold, store cones, cups and tuiles in an airtight tin with baking parchment between them. Cones and tuiles soften within a day in damp air, so crisp them again for 5 minutes in a low oven. Fill chocolate cups and wafers only just before serving.

LEVEL 3 · CONE

Waffle cones

45 minutes | 6 cones | baking thin wafers and rolling them into cones

A homemade waffle cone is crisp, sweet and still warm from the pan. It needs a fast hand: the wafer is bendable for less than half a minute. Use a waffle iron, or a non-stick frying pan for a flat version.

INGREDIENTS (6 PORTIONS)

2	Lion-marked eggs
100 g	caster sugar
100 g	plain flour
50 g	butter, melted and cooled
2 tbsp	milk
1 tsp	vanilla extract
1	clean cone former or a stiff card cone, wrapped in baking parchment, and a tea towel

1. Whisk the eggs and sugar for 2 minutes until pale. Stir in the flour, butter, milk and vanilla to a smooth, thick batter. Rest it for 10 minutes.
2. Waffle iron: pour a small ladle onto the hot iron, close and cook for **1 to 2 minutes** until golden. Pan: heat a non-stick pan over a medium-low heat, spread the batter in a thin circle and cook for **1 to 2 minutes each side**.
3. Lift the wafer onto the tea towel, wait 20 seconds, then wrap it round the cone former, folding the towel over to hold it. Press the seam down firmly with the towel.
4. Hold for **20 seconds**, then stand upright in a glass to set and cool completely before filling.

> **HOT IRON, HOT WAFERS, RAW EGG AND ALLERGENS**
>
> **Waffle iron or pan:** a waffle iron, a pizzelle iron or a non-stick frying pan all work. Heat gets very high, so keep the lead and the iron away from the edge of the worktop and out of reach of children, and never put your hand inside while it is hot. Wipe the surface with a little oil on kitchen paper held in tongs, not your fingers.

Hot wafers burn fingers: a freshly baked wafer is much hotter than it looks and is very soft for only a few seconds. Use a clean, dry tea towel or oven gloves to hold it, wait about 20 seconds so it is cool enough to touch, then shape it quickly. Never press it with bare fingers straight from the pan, and keep children away from the hot iron or pan.

Eggs: use eggs with the British Lion mark and wash your hands after handling raw egg. This course never serves raw egg: custards are cooked, and the no-churn and sorbet recipes have none. Pregnant women, babies, older people and anyone unwell should check current FSA advice before eating egg dishes, even cooked custard.

Allergens: ice cream usually contains milk (cream, condensed milk), and often egg, nuts, peanuts, soy (in some chocolate and cookies) and wheat (cookies and cones). Check labels, and never serve a nut-containing ice cream to someone with a nut allergy without telling them. Coconut cream or oat cream can replace dairy cream in some recipes, but the texture changes.

Keeping: once completely cold, store cones, cups and tuiles in an airtight tin with baking parchment between them. Cones and tuiles soften within a day in damp air, so crisp them again for 5 minutes in a low oven. Fill chocolate cups and wafers only just before serving.

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

Batter thickness

Thin or thick.

1. Bake one tuile spread very thin and one spread about twice as thick.

Look for: The thin tuile is crisp and lacy but fragile; the thick one is sturdy but chewy. Aim for just thicker than a coin.

EXPERIMENT

Rolling speed

At once, after 20 seconds, after a minute.

1. Shape three wafers from the same batter: straight away (use a towel), after 20 seconds and after 1 minute.

Look for: The first is too hot and floppy; the 20-second wafer rolls well; the last has cracked as it set. Practise the timing.

EXPERIMENT

Baking time

Pale, golden and dark.

1. Bake three wafers for 4, 6 and 8 minutes. Compare colour, snap and taste.

Look for: The pale wafer bends and goes soft; the golden one snaps crisply; the dark one tastes bitter. Colour is the clock.

EXPERIMENT

Cooling over a mould

Over a glass or flat.

1. Mould one tuile over a glass and leave another flat on the tray.

Look for: The first keeps its cup shape; the other sets flat. The mould is what makes the shape, so always cool the wafer over it.

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Chocolate cups				
Meringue nests				

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Tuile cups				
Waffle cones				
Batter thickness				
Rolling speed				
Baking time				
Cooling over a mould				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Wafer cracks when shaped	Left too long, or too thin	Shape within 20 seconds; bake a few at a time
Wafer is soft and floppy	Underbaked	Bake until deep golden
Wafers stick to the pan	No lining or no oil	Use baking parchment or a non-stick pan with a little oil
Meringue nests brown or crack	Oven too hot	Bake at 100°C (80°C fan) and cool in the oven
Chocolate cup breaks	Shell too thin	Add a second coat
Cones go soft	Damp air	Store airtight; re-crisp in a low oven

HOT WAFERS, HOT OVEN AND ALLERGENS

Hot wafers burn fingers: a freshly baked wafer is much hotter than it looks and is very soft for only a few seconds. Use a clean, dry tea towel or oven gloves to hold it, wait about 20 seconds so it is cool enough to touch, then shape it quickly. Never press it with bare fingers straight from the pan, and keep children away from the hot iron or pan.

Hot oven: use oven gloves, open the door away from your face, and don't leave the oven unattended while the meringue browns: it goes from golden to burnt in under a minute. Don't use a cracked or

very cold glass dish in a hot oven.

Allergens: ice cream usually contains milk (cream, condensed milk), and often egg, nuts, peanuts, soy (in some chocolate and cookies) and wheat (cookies and cones). Check labels, and never serve a nut-containing ice cream to someone with a nut allergy without telling them. Coconut cream or oat cream can replace dairy cream in some recipes, but the texture changes.

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

- ☐ I can make a chocolate shell and a meringue nest.
- ☐ I can bake a wafer thin and golden.
- ☐ I shape wafers within 20 seconds, using a tea towel.
- ☐ I store cones and cups airtight and fill them last.
- ☐ I keep children away from the hot iron and pan.

NEXT CHAPTER

Cooking Skills: Ice Cream 2, chapter 7 is Shakes, Floats and Frozen Drinks: ice cream you can drink.

Cooking Skills: Ice Cream 2

Chapter 7 · Shakes, Floats and Frozen Drinks

SKILL GOAL

Make four frozen drinks and choose the ratio that gives the thickness you like.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

Ice cream is also a drink ingredient. This chapter is about **ratios**: how much ice cream, milk, fruit or fizz gives the thickness you like. It is a lighter chapter than the others, with quick recipes that use the ice cream, sorbet and granita you have already made.

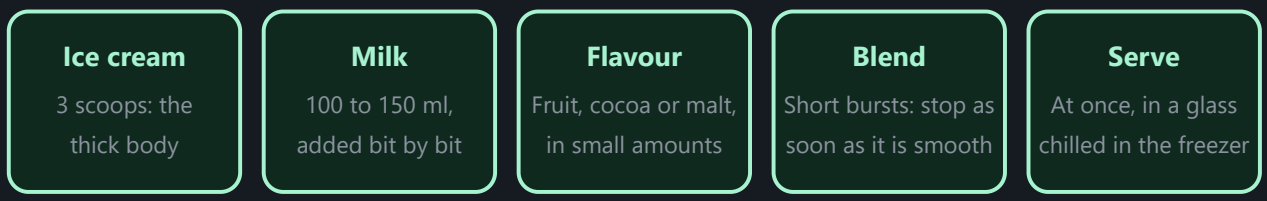


Figure 7. Start with three scoops of ice cream and add the milk bit by bit: you can always thin a shake but not thicken it.

The method

- **Ice cream first, liquid second.** Three scoops (about 200 g) to 100 to 150 ml of cold milk makes a thick, spoonable shake.
- **Add the milk a little at a time.** Thin a shake with milk; thicken it with more ice cream.
- **Blend in short bursts** and stop as soon as it is smooth. Long blending warms it and makes it thin.
- **Chill the glass** in the freezer for 10 minutes: a cold glass keeps the drink cold and thick.
- **Pour fizz slowly** down the side of a tilted glass, then add the second scoop.

DRINK	ICE CREAM	LIQUID	THICKNESS
Thick shake	3 scoops	100 ml milk	Spoon it
Standard shake	3 scoops	150 ml milk	Sip with a wide straw
Thin shake	2 scoops	200 ml milk	Drinkable
Float	2 scoops	250 ml fizzy drink	Bubbly, drink and spoon
Slush	4 scoops sorbet	300 ml sparkling water	Spoonable, sippable

BLENDER, FIZZ AND COLD DRINKS

Blender safety: put the lid on firmly before switching on, keep hands and spoons out while it runs, and unplug it before cleaning the blades. Don't blend anything hot, and don't overfill: frozen mixtures need room to move.

Fizzy drinks: pour fizzy drinks slowly down the side of a tilted glass, because they foam up fast over ice cream and can overflow. They are also high in sugar, so keep floats and slushes for treats.

Straws and small children: thick shakes can block a thin straw, and sipping cold drinks quickly causes a short, sharp head pain (often called brain freeze), which is harmless but unpleasant. Use a wide straw or a long spoon, and drink slowly.

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

Classic milkshake

10 minutes | 1 large shake | blending ice cream and milk to the right thickness

Ice cream plus cold milk, blended just until smooth. The ratio is the whole skill: start with less milk than you think, because you can add more but you cannot take it out.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

3	scoops of vanilla ice cream (about 200 g)
120 ml	cold whole milk
1 tsp	vanilla extract (optional)
1	tall glass, chilled in the freezer

1. Put the ice cream in the blender first, then pour in **half** of the milk and the vanilla.
2. Blend in short bursts of about 10 seconds, until smooth. Check the thickness and add the rest of the milk a splash at a time if you want it thinner.
3. Pour into the cold glass and serve at once with a wide straw.

BLENDER, SMALL CHILDREN AND SERVING

Blender safety: put the lid on firmly before switching on, keep hands and spoons out while it runs, and unplug it before cleaning the blades. Don't blend anything hot, and don't overfill: frozen mixtures need room to move.

Straws and small children: thick shakes can block a thin straw, and sipping cold drinks quickly causes a short, sharp head pain (often called brain freeze), which is harmless but unpleasant. Use a wide straw or a long spoon, and drink slowly.

Serving: shakes, floats and slushes are made to be drunk at once. Don't store them or refreeze a melted shake. Chill the glasses in the freezer for 10 minutes first.

Allergens: ice cream usually contains milk (cream, condensed milk), and often egg, nuts, peanuts, soy (in some chocolate and cookies) and wheat (cookies and cones). Check labels, and never serve a nut-containing ice cream to someone with a nut allergy without telling them. Coconut cream or oat cream can replace dairy cream in some recipes, but the texture changes.

LEVEL 2 · FLAVOUR

Malted or fruit shake

10 minutes | 1 large shake | adding fruit or malt without thinning the shake

Fruit and malt add flavour but also liquid or powder, so the shake changes thickness. A ripe banana makes it thick and creamy; strawberries make it fresher and a little thinner. Use less milk when you add fruit.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

3	scoops of vanilla ice cream
1	ripe banana, or 100 g strawberries
100 ml	cold milk
1 tbsp	malted milk powder (optional)
1 tsp	honey (optional)

1. Peel and slice the banana (or wash and hull the strawberries). Put it in the blender with the ice cream, then pour in two thirds of the milk.
2. Add the malt powder and honey, if you are using them. Blend in short bursts until smooth.
3. Taste and add the rest of the milk only if needed. Serve at once in a cold glass.

BLENDER, FRUIT, MALT AND ALLERGENS

Blender safety: put the lid on firmly before switching on, keep hands and spoons out while it runs, and unplug it before cleaning the blades. Don't blend anything hot, and don't overfill: frozen mixtures need room to move.

Fruit: wash fresh fruit before use. If you use frozen berries, heat them until boiling and simmer for a minute before using them cold, as is usual UK advice for frozen berries (general guidance: check the pack).

Malted milk powder: malt is made from barley and usually contains gluten, and the powder contains milk. Check the label, and leave it out for anyone with a gluten or dairy allergy.

Knife safety: cut on a stable board (a damp cloth underneath) and tuck your guiding fingertips back (the claw). Cut a banana or mango in a way that gives a flat side to rest on.

LEVEL 2 · FLOAT

Ice cream float

5 minutes | 1 float | pouring a fizzy drink over ice cream without overflowing

Cold ice cream, fizzy drink and a long spoon: the cream mixes into the bubbles as it melts. The skill is the pour, because the foam builds fast when the drink hits the ice cream.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

2	scoops of vanilla ice cream
250 ml	cold ginger beer, cream soda or cola
1	tall glass, chilled in the freezer
1	long spoon and wide straw

1. Put one scoop of ice cream in the bottom of the cold glass and pour in about **a third** of the drink very slowly, down the side of the tilted glass.
2. Wait for the foam to settle, then add the second scoop and top up gently.
3. Serve at once with a long spoon and a wide straw.

FIZZY DRINKS, SUGAR AND SERVING

Fizzy drinks: pour fizzy drinks slowly down the side of a tilted glass, because they foam up fast over ice cream and can overflow. They are also high in sugar, so keep floats and slushes for treats.

Straws and small children: thick shakes can block a thin straw, and sipping cold drinks quickly causes a short, sharp head pain (often called brain freeze), which is harmless but unpleasant. Use a wide straw or a long spoon, and drink slowly.

Serving: shakes, floats and slushes are made to be drunk at once. Don't store them or refreeze a melted shake. Chill the glasses in the freezer for 10 minutes first.

LEVEL 3 · SLUSH

A sorbet or granita slush

10 minutes | 4 glasses | turning frozen crystals into a drinkable slush

A frozen drink with no dairy: sorbet from Cooking Skills: Ice Cream 1, chapter 4, or a granita from chapter 2 of this course, softened with sparkling water into a spoonable, sippable slush. Add the liquid a little at a time so it stays thick.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

4	scoops of lemon or raspberry sorbet
300 ml	cold sparkling water or lemonade
1	lime, in thin slices, to serve
4	tall glasses, chilled in the freezer

1. Put a scoop of sorbet (or a heap of granita crystals) in each cold glass.
2. Pour in about **75 ml** of the cold sparkling water or lemonade slowly, down the side of the glass, and stir gently once.
3. Top with a slice of lime and serve at once, with a spoon and a straw.

> FIZZY DRINKS, SMALL CHILDREN AND SERVING
>
> **Fizzy drinks:** pour fizzy drinks slowly down the side of a tilted glass, because they foam up fast over ice cream and can overflow. They are also high in sugar, so keep floats and slushes for treats.
>
> **Straws and small children:** thick shakes can block a thin straw, and sipping cold drinks quickly causes a short, sharp head pain (often called brain freeze), which is harmless but unpleasant. Use a wide straw or a long spoon, and drink slowly.
>
> **Serving:** shakes, floats and slushes are made to be drunk at once. Don't store them or refreeze a melted shake. Chill the glasses in the freezer for 10 minutes first.

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

Ice cream to milk ratio

Thick, standard and thin.

1. Make three shakes with 3 scoops of ice cream and 60, 120 and 200 ml of milk.

Look for: The first is so thick it needs a spoon; the middle is the classic; the last is thin and quickly warm. Pick your favourite ratio and note it down.

EXPERIMENT

Blend time

10 seconds or a minute.

1. Blend one shake for 10 seconds and another for a full minute.

Look for: The short-blended shake is thick and cold; the long-blended one is warm, thin and foamy. Short bursts keep it thick.

EXPERIMENT

Glass temperature

Chilled or room temperature.

1. Serve the same shake in a freezer-chilled glass and a room-temperature glass and time how long each stays cold and thick.

Look for: The chilled glass stays thick and cold for longer, while the warm one melts the shake at the edges. Chill the glass.

EXPERIMENT

Thickness by amount

Change the ice cream.

1. Keep the milk at 120 ml and change the ice cream to 2, 3 and 4 scoops.

Look for: More ice cream gives a thicker, colder shake; less gives a thin, milky one. The ice cream is the body, and the milk only adjusts it.

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Classic milkshake				
Malted or fruit shake				
Ice cream float				
Sorbet slush				
Ice cream to milk ratio				
Blend time				
Glass temperature				
Thickness by amount				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Shake too thin	Too much milk or over-blended	Add another scoop of ice cream; blend less
Shake too thick to sip	Too little milk	Add a splash of milk and pulse once
Float overflows	Poured too fast or onto warm ice cream	Pour slowly down the side; chill the glass
Icy, chunky shake	Ice cream too hard	Stand it for 5 minutes before blending
Shake separates	Left standing	Drink at once, or stir and re-blend briefly
Flat float	Fizzy drink not cold	Chill the drink well before pouring

BLENDER AND ALLERGENS

Blender safety: put the lid on firmly before switching on, keep hands and spoons out while it runs, and unplug it before cleaning the blades. Don't blend anything hot, and don't overfill: frozen mixtures need room to move.

Malted milk powder: malt is made from barley and usually contains gluten, and the powder contains milk. Check the label, and leave it out for anyone with a gluten or dairy allergy.

Allergens: ice cream usually contains milk (cream, condensed milk), and often egg, nuts, peanuts, soy (in some chocolate and cookies) and wheat (cookies and cones). Check labels, and never serve a nut-containing ice cream to someone with a nut allergy without telling them. Coconut cream or oat cream can replace dairy cream in some recipes, but the texture changes.

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

☐ I can blend a shake to the thickness I want.

☐ I add the milk a little at a time.

☐ I pour fizzy drinks slowly down the side of the glass.

☐ I chill the glass first and serve at once.

☐ I use the blender safely.

NEXT CHAPTER

Cooking Skills: Ice Cream 2, chapter 8 is A Frozen Dessert Table: planning several frozen desserts for guests.

Cooking Skills: Ice Cream 2

Chapter 8 · A Frozen Dessert Table

SKILL GOAL

Plan, make ahead and serve four contrasting frozen desserts, and start your own set of house recipes.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

A frozen dessert table is the Ice Cream 2 capstone: **four desserts for guests** that you plan, make ahead and serve with ease. It builds on the party-planning ideas in Cooking Skills: Ice Cream 1, chapter 8, but each dessert is more ambitious, so the plan matters more. The big advantage is that almost everything is made days ahead, and the last hour is only slicing, scooping and pouring.

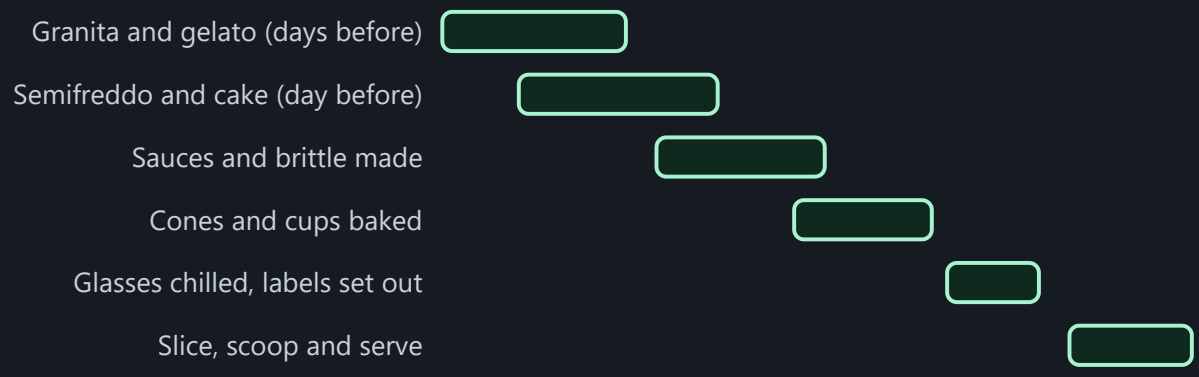


Figure 8. Plan backwards from serving: everything frozen is made ahead, and only the slicing and scooping happen at the table.

The method

- **Choose contrasts:** something icy, something creamy, something sliced and something crunchy, in different flavours.
- **Work backwards** from serving time and write the plan down.
- **Make hot-sugar jobs early,** when you are calm and no guests are in the kitchen.
- **Soften one dessert at a time,** serve it and return it to the freezer.
- **Label everything,** with allergens, so guests can choose safely.

DESSERT	STYLE	MAKE AHEAD	LAST-MINUTE JOB
Gelato or sorbet	Creamy or icy	1 to 3 days	Soften 10 minutes, scoop
Granita	Light, icy	The day before, or that morning	Scrape with a fork
Semifreddo or ice cream cake	Sliced	1 to 2 days	Slice with a hot knife
Sauces and brittle	Topping	1 day	Warm the sauce gently
Cones, cups and tuiles	Crunchy	That morning	Fill at the last moment

FREEZER, ALLERGENS AND SERVING

Freezer space and temperature: a table of four frozen desserts needs room. Clear space in the freezer a day ahead, keep it at -18°C or colder, and don't pack it so full that air can't circulate. Take desserts out one at a time, and put the rest back at once. Don't refreeze anything that has melted (see Cooking Skills: Ice Cream 1, chapter 7).

Allergen cards: put a small card by every dessert listing what is in it (milk, egg, nuts, wheat, soy, sesame, gluten from malt). Ask your guests about allergies before you plan, and keep one dessert (such as a granita or sorbet) free of milk, egg and nuts.

Serving safely: use a clean spoon and scoop for each dessert, wash hands before handling food, and don't leave frozen desserts out for more than about 20 minutes at a party. Throw away melted dessert that has stood for a long time.

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

A two-dessert table

Plan 30 minutes; making depends on your recipes | 8 guests

putting two desserts and a sauce together on one table

Start small: one creamy dessert and one icy one, with a sauce. Gelato and granita contrast well, since one is rich and smooth and the other sharp and light, and the coulis ties them together.

INGREDIENTS (8 PORTIONS)

1 batch	fior di latte gelato (Gelato, chapter 1)
1 batch	raspberry coulis (Sauces, Brittle and Toppings, chapter 5)
1 batch	lemon granita (Granita and Shaved Ice, chapter 2)
8	small chilled glasses or bowls

1. Make the gelato and granita 1 to 3 days ahead and the coulis the day before. Keep them in the freezer or fridge, covered and labelled.
2. On the day, chill the glasses for **10 minutes** in the freezer. Stand the gelato out of the freezer for 10 minutes to soften while you scrape the granita with a fork.
3. Serve one scoop of gelato and a spoonful of granita in each glass, with the coulis in a jug.

FREEZER, ALLERGENS AND SERVING

Freezer space and temperature: a table of four frozen desserts needs room. Clear space in the freezer a day ahead, keep it at -18°C or colder, and don't pack it so full that air can't circulate. Take desserts out one at a time, and put the rest back at once. Don't refreeze anything that has melted (see Cooking Skills: Ice Cream 1, chapter 7).

Allergen cards: put a small card by every dessert listing what is in it (milk, egg, nuts, wheat, soy, sesame, gluten from malt). Ask your guests about allergies before you plan, and keep one dessert (such as a granita or sorbet) free of milk, egg and nuts.

Serving safely: use a clean spoon and scoop for each dessert, wash hands before handling

> food, and don't leave frozen desserts out for more than about 20 minutes at a party. Throw away melted dessert that has stood for a long time.

LEVEL 2 · TABLE

A four-dessert frozen table

A day or two of making; 45 minutes to serve | 10 guests

balancing four frozen desserts in texture and flavour

Four desserts that contrast: something icy, something creamy, something sliced and something crunchy. Choose different flavours (one fruity, one chocolatey, one plain, one nutty or caramel) so there is no repeat, and a different texture for each.

INGREDIENTS (10 PORTIONS)

1 batch	gelato or granita (a choice from chapters 1 and 2)
1 batch	semifreddo (Semifreddo and Frozen Mousses, chapter 3)
1 batch	an ice cream cake or frozen cheesecake (Ice Cream Cakes and Frozen Bakes, chapter 4)
1 batch	hot fudge or butterscotch sauce and brittle (chapter 5)
1 batch	tuile cups or waffle cones (chapter 6)

1. Choose four desserts from the course, one from each style: icy (granita), creamy (gelato), sliced (semifreddo or cake) and crunchy (cones, brittle or wafers). Write them on the plan.
2. Make everything frozen at least a day ahead, following the plan in the diagram. Make the sauces and brittle the day before and bake the cones that morning.
3. An hour before serving, set out the labels, the chilled glasses, the sauces (warmed) and the toppings. Take out one dessert at a time, soften it for 10 minutes, then slice or scoop and serve.

FREEZER, HOT SAUCES AND ALLERGENS

Freezer space and temperature: a table of four frozen desserts needs room. Clear space in the freezer a day ahead, keep it at -18°C or colder, and don't pack it so full that air can't circulate. Take desserts out one at a time, and put the rest back at once. Don't refreeze anything that has melted (see Cooking Skills: Ice Cream 1, chapter 7).

Hot things at the table: keep hot sauces in a jug with a lid, away from the edge and children, and warm them only just before serving. Hot caramel and wafers are not for children to handle (see chapters 5 and 6 of this course).

> **Allergen cards:** put a small card by every dessert listing what is in it (milk, egg, nuts, wheat, soy, sesame, gluten from malt). Ask your guests about allergies before you plan, and keep one dessert (such as a granita or sorbet) free of milk, egg and nuts.

LEVEL 2 · PLAN

Your make-ahead plan

30 minutes | 10 guests | working backwards from serving time

A written plan is the key skill of a frozen table. Work backwards from the time you serve and give every job a day and an hour, keeping the hot-sugar jobs early.

INGREDIENTS (10 PORTIONS)

1	large sheet of paper or a notes page
1	pen
1	calendar or phone timer

1. Write the time you will serve on the right of the page and the desserts down the left side.
2. For each dessert, write when it must be made, how long it needs to freeze, and when it comes out to soften. Put granita and gelato first and hot sugar early.
3. Add the last jobs: chilling glasses, warming sauces, setting out labels. Check the freezer has room and tick each job off as you do it.

> **PLANNING, HOT SUGAR AND FREEZER SPACE**
>
> **Plan on paper:** write the timeline down with days and times, and tick each job off. Running late with frozen desserts only means a wait; running late with hot sugar, however, means rushing near something dangerous. Do the hot sugar jobs a day early.
>
> **Freezer space and temperature:** a table of four frozen desserts needs room. Clear space in the freezer a day ahead, keep it at -18°C or colder, and don't pack it so full that air can't circulate. Take desserts out one at a time, and put the rest back at once. Don't refreeze anything that has melted (see Cooking Skills: Ice Cream 1, chapter 7).
>
> **Hot things at the table:** keep hot sauces in a jug with a lid, away from the edge and children, and warm them only just before serving. Hot caramel and wafers are not for children to handle (see chapters 5 and 6 of this course).

LEVEL 3 · HOUSE RECIPE

Your flavour notebook and house recipe

Planning 20 minutes; making depends on the recipe | 4 portions | adapting a recipe into one that is yours

Choose the base you liked best, change one thing and write down the result. Your flavour notebook turns these two courses into a set of house recipes that are yours: a base, a flavour, a topping and a note.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

1	notebook for your flavour notes
1 batch	a base recipe from this course that you like best
1	one new flavour, topping or sauce to try

1. Pick the base you liked best (for example fior di latte, lemon granita or vanilla semifreddo) and write the recipe in your notebook with the date.
2. Change **one** thing only: the flavour, the sugar, a swirl, a topping or the shape. Make a small batch.
3. Taste with a friend or family member, and write down what you would change. Repeat until you are happy, then name it.

ALLERGENS IN NEW RECIPES

Allergens: ice cream usually contains milk (cream, condensed milk), and often egg, nuts, peanuts, soy (in some chocolate and cookies) and wheat (cookies and cones). Check labels, and never serve a nut-containing ice cream to someone with a nut allergy without telling them. Coconut cream or oat cream can replace dairy cream in some recipes, but the texture changes.

Nuts: pistachios, almonds and other nuts (and pastes made from them) are serious allergens, and some products are made in factories that handle other nuts. Never serve them to a guest without asking, and make a nut-free swap when anyone has an allergy.

Allergen cards: put a small card by every dessert listing what is in it (milk, egg, nuts, wheat, soy, sesame, gluten from malt). Ask your guests about allergies before you plan, and keep one dessert (such as a granita or sorbet) free of milk, egg and nuts.

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

A timed frozen table

Plan against the clock.

1. Write the full plan for your four-dessert table, then follow it and note how long each job really took.

Look for: Most people find the real times differ from the plan: freezing and softening take longer than expected. Adjust the plan for next time.

EXPERIMENT

Swap one dessert

Same table, one change.

1. Replace one dessert with another style, for example a granita instead of a gelato, and see how the table balances.

Look for: A swap changes the balance of the table: two creamy desserts feel heavy, while an icy one lightens it. Write down which mix you prefer.

EXPERIMENT

Standing times

Soften and taste.

1. Serve a scoop of the same gelato straight from the freezer, and after 5 and 10 minutes. Compare.

Look for: Straight from the freezer it is hard; at 5 minutes it is firm and scoopable; at 10 minutes it is soft and full-flavoured. Plan the standing time into your table.

EXPERIMENT

Your own frozen dessert

One change at a time.

1. Change just one thing in your favourite recipe (the flavour, the sugar level, a swirl or a topping) and make a small batch.

Look for: Changing one thing makes it clear what each change does. Write it in your notebook and name the result.

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Two-dessert table				
Four-dessert table				
Make-ahead plan				
House recipe				
Timed frozen table				
Swap one dessert				
Standing times				
Your own dessert				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Desserts all taste the same	Similar flavours or textures	Choose a contrasting set: icy, creamy, sliced and crunchy
Freezer is too full	Too many desserts at once	Make a day at a time; use shallow, stackable tubs

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Desserts are rock hard	Not softened	Stand 10 minutes before serving
Desserts melt at the table	Left out too long	Bring out one at a time and return the rest
Running late	No written plan	Make a timeline and do the hot sugar a day early
A guest has an allergy	No allergen information	Label every dessert and keep a nut-, egg- and milk-free option

FREEZER, HOT SAUCES AND ALLERGENS

Freezer space and temperature: a table of four frozen desserts needs room. Clear space in the freezer a day ahead, keep it at -18°C or colder, and don't pack it so full that air can't circulate. Take desserts out one at a time, and put the rest back at once. Don't refreeze anything that has melted (see Cooking Skills: Ice Cream 1, chapter 7).

Hot things at the table: keep hot sauces in a jug with a lid, away from the edge and children, and warm them only just before serving. Hot caramel and wafers are not for children to handle (see chapters 5 and 6 of this course).

Allergen cards: put a small card by every dessert listing what is in it (milk, egg, nuts, wheat, soy, sesame, gluten from malt). Ask your guests about allergies before you plan, and keep one dessert (such as a granita or sorbet) free of milk, egg and nuts.

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

- ☐ I can choose four contrasting frozen desserts.
- ☐ I can write a make-ahead plan, working backwards.
- ☐ I make hot-sugar jobs early.
- ☐ I label allergens and offer a safe option.
- ☐ I have written down my own house recipe.

NEXT CHAPTER

This is the last chapter of Cooking Skills: Ice Cream 2. Cooking Skills: Pastry 1 (planned) will add tart cases and sweet shells to fill with ice cream.