

Make Ice Cream, in a Mason Jar

By Amelia Nierenberg

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Making ice cream at home feels like alchemy, a complex process of mixing and cooling.

Now that summer is fast approaching, maybe try it out. You don't even need a fancy ice-cream maker. All you really need is heavy cream, a Mason jar and strong forearms. It's a fun at-home project and so easy a child could be in charge.

Basic Mason Jar Ice Cream

Ingredients

1 cup heavy cream

1 ½ tablespoons granulated sugar

1 ½ teaspoons vanilla extract

A pinch of salt

A 16 oz Mason jar, of course.

Yield: About three servings.

Steps

1. Pour the cream, sugar, vanilla and salt into the jar, and screw on the lid tightly.
2. Shake vigorously, until the cream thickens and almost doubles in size, which should take about five minutes. You'll know you're done when the mixture doubles in volume and is about the consistency of brownie batter.
3. Freeze for at least 3 hours. Then eat. You're welcome.

Or, add a twist...

You could, if you're daring, spruce it up. Here are some ideas on what to add to the recipe above.

Berry Ice Cream. If you want the flavor mixed-in, blend ½ cup of fresh berries and add it to the mixture before you freeze it. (You can also cheat: a tablespoon of jam will work.) If you prefer chunks, cut up the berries. Voilà.

Chocolate Peanut Butter Ice Cream. Add 1 teaspoon of peanut butter to the mixture and shake. If you want the chocolate blended in, squeeze in 1 teaspoon of syrup. But if you're going for a marbled effect, swirl in the syrup at the end and give your mixture a quick stir with a spoon.

Earl Grey Tea Ice Cream. Add 1 teaspoon each of lemon juice and honey. To infuse the tea flavor, take ½ cup of the cream. Heat it, and steep two bags of Earl Grey tea. Remove them. When the cream cools, add it to the jar and shake.

Chunky Chocolate and Nut Ice Cream. The nuts are easy: Add 1 tablespoon of whatever kind of nuts you choose. (Pecans are buttery and yummy. Just saying.) Add chocolate pieces. A note: Mini-chips will work better than chunks. You're only making a little bit, after all.

Rosemary Olive Oil Ice Cream. Whoa, right? Add 1 tablespoon of olive oil, which will make the ice cream extra creamy. As with the Earl Grey version, heat up half the cream and add four sprigs of fresh rosemary. Strain, cool, add, shake, freeze and eat.

The possibilities are endless. For caramel ice cream, just chop candies into the mix. For banana, blend it first. Coconut is a no-brainer, but make sure the pieces are small and fine. (A pinch of salt on top brings out the flavors.) It will be delicious. It's ice cream, after all.