

There are few commercially made ice creams that are a patch on the home-made version and the key to this is in the stirring and cooling, as well as the ingredients. It is vital to have an ice-cream machine to achieve a thick, creamy texture and to use the best-quality eggs and dairy products.

ICE CREAM

Preparation time: 15 minutes
Chilling time: 10-20 minutes
Use: ice-cream maker
Serves: 6

250ml (9fl oz) full-cream milk
250ml (9fl oz) double cream
1 vanilla pod
3 large egg yolks
100g (3½ oz) caster sugar

Pour the milk and cream into a heavy-based saucepan. Split the vanilla pod lengthwise, scrape out the seeds and add both the pod and seeds to the milk and cream

mixture. Bring to the boil, then remove from the heat, cover and leave to infuse for about 15 minutes. Strain the liquid.

Whisk together the egg yolks and caster sugar until thick and creamy. Continue to whisk as you pour over a little of the strained milk and cream, then add the rest of the milk and cream and whisk until well blended. Place the saucepan over a medium heat and, stirring frequently with a wooden spoon, cook until the custard has thickened and coats the back of the spoon. Then follow your chosen recipe below.

CHOCOLATE, HAZELNUT & CURRANT

100g (3½ oz) dark chocolate, minimum 60% cocoa solids, broken into pieces
100g (3½ oz) Hazelnut and Currant Chocolate, or other good-quality fruit and nut chocolate finely chopped

Melt the dark chocolate in a heatproof bowl suspended over a saucepan of barely simmering water and carefully stir into the custard.

Transfer to a metal bowl and place the bowl on a bed of ice in a little water to chill. Stir occasionally to prevent a skin from forming.

Once the mixture has cooled, transfer to an ice-cream machine and churn according to the manufacturer's instructions. Add the chunks of Hazelnut and Currant Chocolate just before the ice cream sets.

CARAMEL BAR

100g (3½ oz) Caramel Chocolate, or any other flavoured bar, chopped into medium-sized chunks

Remove from the heat, transfer to a metal bowl and place it on a bed of ice and a little water to chill. Stir occasionally to prevent a skin from forming. Once the custard has cooled add the chunks of caramel chocolate, transfer to the ice-cream machine and churn according to the manufacturer's instructions.



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