

PASTRY ART & DESIGN'S

frozen desserts

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PREMIER ISSUE

Iced Goodness

Fit for a King

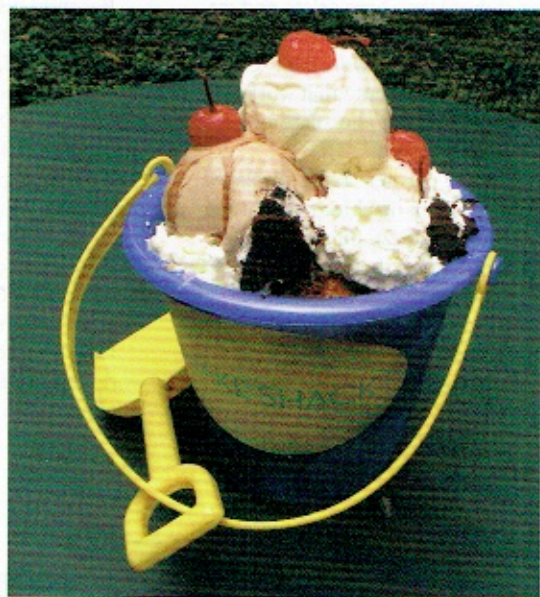
BY JULIA PRICE

Ever had the pleasure as a kid of playing outside with your friends on a lazy, hot summer afternoon, when, all of a sudden, you hear the faint sound of "Pop Goes the Weasel" or some other splendidly annoying plea summoning you from your intense game of hopscotch to devour your can't-be-missed Orange Creamsicle®, Ice Cream Sandwich, or my favorite, the beloved Drumstick®? Remember the joy of being monumentally faced with your very first Banana Split; hot fudge, butterscotch, and strawberry toppings spilling over mounds of rich vanilla ice cream, sprinkled with nuts, dolloped with whipped cream, and sporting a cherry on top? The thought of ice cream brings back memories of cones on a smoldering day in Central Park, that beloved pint that consoled us during the breakup from which we thought we'd never recover, the soft coolness melting into our childhood birthday party clown cake, and the "sundae" celebrations for a perfect report card. It is something that can be shared with friends, family, loved ones, or new acquaintances. Ice cream is a tradition that has been around for ages, spoiling royalty and civilians alike. In 1984, in the U.S., President Reagan even designated July as National Ice Cream Month, with the 3rd Sunday being National Ice Cream Day. But how, for centuries, did this iced goodness come to play such a vital role in our lives?

Myth upon myth has taken us around the globe from China to Italy to France and to England recounting stories and then some on royal banquets showcasing the favored dish. Sung dynasty poet Yang Wanli (1127-1206) described Iced Milk as:

- It looks so greasy but still has a crisp texture
- It appears congealed and yet it seems to float
- Like jade, it breaks at the bottom of the dish
- As with snow, it melts in the light of the sun

Marco Polo (1254-1324) was supposed to have brought it back to Italy from China after having discovered it during his travels. Catherine de Medici (1519-1589) is known to have transported it from Italy to France as a marital gift to her future hubby, the Duc d'Orleans. After having served a sumptuous feast to friends and family, Charles I of England (1600-1649) is said to have unveiled the sweet and creamy royal delicacy, to his guests' great delight. Of course there are many other possibilities; however, there is evidence pointing to China during the Tang period of a chilled snowy substance being prepared, again for royalty, using mare, water buffalo, cow or goat's milk mixed with flour and camphor. Perhaps this is not quite what we have in mind today when we think of what to purchase to top that apple pie. But then again, everyone has his or her own version.



America and Australia vie for the title of consuming the most ice cream in the world per capita, with vanilla leading the way. The Colonial Period suggests the immigration of the ice cream experience by our originators, here in the States. Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Dolley Madison are among the elite to have served and enjoyed it.

Ice cream is one of the creamiest of all "ice" desserts. In the U.S., ice cream is guaranteed to have at least 10% milk fat, while in many cases, for premium ice cream, it can reach up to 16%. It also contains 9-12% milk solids (not fat) containing proteins and carbohydrates (lactose), 12-16% sweeteners, and .2-.5% added stabilizers and emulsifiers providing firmness. The balance comes from water, originating from the milk, and air for softness. And yes, folks, there is fat in ice cream, but that's what makes it so creamy delicious.

Hand-cranked ice cream freezers bring back memories of being in my grandmother's kitchen, barely tall enough to reach the sink faucet. My mom, uncle, grandfather, and I would all stand around watching her pour the coarse rock salt and ice into the wooden bucket. I would be allowed to crank it in the beginning for a total of about two or three times until my arm would cramp. Then it would be my uncle's turn to crank until the ice cream became stiff. The results were phenomenal; homemade peach ice cream with real,

