

VANILLA ICE CREAM

MAKES 1½ QUARTS

Who doesn't love ice cream? I surely appreciate it because I've essentially made a living out of the stuff. The technique for making ice cream is not difficult; however, making a great ice cream instead of just a good ice cream is all about the ingredients. For example, organic milk and cream have more of a viscous body to them, which helps achieve the smooth, creamy texture that every ice cream maker so desperately tries to achieve. And if you can find unhomogenized organic milk, even better. If you're making a vanilla ice cream, vanilla beans will give a tastier result than extract. And for chocolate ice cream (see the variation on the opposite page), seek out a high-end chocolate with more cocoa butter (also known as couverture chocolate).

1½ cups organic heavy cream

1½ cups organic whole milk

1 vanilla bean, split lengthwise

6 large egg yolks

¾ cup sugar

1 tablespoon light corn syrup

In a medium saucepan, combine the cream and milk. Scrape the vanilla seeds into the pan and then add the vanilla bean halves.

In a bowl, whisk together the egg yolks, sugar, and corn syrup. Add a small ladleful of the cold cream-milk mixture to the egg yolks and whisk to combine.

Bring the remaining cream-milk mixture to a boil over medium heat.

Whisking constantly, ladle small amounts of the hot cream-milk mixture into the yolk mixture until it feels warm, then pour it all back into the saucepan. Cook the custard over low heat, stirring constantly in a figure-8 pattern, until it thickens slightly and coats the back of a spoon (see Insider Tip, opposite page).

Set up an ice bath (a large bowl of ice and water). Strain the custard mixture into a bowl that will fit in the ice bath. Stir occasionally as it chills, then transfer to the refrigerator until well chilled. Discard the vanilla bean.

Transfer the ice cream base to an ice cream machine or a stand mixer ice cream attachment and freeze according to the manufacturer's directions. Transfer the ice cream to a freezer container and place in the freezer until you're ready to serve. Let sit at room temperature briefly before serving.

VARIATIONS

Chocolate Ice Cream: Omit the vanilla seeds and bean and whisk 2 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder into the milk-cream mixture. After the custard has been cooked and coats the back of a spoon, stir 4 ounces of finely chopped couverture chocolate into the hot mixture until melted. Strain and freeze as directed. Personally, I go for dark chocolate, but you can substitute milk chocolate and take out 1 tablespoon of the sugar to balance the sweetness.

Espresso Ice Cream: Add 2 tablespoons espresso powder to the milk and cream mixture in the saucepan.

INSIDER TIP • NAPPÉ

In the professional kitchen, the French term *nappé* is used to describe the stage at which a mixture that is being thickened over heat will coat the back of a spoon. A good way to check if you've come to the *nappé* point is to dip the spoon in the mixture to coat

and then run your finger down the middle of the back of a spoon. If the line holds its shape, you have reached nappé.