



Ice Cream Making Activities - Part 2

If ice cream sales is what you're going for, here are some ice cream specialties ideas to help showcase the playful, special-occasion side of ice cream.

By Barbara Berst Adams

Make Your Ice Cream Product Unique
Developing your own signature artisan product

Don't miss Part 1 of this article>>

It's the milk.

For frozen desserts or cream soda using real dairy, a dairy from your region, if not your own, is the most obvious main signature ingredient.

In the Swiss Alps, it's said one can tell which valley meadow the milk and cheese came from, because each meadow's grasses and herbs produce a different flavor.

And today in America, we even go beyond sustainable and organic grass-fed dairies.

We have, for example: Milk from Elsa, Greta, Ruby, Iggy, or one of the other named and carefully hand-tended Brown Swiss cows of Rockhill Creamery that graze the rocky hillside in Utah's beautiful Cache Valley, and even play out in the snow in the winter, which produce what the owners call, "Hardy milk from hardy cows." Or from The Living Farm in Colorado described earlier, we have sheep's milk from Sadie, Pollyanna, Cheyenne and their other dairy sheep (also all named), which are rare breed sheep that graze the Colorado fields.

How is the dairy you use different? Your free range eggs may also play a star role.

It's the water.

For soda pop, perhaps the deep well water plays a more important ingredient than one might imagine.

Some famous brew houses brag it's their water that makes their brew special. Your own may be an ingredient worth show-casing.

It's the flavors.

Look for farm or regionally grown flavors for both soda pop and ice cream. What fruits, nuts, edible flowers, unrefined sweeteners or herbs do you produce that could flavor ice cream, a lighter sorbet, or be blended into a soda pop flavor?

Walnuts? Cinnamon Basil? Wildflower honey? Orange mint? A hedgerow of wild or antique roses? Fresh melon?

Seasonal melon flavored soda pop is becoming vogue in certain gourmet outlets, but why stop at familiar melons.

What could you do with the highly perfumed Noir Des Carmes heirloom melon once grown by French monks, and now sold by Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds to grow in America?

You might want to start with a favorite homemade fruit drink or farm-grown iced herbal tea you've come to love (or a blend of both) and experiment with simmering it into a sweeter, thicker syrup and adding it to carbonated water.

As you can see, flavors for handcrafted soda pop and ice cream don't have to come only from tropical-grown fruits or imported exotic spices.

Flavor Combo Suggestions

Here are fabulous temperate-grown crop combinations to explore. The first ingredient is the dominate flavor, with the second one offering delicious undertones:

Pears and rose petals	Add ginger to the above, which can be		
Cranberries and rosemary	Peaches and coriander		
Nectarines and cinnamon basil	Strawberries and lavender		
Blackberries and mint	Blueberries and cornflower petals	Cherries and lavender	Lemon Verbena
and rosemary			



United Nations of Farms

Popular commercial soda pop flavors now come in various tea blends. What blend could you invent that has a geographical significance or memory specific to you that could add fair trade ingredients to your own farm grown ingredients?

One owner of Pelindaba Lavender Farm mentioned above is from South Africa. They mix fair trade rooibos tea (a South African native tea) with their own lavender to create a tea blend all their own.

Top Here are some thoughts beyond simply stocking your farmstand with farm-brewed soda pop or offering ice cream options to your CSA.

Enticing customers to the farm

Farms that sell direct sometimes like to draw customers and media exposure right onto their farm with various agritourism on-farm activities.

Try hosting a soda and ice cream social as a unique agritourism event.

While apple cider pressings and corn mazes are quite familiar agritourism activities, a soda pop and ice cream social could become a unique summer tradition for farm customers.

Lynn Gillespie, owner of The Living Farm where delicious sheep's milk ice cream is made, is just starting an agritourism venture on her farm offering sheep's milk ice cream as part of the farm tour.

In spring, lucky guests get to hold the baby lambs and, later, eat premium sheep's milk ice cream.

Make your own kits.

You may enjoy selling kits to others to make their own at home.

Depending on what you're offering, fill a box or basket with your fresh eggs, the right amount of herbs, flowers or fresh fruits, a bottle of your own or local milk or homemade carbonated water, and the recipe.

Farm or bakery partnership.

Partner with another local farm or artisan home baker if you don't raise all the ingredients, but both want more local value-added products to sell. A baker could possibly supply hand-made ice cream cones.

My family used to drive to Cascadian Farms in the foothills of the Pacific Northwest Cascade Mountains when it was independently owned.

After a day of picking strawberries or blueberries from their u-pick fields, we enjoyed how they mixed their organic berries with local dairies to sell out-of-this-world blueberry and strawberry ice cream at their roadside stand.

We also used to go to a u-gather filbert grove and bring home the nuts, which can eventually become a delicious topping for homemade ice cream.

Hand-crafted soda syrup.

Sell your own soda syrup on its own, allowing customers to take it home and add it in any way they wish to their own club soda or sparkling mineral water. (i.e., Green Hill Farm's Orange Mint Soda Syrup).

Connect with an urban destination.

There is a movement away from canned sodas and even away from soda "guns" at restaurants, and towards artisan, seasonal handcrafted sodas and ice cream floats.

In New York City, at the Savoy restaurant on Prince Street, summertime customers may order fresh handcrafted watermelon soda served with scoops of fresh market melons and lime-yogurt sorbet.

At Dogmatic Gourmet Sausage System, a hot-dog cart operating in a New York City playground in Abingdon Square, customers can purchase homemade ginger and strawberry sodas along with all-natural, nitrate and nitrite free beef, turkey and pork hot dogs from grass and flax seed fed animals.



Farmers are partnering with (and sometimes even starting their own) outlets in towns and cities to sell various value-added products grown on the farm. Remember that local micro and home beer brewing is now so popular, it's become a threat to the beer giants! A soft version is on the horizon.

About the Author: Barbara Berst Adams is the author of *Micro Eco-Farming: Prospering from Backyard to Small Acreage in Partnership with the Earth* (New World Publishing, 2004), www.MicroEcoFarming.com

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