

GELATO

Italian Dessert Becoming Frozen Favorite in U.S.



Gelato is Italian for ice cream. Although the two frozen treats share some common ingredients, the recipe for each and how they're made result in two different flavor and texture profiles. After years of being a specialty dessert found only in big city Italian restaurants, gelato is now mainstream in showcases at pizzerias as well as in gelato stores throughout the country. Technomic confirmed the growing demand as a recent survey showed 33% of consumers would order gelato for dessert in 2017, compared to 29% two years earlier.

Foodservice operators can work with producers of gelato made with Real California milk to tap into the growing popularity and offer a lower-calorie alternative to ice cream. Also by offering gelato, pizzerias and Italian restaurants are adding more authenticity to their menus.

GELATO FACTS

There are several key differences between gelato and ice cream.



- Like ice cream, gelato has a base of milk, cream and sugar. It generally contains more milk than cream, which results in a lower percentage of butterfat and more intense flavor.
- Gelato is churned at a slower speed than ice cream resulting in a denser product because less air is whipped into the mixture (Gelato: 25-30% air vs. 50% for ice cream).
- Unlike ice cream, gelato is usually made without egg yolks.



While U.S. law requires 10% butterfat for ice cream, there's no standard legal definition for gelato. Italian law states it must have a minimum of 3.5% butterfat.

Gelato is available in a myriad of fruit flavors as well as popular vanilla, chocolate, hazelnut, and stracciatella (vanilla with crunchy chocolate pieces).



STORAGE & HANDLING

- Ice cream is typically served frozen, but gelato is stored and served at a slightly warmer temperature, around 15°F, so it's not completely frozen.
- Foodservice operators generally serve gelato in showcases with pans displaying six to 24 flavors. Authentic gelato isn't scooped, it's served with a spade.
- The "best used by" date stamped on some gelato cartons tells you how long the product will be at top eating quality.
- After serving, return the gelato carton to the freezer immediately to help prevent ice crystals, which can form when gelato partially thaws and then refreezes.



FOODSERVICE APPLICATIONS

Front-of-the-House

The gelato snack and dessert trend has expanded beyond pizzerias and Italian restaurants. The most popular display in many Italian restaurants is the showcase in a prominent spot near the front counter or main dining area where the colorful, multi-flavored offerings sell themselves. Foodservice operators at non-Italian independent restaurants are also including gelato on dessert menus, as many consumers see it as a healthier and satisfying alternative to other sweets. There's an opportunity to upsell desserts by adding gelato as it gives customers the impression the dessert is special and worth the price. Additionally, operators are using gelato in place of ice cream in soda fountain specialties, such as milkshakes and malts.



WHAT'S TRENDING

New, On-Trend Flavors

In Italy, gelato is generally served with two-flavor combinations side-by-side. In California, gelato makers are adding their own twist by creating flavorful combinations inspired by popular ice cream and frozen yogurt flavors, such as cake batter, cookie dough, peanut butter cup, and more.

Cheers with Gelato

Mixing gelato and wine or spirits to create desserts with popular cocktail flavor profiles is a trend that satisfies adult palates.

Newest Dessert Option

Combine a scoop of gelato with a shot of espresso and it's an affogato — a growing application that's a dessert and beverage in one. Some operators use the simple affogato as a starting point for more elaborate dessert drinks.

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ICE CREAM & SOFT SERVE

California Top Producer of Frozen Favorites



Without a doubt, ice cream is one of Americans' most popular indulgences. It's the ultimate comfort food – the go-to choice after a long day at the office or school. Americans are considered to be the No.1 consumers of ice cream in the world, eating almost a pint a week – 48 pints of ice cream a year.

ICE CREAM FACTS

California ice cream production in 2017 totaled 106 million gallons.



The most popular ice cream flavors in the nation are vanilla, chocolate, cookies 'n cream and mint chocolate chip.

Ice cream is an energy-dense food, high in protein; it also provides small doses of calcium and numerous Vitamins including A and D.



It's estimated nine percent of total milk production in the U.S. is devoted to ice cream.

Ice cream is made by stirring, while freezing, a combination of milk or cream, sweetener and flavoring. Rapid freezing helps keep ice crystals small, while agitation incorporates air into the mixture, increasing volume.



Commercial ice cream mixes are pasteurized and homogenized before freezing and mixing and usually contain stabilizers and emulsifiers to improve texture and body.

Soft serve, which has been sold commercially since the late 1930s, is softer than regular ice creams due to air introduced during freezing.



The amount of air used changes the taste of soft serve. Low quantities of air make a heavier soft serve, while higher air content tastes creamier and lighter.



STORAGE & HANDLING

- Store ice cream in a sealed container in the freezer, set at 0 F.
- The “best used by” date stamped on some ice cream cartons tells you how long the product will be at top eating quality.
- To soften ice cream, transfer to the refrigerator for 10-20 minutes before serving. For faster softening, place the ice cream in its cardboard container in a microwave set to high and follow these timing guidelines (not recommended for products in plastic containers):
 - One pint = 10 to 15 seconds
 - One quart = 15 to 25 seconds
 - One half gallon = 30 to 40 seconds
- After serving ice cream, return the carton to the freezer immediately to help prevent ice crystals, which can form when ice cream partially thaws and then refreezes.



FOODSERVICE APPLICATIONS

Front-of-the-House

Business-minded foodservice operators covering all categories would do well to stock ice cream for their patrons—at least the ever popular vanilla and chocolate. Many restaurants offer California ice cream as part of dessert menus or in carry-out settings with multiple topping options – pecans are the most popular nut and strawberries the favorite fruit choice. Waffle cones and sugar cones are equally popular devices for consumers to load their icy treats.

Milkshakes have a strong following too as nothing is more gratifying on a hot summer day or night than a cool, refreshing milkshake. According to a recent Technomic report, 60 percent of consumers ordered a milkshake from foodservice in the past month.

Soft serve tastes best when the flavor is light and the texture is rich. Adding multicolored sprinkles, fruits or chopped nuts turns soft serve into an epic snack. Consumers young and old are used to seeing soft serve and its signature ridged swirl at mall kiosks and beach stands.

Ice Cream – Here’s the Scoop

Commercial ice cream must contain at least 10 percent milk fat, some premium ice creams contain 16 percent milk fat. Soft serve ice cream, as the name indicates, has a softer texture than traditional ice cream or gelato. Soft serve is lower in milk-fat (at 3-6 percent) than ice cream and is produced at a slightly higher temperature.

Both soft serve and regular ice cream are served in cups, cones or over another dessert. They’re also popular in milkshakes, which provide foodservice operators with a significant opportunity to drive visits, boost average tickets and increase customer satisfaction.

A scoop of Real California ice cream adds perceived value and pleasure as a dessert or snack. As the nation’s no. 1 producer of ice cream, California is the source of many smiles from very satisfied ice cream lovers throughout the country.

WHAT’S TRENDING

Door-to-Door Service

A number of ice cream retailers are now offering home delivery of scoops and quarts in line with the growing trend of off-premise indulging.

Fast Frozen Ice Cream

Liquid nitrogen is gaining in popularity as a way to fast freeze, custom-ordered ice cream. Flavor combinations are selected and instead of scooping out of freezers, the creamy mix is flash frozen with liquid nitrogen and served. The ice cream shops claim the flash freezing creates a smoother, creamier product.

Bite-Size May Be Better

While “super-sizing” has a certain following, a recent Technomic report shows that downsizing may be the way to go with desserts: Approximately 34 percent of consumers say they are more likely to order dessert if a smaller-portion option is available. Miniature desserts or dessert “flights” not only appeal to children and calorie-conscious consumers, but also could lead to off-hours business as consumers drop by for a quick pick-me-up. product.

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