

FOOD

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Hot or Cold, They're All Cool

Ice Cream Sandwiches, No Longer Frozen in Time

By **ANDREA SACHS**
Washington Post Staff Writer

To celebrate the first softball game of the season, Aaron Adkins surprised his Washington team with the quintessential summer-in-the-city treat: ice cream sandwiches. Sweet and nostalgic, the frozen dessert did more than just erase the sting of their loss.

"We sat on the Mall eating the ice cream sandwiches and watching the sun set," the congressional staffer says wistfully. "We felt like little kids again, from 32 going on 7."

Much like Pop Rocks and Yoo-hoos, ice cream sandwiches have that retro-regressive effect. One bite into cookie, then ice cream, then more cookie and you're back in pigtales or cowlicks, racing after the ding-dong truck. Plus, there's that sugar buzz.

"Who doesn't love cookies? And ice cream?" asks Cheryl Irby, an assistant at Moorenko's Ice Cream Cafe in Silver Spring and McLean, which sells house-made ice cream sandwiches. "They are a combination of two of America's favorite things."

Though most urbanites and suburbanites fondly recall the ice cream sandwiches of their youth — typically vanilla ice cream

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S'okay by Me if the S'mores Are Made Indoors

By **NANCY BAGGETT**
Special to The Washington Post

The graham cracker was invented as one of America's first health foods, but since at least the late 1920s, Americans have used it to sandwich layers of chocolate and toasted marshmallows to make s'mores.

The irony is not lost on me that a bland, no-frills cracker made with graham flour — named after 19th-century health crusader Sylvester Graham, who advocated its high-fiber wheat component — became the top and bottom of the classic, ooey-goey campfire treat.

These days, though, we're just as likely to build them using the heat of a backyard grill or order a make-your-own dessert kit in a restaurant — complete with mini-hibachi, sections of Hershey bars and white puffs with skewers at the ready.

The first written recipe for Some Mores appeared in a 1927 publication called "Tramping and Trailing With the Girl Scouts." Yevgeniya Gribov, archivist at the National Historic Preservation Center, Girl Scouts of the USA in New York, has furnished me with the original recipe, plus several later variations of Girl Scout s'mores, including one that called for slices of apple to replace the graham and peanut butter to stand in for the chocolate.

I might not mind adding peanut butter or maybe even apple

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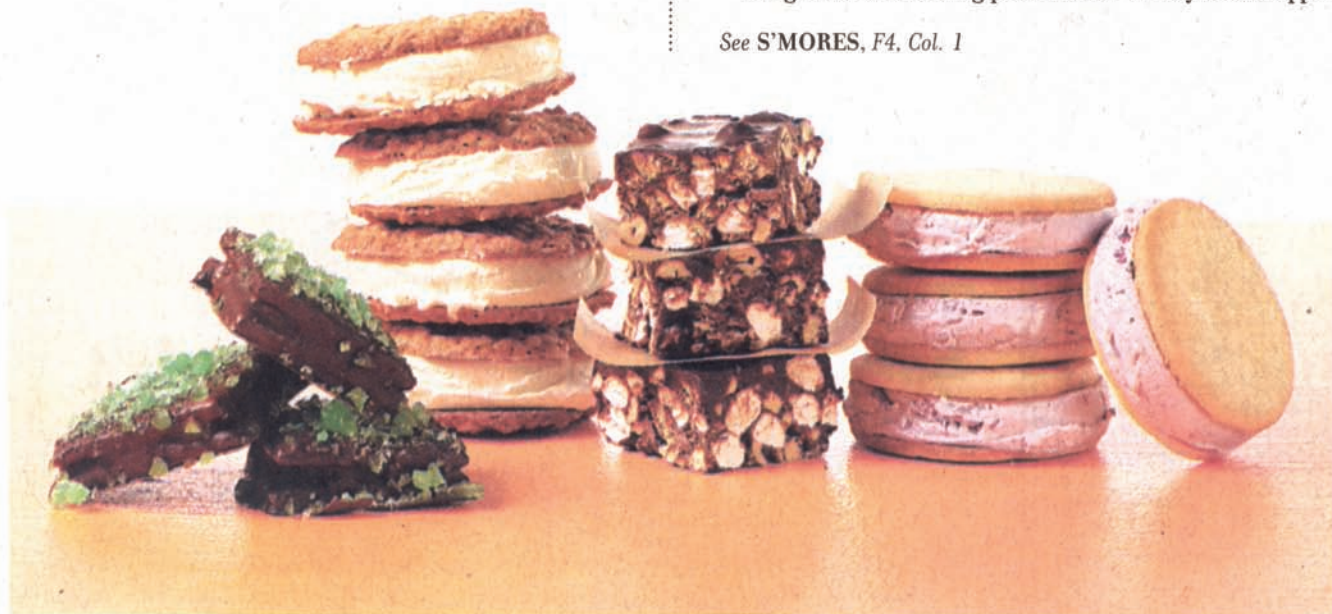


PHOTO BY RENEE COMET / STYLED BY LISA CHERKASKY FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

From left: Chocolate-Dipped Minted Indoor S'mores, Oatmeal Cinnamon Gelato Sandwiches, Quick No-Bake S'mores Bars, Lemon Cookies With Blueberry Lavender Ice Cream. Find recipes for these and other ice cream sandwiches and s'mores on Page F8 and online at www.washingtonpost.com/recipes.

Plain Vanilla No More

SANDWICHES, From F1

between two rectangular chocolate-cakelike pastries — today's versions are hardly a frozen relic from the Good Humor Age. Innovative professionals and home cooks are experimenting with gourmet ice cream flavors (honey lavender, green tea, etc.) and unexpected cookies (ginger, lemon) that seem to have redefined the genre.

"I was never an ice cream sandwich fan," says Adkins, who grew up in Southern California, "but I was always a fan of really good cookies and homemade ice creams in interesting flavors." Hence, for his softball opener Adkins ordered a case to be shipped from Oregon's Ruby Jewel Treats that included double-chocolate cookies with peanut butter ice cream, and ginger cookies with pumpkin ice cream.

The confection had a humble beginning — so humble, in fact, that "no one claimed the ice cream sandwich," says Ed Marks, an 81-year-old ice cream historian from Lititz, Pa. "It's not like the banana split; it just kind of evolved."

Early references date from the late 1890s, around the time two inventions were introduced: a utensil that easily sliced off slabs of ice cream, creating uniformly shaped sandwich fillers, and a mold that pressed ice cream between two wafers. "Ice cream sandwiches were one of the first novelties," Marks says.

The International Dairy Foods Association attributes the snack to late-19th-century New York City vendors who placed ice cream between two wafers to create a portable street snack for the masses. Soon after, the populist treat went upscale, appearing between macarons and fancy cookies at tea time. Meanwhile, on the opposite coast, George Whitney of San Francisco put vanilla ice cream between two large oatmeal cookies and dunked the whole shebang in dark chocolate. Today, his 1928 company has expanded the It's-It line with chocolate, mint and cappuccino ice cream sandwiches, the Big Daddy (vanilla ice cream between chocolate wafers) and Chips It (vanilla ice cream between chocolate chip cookies).

Lisa Herlinger, the 33-year-old founder of Ruby Jewel Treats, was inspired in part by It's-It, which she snacked on during her California childhood. "I think of a dessert and turn it into an ice cream sandwich," Herlinger says. "Like put a snickerdoodle cookie with mixed berry ice cream and call it a cobbler." That recipe, by the way, is still sitting in the ideas folder of her Portland-based business, which, besides op-

erating an online store, supplies West Coast farmers markets and groceries. Ruby Jewel does make espresso ice cream with cinnamon cookies, a combo based on her favorite Mexican mocha coffee drink, and honey lavender ice cream with lemon cookies. "I love putting lavender in everything," she says.

Erin McKenna, the 31-year-old founder of Babycakes, a vegan bakery in New York City, constructs her "ice cream" sandwiches with animal-free frozen vanilla frosting or blood orange sorbet (the former is matched with chocolate chip cookies, the latter with chocolate wafers). Locally, Cafe Gelato in Bethesda pairs more than 20 gelato flavors with chocolate chip cookies.

Few rules govern the "bread" portion of the sandwich. The tops and bottoms can be store-bought or made from scratch; oatmeal or chocolate; peanut butter or gingersnaps. In fact, they don't even need to be cookies: Try brownies, ladyfingers, waffles. "I'm not proud to say it, but in a rush, I have made chocolate ice cream sandwiches with unfrosted strawberry Pop-Tarts," says Bruce Weinstein, co-author with Mark Scarbrough of "The Ultimate Frozen Dessert Book" (William Morrow, 2005).

Moorenko's takes an almost literal approach to ice cream sandwiches, using handmade brioche as the bookends to every flavor. Owner Susan Soorenko discovered the concoction during a visit to Sicily, where locals eat the treat morning to night. Among her American crowd, the most popular ice cream sandwich flavors are Danish sweet cream, pistachio and salted caramel with pralines. "You need a dense ice cream: something meaty, like amaretto, salted caramel or butter pecan," Irby says. "It has to have more to it than vanilla or chocolate chip."

Home chefs with a yen to make their own ice cream sandwiches need to keep a handful of fundamentals in mind, starting with the all-important selection of the main components. Soft and chewy cookies with rich, dense ice cream — each with relatively simple flavors for better pairing possibilities — can make for a delectable confection that doesn't dissolve into a crumbly, drippy mess.

Of course, even a crumbly, drippy mess can be delectable. In the end, your taste meter is the best — and final — judge. "It's all personal," concedes Weinstein, he of the ice cream Pop-Tart sandwich. "There really are no mistakes — even garlic ice cream with oatmeal cookies."



PHOTO BY RENEE COMET / STYLED BY LISA CHERKASKY FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Clockwise from top: Chocolate-Dipped Minted Indoor S'mores, Quick No-Bake S'mores Bar, Lemon Cookie With Blueberry Lavender Ice Cream, Oatmeal Cinnamon Gelato Sandwich.

Ice Cream Sandwiches

Lemon Cookies With Blueberry Lavender Ice Cream

Makes about 20 cookies and 2 quarts of ice cream

Light and pretty in their color contrast, these sandwiches are a nice change from chocolate-cookie ice cream sandwiches.

You'll need a 3-inch round cookie cutter or a glass with a 3-inch opening. For best results, dip the rim of the cutter/glass in flour between uses. The cookies can be made several days or weeks ahead and frozen. The ice cream mixtures need to be refrigerated overnight, and the assembled sandwiches need a few hours to firm up in the freezer before serving. After you've made 10 sandwiches, you'll have ice cream left over for enjoying on its own.

Food-grade dried lavender and lemon zest oil are available at Sur La Table. Adapted from Lisa Herlinger of Ruby Jewel Treats in Portland, Ore.

INGREDIENTS

For the cookies

- 16 tablespoons (2 sticks) unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 1 cup superfine sugar
- ½ teaspoon sea salt
- 1 egg yolk
- 1 large egg
- ½ teaspoon lemon oil
- 2 teaspoons finely minced lemon zest
- 2½ cups flour, plus more for dusting

For the ice cream

- 2 cups whole milk
- 2 cups heavy cream, preferably not ultra-pasteurized
- 1 tablespoon dried lavender flowers (culinary variety)
- 4 large egg yolks
- ¼ cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon sea salt
- 1 pint blueberries, preferably fresh

DIRECTIONS

- For the cookies: In the bowl of a stand mixer or using a hand-held mixer on medium speed, combine the butter, sugar and salt and beat for about 3 minutes until light and fluffy. Add the yolk and whole egg in separate additions, then add the lemon oil and zest, beating until well incorporated. Reduce speed to

low and add the flour, mixing until well incorporated. Wrap the cookie dough in plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 1 hour or until firm.

- When ready to bake, preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Line 2 large rimmed baking sheets with parchment paper or a Silpat liner.

- Roll out the dough between 2 sheets of wax paper. Use a 3-inch round cookie cutter to form the cookies. Bake one sheet at a time for 12 minutes or until the cookies have browned slightly around the edges. Transfer them to a wire rack to cool completely. Wrap the cookies well and freeze until ready to use.

- For the ice cream: Have ready a large bowl filled with ice water and ice cubes.

- Combine the milk, 1 cup of the heavy cream and the lavender in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Cook for about 10 minutes, stirring, until the mixture begins to bubble around the edges. Be careful not to scald; do not allow the temperature to exceed 175 degrees. Strain and discard the lavender and return the mixture to the stovetop over medium heat.

- Meanwhile, in a medium bowl, whisk together the egg yolks, ½ cup of the sugar and ½ teaspoon of the salt until the mixture is fluffy. Temper the egg yolk-sugar mixture with a ladle of the warm

milk-lavender mixture, whisking constantly. Add the tempered mixture to the saucepan and cook for 10 to 12 minutes, stirring, until the custard begins to thicken. Transfer to a bowl and place the bowl in the ice-water bath to cool completely. When the mixture has cooled, add the remaining 1 cup of cream, stirring to combine. Cover and refrigerate the custard overnight.

- In a small saucepan over medium heat, combine the blueberries, the remaining ¼ cup of sugar and the remaining ½ teaspoon salt. Cook for about 20 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the mixture thickens. Transfer to a lidded container and cool completely. When it has cooled, combine the custard with the blueberry mixture and churn in your ice cream maker according to the manufacturer's directions. Cover and freeze the ice cream for 1 hour; the ice cream should be soft enough to scoop onto the frozen cookies.

- To assemble, scoop about 3 tablespoons of the ice cream onto the flat side of half of the cookies. Top with the remaining cookies, flat side down. Wrap well and freeze for a few hours, until the ice cream is quite firm.

NUTRITION Per sandwich (based on 10): 436 calories, 5 g protein, 50 g carbohydrates, 25 g fat, 15 g saturated fat, 127 mg cholesterol, 162 mg sodium, 1 g dietary fiber

Recipe tested by Bonnie S. Benwick and Hal Mehman; e-mail questions to food@washpost.com.