

# Extraordinary Ice Creams

When Susan Moses makes ice cream, she doesn't waste her time with vanilla and chocolate, although the International Dairy Foods Association reports they are the most popular flavors. Instead she reaches for black tea, Pecorino cheese, pomegranates, and other unusual ingredients to make cold and creamy creations.

Moses, co-owner and executive chef of 212 Market Restaurant, a 16-year-old fine-dining room in Chattanooga, Tennessee, doesn't make ice cream every day or even every week. It's too time consuming. "I do like to prepare unusual ice creams for private parties and special events, though," she says. The dessert at an Australian wine dinner, for example, included a Lapsang Souchong ice cream served in a fried wonton on a stick. "I infused the cream and milk with the tea and let it sit overnight. That gave the ice cream a caramel color, and the smoky flavor of the tea made it taste a little like Scotch," she explains.

The Pecorino ice cream was a big hit by mistake. "I had planned to add the cheese shavings to the hot custard but forgot. So I added them while the ice cream was churning. The result was delicious and much better than when I made it the 'right' way," she says.

Chefs like Moses find nearly any vegetable, fruit, herb, or spice can be churned into ice cream. Pumpkin ice cream is de rigueur for the fall holidays. In the summer, sweet corn is a popular flavor. It's unusual but not new. Patrick O'Connell of the Inn at Little Washington in Washington, Virginia, included it as an accompaniment for warm plum torte in his 2004 cookbook, *Refined American Cuisine: The Inn at Little Washington*.

Ice creams with the flavor—and sometimes the kick—of alcohol also are making the restaurant rounds. Moses makes ice cream with Jack Daniel's Tennessee Whiskey. "Sometimes we use it in floats. If a customer orders more than one, we call a taxi," she quips.

**212 Market Restaurant,**  
Chattanooga, Tennessee  
212market.com

**Inn at Little Washington,**  
Washington, Virginia  
theinnatlittlewashington.com

**Jeni's Ice Creams,**  
Columbus, Ohio  
jenisicecreams.com

**Laloo's Dairy,**  
Petaluma, California  
goatmilkicecream.com

**Mercers Dairy,**  
Boonville, New York  
mercersdairy.com

**Spotted Dog Creamery,**  
Salt Lake City, Utah  
spotteddogcreamery.com

Wine ice creams are another popular frozen dessert. Those from Mercer's Dairy ([mercersdairy.com](http://mercersdairy.com)) in Boonville, New York, were named "best new product" at the Great American Dessert Expo in Atlanta, Georgia, in June 2007. Using wines from the Brotherhood Winery in Washingtonville, New York, Mercer's offers six flavors, including Ala Port, Peachy White Zinfandel, Red Raspberry Chardonnay, Cherry Merlot, and Royal White Riesling.

Unlike some wine-flavored ice creams, Mercer's products really do have the flavor and the kick of wine. "They contain as much as five percent alcohol and are sold only to those of legal drinking age," says Roxaina Hurlburt, director of marketing. "We are licensed to sell in 45 states and hope to soon be available nationally."

Goat's milk ice cream is another cool trend. Laloo's Dairy ([goatmilkicecream.com](http://goatmilkicecream.com)) in Petaluma, California, makes ten flavors. Sysco, Whole Foods Markets, and other retail outlets sell them throughout the country. "Vanilla Snowflake is the most popular flavor, but our Black Mission Fig also is a big seller," says Laura Howard, founder. Other flavors include Capraccino, Deep Chocolate, Chocolate Cabernet, Rumpelint, Strawberry Darling, Molasses Tinsycake, Pumpkin Spice, and Lemon Chiffon.

Because goat's milk is creamier than cow's milk, the dairy doesn't have to add cream to produce an ultrapremium ice cream. That makes the product lower in fat than other ultrapremium ice creams and often more digestible for people who are lactose intolerant. "Our ice creams also recently were designated kosher," Howard adds.

These ice creams are just the first shelf of the freezer when it comes to new flavors. We found wasabi, barbecue, Thai basil, avocado, and many other unusual ice cream flavors being served around the country. How do customers react to them? Moses responds, "If it tastes good people will eat it."

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