



## Make Them Scream for Ice Cream

Knowing what drives ice cream sales can give you the competitive edge

Ice cream is a universal treat—just take a look of the burgeoning ice cream shop segment for proof of its appeal. According to a recent Mintel Menu Insights report, ice cream shop sales have grown 9% from 2005-09. In honor of National Dairy Month, we're taking a dive into the psychology of those who indulge in sweet, cold ice cream, because understanding the psychographics can help build a profitable ice cream menu.

Ice cream holds strong family appeal. But how do you entice each family member to indulge? From Mintel, December 2009: "For households with kids, toppings are important. In addition, kids are highly sensitive to brand names so the availability of these products is influential." According to that

same report, women enjoy variety in flavors of ice cream while men are looking for quality of ice cream and brand availability of toppings/mix-ins. The fact that men also are more apt to value name brand products clearly illustrates they link brand with quality. To that end, it behooves operators to clearly mark and display branded toppings." Older consumers, such as grandparents, are more concerned about the basics and less interested in toppings.

Mintel identifies fun as a fundamental characteristic of market innovation "through the use of co-branding initiatives, unique toppings and original formats to deliver ice-cream treats that appeal to kids and adults."

### Top Five Ice Cream Flavors\*

Vanilla  
Chocolate  
Vanilla Bean  
Strawberry  
French Vanilla

*\*Mintel Menu Insights, Q4 2009*



### Top Five Ice Cream Mix-Ins\*

Fudge  
Caramel  
Brownie  
Oreo Cookie  
Chocolate

\*Mintel Menu Insights, Q4 2009

Once the trends are understood, you need ideas that capture them. "We look at those reports and develop recipes that hit the sweet spots they call out," says Jeff Basalik, executive corporate chef at the Kraft Culinary Centre. "Our Black Forest Sundae with Oreo is a perfect example of that." In it, he layers strawberry ice-cream topping with vanilla ice cream and Medium Oreo Pieces, then finishes with a flourish of prepared whipped topping. For operators seeking menu distinction while still offering fan favorites, Chef Basalik suggests the Rocky Road Ice Cream Cake, which sees softened chocolate ice cream mixed with inclusions of Oreo Pieces and marshmallow. "You're giving diners what they want, but presenting it differently than the restaurant down the street," he says.

Again turning to ice-cream shop trends for insight into the habits of ice-cream lovers, Mintel tells us that there's op-

portunity in DIY ice-cream desserts. Roughly three out of 10 respondents expressed interest in creating their own ice-cream treats. This opens up point-of-distinction possibilities for school dining, casual dining and perhaps tableside service in fine dining.

However you choose to menu ice cream, the National Ice Cream Association offers these storage tips:

Keep your freezer temperature set between -5°F and 0°F

Never allow ice cream to soften and re-freeze. As ice cream's small ice crystals melt and re-freeze, they can turn into large, unpalatable chunks that lose the desired creamy consistency.

To ensure a tight seal, consider adding heavy-duty plastic wrap or aluminum foil around the mouth of the container.

### Black Forest Sundae with Oreo

<http://www.kraftfoodservice.com/recipes/black-forest-sundae-oreo-96965.aspx>

### Rocky Road Ice Cream Cake

<http://www.kraftfoodservice.com/recipes/rocky-road-ice-cream-97477.aspx>

**Please see your Sysco Marketing Associate for more information on popular ice cream flavors.**