

Ice Cream Flavors

By Vera Blaine

A long ago, about 400 B.C., when the Ancient Persian Empire covered much of South and Southwest Asia, people were making a cold dessert by pouring grape juice concentrate over snow. In those hot climates and desert areas, snow was available only from mountain tops and it was definitely not easy to obtain. Only kings and royalty were privileged to have this luxury. Snow from the mountains would be stored in underground chambers.

There are records that show China had a frozen mixture using milk and rice in the year 200 B.C. During the Roman Empire, many years later, people used ice brought from the mountains and combined it with fruit toppings. As early as the Ninth Century, the Arabs were the first to use milk as the main ingredient. Fruit juices, dried fruits and nuts were added for flavor. In those days, this cold food was popular in cities including Baghdad, Damascus and Cairo.

Along the trail in the history of ice cream and its flavors, there is a legend from the 1600s in England that tells about King Charles who had a high regard for what he called "frozen snow". He was so enamored with this dessert, he offered his ice cream maker a lifetime pension for keeping the formula a secret. In that same century of the 1600s, there were early recipes for flavored ices in French. One recipe stated that its results would be a fine consistency of sugar and snow.

Throughout the world and many centuries there have been great improvements in methods of making ice cream, and the varieties of ice cream flavors keep increasing. In Europe, Italy has always been the leader in innovations of this popular food. The small country of Finland is the leading consumer of ice cream per capita in Europe. This seems unusual as Finland definitely does not have a warm climate. On the other side of the world, Australia and New Zealand are among the leading ice cream eaters just behind the United States.

Back to the subject of ice cream flavors, today there are hundreds of flavors to choose from. A few exotic examples are: Chocoholic Fruitastic Nutmania Mix-In that is offered by Baskin Robbins; and Ben and Jerry's has a Premium Churned, Reduced Fat, No Sugar Added, Caramel Turtle Truffle Ice Cream. Personally, I'll settle for plain vanilla (with hot fudge) or Rocky Road.