



Ice dream makers

Break away from the bland and take control of your treats with a Best Buy ice-cream maker

DOING IT YOURSELF

Joanne White and daughters Zoe and Lucy

Joanne White and her daughters, Zoe (14) and Lucy (13), leapt at the chance to use an ice-cream maker with a built-in freezer to try four seasonally themed ice-cream recipes – rhubarb crumble and elderflower varieties for spring, basil for summer and Christmas pudding ice cream for a wintry treat.

Joanne was impressed with the results, enjoying the taste and texture of all of the ice creams – particularly the Christmas pudding and rhubarb flavours. Both girls were put off by the alcohol in the Christmas pudding ice cream, and Zoe didn't like rhubarb. But Lucy did experiment with citrus sorbet, with delicious results.

Joanne is positive about the experience for her family: 'It's nice for the girls to learn that you can make something like ice cream at home. And it was fun for us to do it together and make unusual recipes – like basil.'

However, the machine won't be essential kit for the White home – particularly as Joanne realised the ice cream needs to be eaten within a week, so making big batches for summer isn't an option. Cost was also a factor. 'The machines are very expensive and we spent more than £20 on ingredients,' Joanne said.

As the old rhyme goes 'we all scream for ice cream', and there's no doubt that a creamy scoop of your favourite flavour is the perfect treat on a hot summer's day. But a quick glance at the ingredients of supermarket ice cream can make it sound less than appetising – extracts of Irish moss seaweed (carageenan), ground-up locust beans and corn syrup are just three of the non 'ice' and 'cream' ingredients added to commercial products to improve their taste and shelf life.

As we all grow more aware of the impact the food we eat has on our health and the world around us, it's easy to think that indulgent desserts should be a thing of the past. But we beg to differ. Buy one of our Best Buy ice-cream makers and a whole new world of iced puddings, including ice cream, sorbets and frozen yogurt, will open up to you.

Be indulgent and virtuous

By controlling the ingredients that go into them, you can make your puddings as angelic or as devilish as you wish. Choose locally grown, seasonal fruits, free-range

eggs and organic dairy produce to build a better world as you make the dinner. Or go wild in the aisles and follow your fancy for exotic flavours – at Which? HQ we recreated Heston Blumenthal's egg and bacon ice cream and lived to tell the tale. Some of us even came back for seconds.

So if your body is a temple, you're on a restricted diet or the range of flavours offered by your local supermarket leaves you cold, take inspiration from the following pages and put an ice-cream maker at the centre of your family's desserts this summer.

OUR RESEARCH

When selecting ice-cream makers to test, we consult manufacturers, market intelligence reports and industry experts, then check availability on the high street and online. Tested models include top sellers from the most popular brands, products with innovative features and models from some lesser-known brands.

THE LOWDOWN ON LOW-FAT ICE CREAM

Is low-fat ice cream as tasty as the real thing? Spoons at the ready, our intrepid researchers dig in at our taste test

We investigated whether you can taste the difference if you use lower-fat ingredients in ice cream. In our chocolate ice cream taste test, the only difference between the recipes was the type of cream and milk used – there was a 24% difference in the amount of calories between the lardiast and the lightest recipe.

More than 30 Which? researchers joined in a blind taste test to see which recipe they preferred.

Unsurprisingly, the highest calorie load was the big winner: 47% of those who tried it preferred it. But there was less difference between the high and lower-calorie versions when people were asked to name their least favourite: 43% said the higher-calorie versions were their least preferred.

We also got the distinct impression that if you served the lower-fat versions at a dinner party, your guests wouldn't turn up their noses.



Buy seasonal produce **Save money and ensure that your ingredients are at their best by buying in season**

Our chart, below, shows you the seasons of some typical – and some not so typical – ice-cream ingredients. Although you can often buy these fruits throughout the year, they will be at their best and cheapest when in season.













The joy of making ice cream at home is that you can exercise your conscience at the same time as you broaden your horizons. Go to www.which.co.uk/icecreammakers

for tips on how you can use your ice-cream maker to reduce your food miles, encourage ethical farming, and more.

What to make

It is easy to find recipes to take advantage of seasonal fruits. Two of our favourite ice-cream-making websites are: BBC Food (www.bbc.co.uk/food) – an excellent

resource of ideas from TV chefs, with more than 200 ice-cream-based recipes to choose from; and Channel 4 Food (www.channel4.com/food), which has many ice-cream-based recipes from the channel's cookery shows. For a good range of more unusual recipes, including green tea flavour and liquorice toffee, check out the US website www.ice-cream-recipes.com.

Pears Forced rhubarb 	Forced rhubarb 	Early rhubarb Mint 	Watercress Mint 
Mint Rhubarb 	Basil Greengages Strawberries 	Gooseberries Tayberries Elderflowers Strawberries Redcurrants Cherries 	Blueberries Strawberries Watercress Loganberries Raspberries 
Damsons Plums Blackberries Apples Figs 	Elderberries Figs Watercress Apples Pumpkin 	Chestnuts Cranberries Pears Quinces 	Pomegranate Pumpkin Pears 

Buyer's guide

There are two basic types of ice-cream maker. We help you pick the one that's right for you

FREEZER BOWL

These use a bowl that is pre-frozen for around 12 to 24 hours – this cools your ice-cream mixture as it's stirred. They are cheap, costing less than £50, and don't require much power because they simply run the paddle – the freezing is done by your freezer. You need to plan to pre-freeze the bowl and have space in your freezer for it.



You should wait until the bowl returns to room temperature before washing it, or you could damage it. This, plus the pre-freezing time, means it's not for

those who want to make more than one batch at a time.

BUILT-IN FREEZER

These are quite expensive – usually between £200 and £300 – and freeze the mix as the paddle turns. They create their own freezing power and making each batch is equal to running a bright light bulb for an hour – you can cut energy costs by

pre-chilling the mix. Removable bowls can be washed as soon as the ice cream is removed, so are perfect if you want to make more than one batch at a time.





78% Cuisinart Ice Cream Bucket £50

This stylish machine creates good-quality ice cream, is a dream to operate and is easy to clean. Its pre-frozen bowl rotates quickly around a fixed paddle, mixing and freezing the ingredients consistently and rapidly. It's quick and easy to assemble; the components lock together with a simple twist. Unfortunately, it's a bit noisy. It's cheapest online at Amazon. **WE LIKE** Its glacial minimalist good looks are perfect for the iPod generation.

Available Online **Pre-freezing time** 6-22 hours **Bowl time** 30 mins max **Freezer time** Three hours max **Recipes** 18 **Guarantee** Five years



72% Russell Hobbs Temptations 13863 £25

This spinning-bowl ice-cream maker is quick and easy to use – superb for people who want to dabble in homemade ice cream for the first time. It's very easy to assemble and clean – the paddle can be removed without you getting messy. The lid has a large hole for adding the mixture into the bowl without spillage. It's cheapest from Asda's website. **WE LIKE** The great price makes it perfect for families on a tight budget.

Available Asda (online), Amazon, independents **Pre-freezing time** 6-8 hours **Bowl time** 30 mins max **Freezer time** Three hours max **Recipes** 39 **Guarantee** One year



73% Simac II Gelataio GC 5000 £200

The fabulous taste, texture and appearance of the ice cream made in this massive machine wowed our testers. Unusually, the ice cream is created in a sealed chamber – which seems to benefit the results. Only the removable bowl can be used to make ice cream. To reduce spillage, you can pour in the mixture before fitting the lid. It's cheapest from Domotec, which imports it from Italy.

WE THINK The price and size makes this best for serious ice-cream addicts.

Available Online **Pre-freezing time** None **Bowl time** 40 mins max **Freezer time** Three hours max **Recipes** 34 **Guarantee** One year



71% Magimix Gelato Chef 2200 £229

This machine produces lovely ice cream, but it could be easier to operate and clean. It has a built-in freezer, so there's no need to pre-chill the mixture. The mixture can be poured into the fixed or removable bowl with no mess before the lid and paddle unit is fitted. It's not particularly intuitive to assemble and requires good coordination to fit the pieces together. It's cheapest at John Lewis.

WE LIKE It's perfect for making batch after batch of top-quality ice cream.

Available John Lewis, Debenhams **Pre-freezing time** None **Bowl time** 40 mins max **Freezer time** Three hours max **Recipes** 35 **Guarantee** One year



Which? online

ice-cream makers **Search**

Our testing is second to none. Discover why

Find out at www.which.co.uk/icecreammakers why we made 72 batches of ice cream, did 64 separate

checks to rate convenience, and used rum and raisin and summer fruit coulis flavours to decide on our Best Buys.

USING THE TABLE

The more stars the better.

Specification

Price For Best Buys we give the cheapest widely available high-street price as we went to press. If we couldn't find them at major high-street retailers we give the most common online price. Prices for other models are a guide. **Built-in freezer** A ✓ freezes your mixing bowl as it churns. **Freezer space** Height and diameter needed in freezer to pre-freeze the bowl. **Capacity** The maximum quantity of ice cream. This is greater than its ingredients due to thickening and air added during the process.

Performance

Freezing time (bowl) How long the mixture took to freeze in the machine's bowl: ★★★★★ means less than 20 mins, ★ means more than an hour. **Freezing time (freezer)** How long the mixture required in the freezer before it was ready to serve: ★★★★★ means less than 2.5 hours, ★ means more than five hours.

Freezing capability

★★★★★ means it creates consistently mixed, evenly frozen ice cream and had no problems with soft fruit or alcohol. **Ice cream quality** How good the ice cream tasted, felt, looked and smelt. ★★★★★ had a consistent, firm, velvety, smooth quality. ★★★ was less appetising – lighter, softer, crunchier, less evenly mixed. **Ease of assembly** How easy it was to assemble and take apart. **Ease of cleaning** How easy it is to clean the exterior and components. **Noise** ★★★★★ means the machine was quiet during use, ★★ means it made a loud or irritating noise.

Score

Ignores price and is based on:
Performance **60%**
Assembly and operation **30%**
Cleaning **10%**

Contacts

Cuisinart 0870 240 6902
www.cuisinart.co.uk
Gaggia 01422 330295
www.gaggia.co.uk
Kenwood 023 9247 6000
www.kenwood.co.uk
Magimix 01483 427411
www.magimix.com
Philips 0845 601 0354
www.philips.co.uk
Russell Hobbs 0161 947 3000
www.russellhobbs.co.uk
Simac 01249 815511
www.domotec.uk.com

MODEL

- 1 **CUISINART** Ice Cream Bucket
- 2 **SIMAC** II Gelataio GC 5000
- 3 **RUSSELL HOBBS** Temptations 13863
- 4 **MAGIMIX** Gelato Chef 2200
- 5 **KENWOOD** IM250
- 6 **MAGIMIX** Le Glacier 1.1 11047
- 7 **CUISINART** Ice Cream Professional
- 8 **MAGIMIX** Le Glacier 1.5 11048
- 9 **GAGGIA** Gelatiera
- 10 **KENWOOD** IM200 Ice Cream Maker
- 11 **PHILIPS** Delizia HR 2304

a Not stated by manufacturer

Ice-cream issues

From stuck paddles to the perfect texture, your burning ice-cream-making questions answered

Q Why does my paddle keep getting stuck?

A There are several possible reasons. Firstly, if you have a pre-frozen bowl, you might be letting the bowl get too cold. The mix freezes on contact with the frozen bowl's surface. If the mixture freezes too rapidly to the bowl's surface, it makes it hard for the paddle to cut through it and turn. Add your mixture to the middle, not the sides of the bowl.

Secondly, if your mixture has chunky ingredients, the paddle might be getting caught on them. Check what size chunks the instructions say are safe to use and when you should add them to the mix.

Finally, your ice cream might just be ready sooner than you expect – so tuck in.



Q My ice-cream maker's lid keeps coming off – why?

A This is quite a common problem with designs where the paddle and motor assembly are part of the lid and attach to the freezing bowl with a bayonet action (like a bayonet-fitting light bulb).

If the paddle gets stuck, either in the stiff mix – ice cream gets stiffer as it freezes – or on a chunky ingredient, the paddle reverses direction to free itself. When this happens repeatedly it causes the lid to unscrew from the base.

To avoid it, don't over-cool your mixture and keep an eye on your mix. If the paddle does get stuck, remove it then scrape

the mixture off the sides of the bowl to allow the paddle to move freely.

Q Why isn't my freezer bowl freezing my ice cream?

A It could be a combination of reasons:

- the bowl wasn't in the freezer long enough
- your freezer isn't cold enough (it needs to be -18°C to set)
- you put too much mixture in the bowl

■ the ingredients are too warm

■ the bowl wasn't kept in an upright position and all the frozen liquid inside is unevenly distributed.



Q My sorbet is too tart. What's going wrong?

A The freezing process reduces the sweetness of fruit. Test the ripeness and sweetness of any fruit before

you begin and add some sugar to the recipe if it tastes a bit tart to begin with.



Q What are your top ice-cream-making tips?

A Always store ice cream in the centre of the freezer where the temperature is most constant. Its fresh ingredients and lack of preservatives mean homemade ice cream should be eaten within a week.

Before serving, leave at room temperature for 15 minutes or for 30 minutes in the fridge to let flavours develop.

Alcohol doesn't freeze well at normal freezer temperatures, so don't use too much.

Never refreeze ice cream: you run the risk of food poisoning, and the texture will deteriorate.

SPECIFICATION

PRICE (£)	SIZE (cm) (hwxwd)	WEIGHT (kg)	BUILT-IN FREEZER	FREEZER SPACE (cm) (hxdiameter)	CAPACITY (litres)	FREEZING TIME (BOWL)	FREEZING TIME (FREEZER)	FREEZING CAPABILITY	ICE CREAM QUALITY	EASE OF ASSEMBLY	EASE OF CLEANING	NOISE	SCORE %
50	29x26x23	3.1		14x18	1.5	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★	78
200	25x32x43	13.7	✓	n/a	1.2	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	73
25	29x24x23	3.2		15x18	1.5	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	72
229	30x25x35	10	✓	n/a	1.5	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	71
27	26x24x22	3.2		15x22	1	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	68
34	23x20x20	2.7		14x20	1.1	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	67
260	27x36x26	12.6	✓	n/a	1.5	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★	66
45	26x20x20	3.1		18x19	1.5	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	65
300	23x29x38	12.2	✓	n/a	ns ^a	★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	64
25	25x20x20	2.8		15x20	ns ^a	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	63
35	25x27x24	2.9		7x18	1	★★	★★★★★	★★★	★★★	★★	★★★★	★★★★★	52