



taste test: ICE CREAM

The smooth texture and creamy flavour of good ice cream really come into their own on a hot Summer's day...

It can be fun to make ice cream at home, but if you're pressed for time and are looking to buy a tub of something cooling and delicious, how do you know which brand to choose?

In one of our toughest assignments to date, the Preview team taste-tested 14 different brands of ice cream to report back on which we liked the best – and why.

The ice creams we tasted ranged from the highly marketed 'usual suspects' such as Häagen Dazs and Green & Blacks, to smaller, artisan brands including Booja Booja and Rocombe Organic.

One of our findings that came as a surprise was that some of the brands we'd expected to like the most were unanimously voted out of the test... there are some ice creams, we discovered, for which it's not worth getting fat. But at the other extreme, our final selection did rather debunk our previous aversion to some of the bigger brand names.

The E-number watchers amongst us also closely inspected the ingredients list on each tub.

To make ice cream at home, you need eggs, milk, double cream and sugar – and simple flavourings such as fruit or vanilla beans. The smaller brands we tested did, for the most part, limit themselves to just these ingredients. But some of brands listed more than 14 ingredients (we lost count on one of the tubs) and we came to the conclusion that any with more than ten ingredients – or with ingredients that are completely unpronounceable – should be rejected for that reason alone.

Of the 14 ice creams we tasted, here are the nine brands and flavours that we rated as being both delicious and wholesome. Our overall favourite turned out to be a handmade-in-small-batches ice cream from The Old Mill Museum in Lower Slaughter. It is SO delicious that we even considered keeping it to ourselves... but journalistic integrity finally won the day. To all existing fans of The Old Mill Museum's ice cream, our apologies for spreading the word and we hope that stocks last.

Here's to a delicious Summer.

TASTING NOTES

BEN & JERRY'S – CHOC FUDGE BROWNIE

Gorgeous brownie flavour and proper brownie chunks. £1.39 / 150ml. From all good supermarkets

BOOJA-BOOJA 'STUFF IN A TUB' – MAPLE PECAN

The only non-dairy we approved. Crystalline texture, on balance a good ice cream substitute and gorgeous flavour. £5.49 / 500ml. From health food shops

ESPICE – CINNAMON

Exotically spicy ice cream with a fabulous texture. Would be perfect with hot apple pie. £5.99 / 500ml. Maby's, Stow on the Wold: 01451 870071

GREEN & BLACK'S – CHOCOLATE

We nearly came to blows over this one! Texture of chocolate mousse. £1.59 / 150ml. From all good supermarkets

HÄAGEN DAZS – DULCE DE LECHE

Toffee flavour to drown in. It melted the fastest, so didn't waste any time – just enjoy. £3.99 / 500ml. From all good supermarkets

HILL STATION – PASSION FRUIT AND WHITE CHOCOLATE

Amazingly smooth, rich texture with a subtle flavour. £3.50 / 500ml. From all good supermarkets

PURBECK – CAPPUCINO

Lovely soft texture and a good delicate flavour. £4.99 / 500ml. Maby's, Stow on the Wold: 01451 870071

ROCOMBE ORGANIC – COFFEE

Lovely dense texture, a mouth-filling coffee flavour (but not too strong) – and funky packaging. £4.50 / 500ml. Wychwood Deli, Milton-under-Wychwood: 01993 832583

THE OLD MILL MUSEUM ICE CREAM

We loved it so much we tried seven flavours. A close-run thing but the overall winner of our taste-test was Wild Strawberry – heavenly. £1.99 / 150ml. Only from The Old Mill Museum, Lower Slaughter: 01451 820052

