

Vanilla Ice Cream

An ice cream base with the smoothness, body, and stability of a traditional French vanilla, with a bit lower fat, without the egginess, and with a less oily mouthfeel.

Makes 3/4 quart to 1 quart

370g (1-1/2 cups) whole milk*
1 vanilla bean (preferably Madagascar)
15g trimoline**
85g granulated sugar
32g dextrose**
25g (2-1/2T) nonfat dry milk***
1g (1/3 tsp) powdered gelatin
0.3g (1/8 tsp-) xanthan gum
1g salt
2 egg yolks (36g)
360g (1-1/2 cups) heavy cream*

*Use the best quality milk and cream you can get, ideally from an artisanal farm. Avoid ultrapasteurized cream. Unhomogenized milks and creams are ok, but may lead to a slightly icier texture.

**if you don't have dextrose and trimoline, use 130g (3/4 cup minus 1 TB) of granulated sugar and add 10g (2 tsp) vodka (or alcohol-based vanilla extract)

***Dry milk needs to be high quality and it needs to be fresh and properly stored. There should be no off odors either when it's dry or when it's mixed. Better to leave it out than to use substandard dry milk. If you leave it out, increase sugar to 140g and increase vodka to 1TB.

-Mix trimoline into the milk and heat just until it steams (about 180°F / 82°C). While it's warming up, split the vanilla bean lengthwise and scrape the seeds into the milk with the tip of a finger or paring knife. Add the bean pod to the milk. When the mixture reaches temperature, remove from heat. Let it sit covered for 30 minutes.

-Whisk yolks until pale (optional—to diminish yellow color of base)

-Remove vanilla bean from milk and set aside. Thoroughly mix the granulated sugar, dextrose, dry milk, powdered gelatin, xanthan gum, and salt. Whisk this mixture into the milk.

-Temper yolks with a portion of the warm milk and pour the milk / yolks back into the saucepan.

-Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly and scraping the bottom and corners with a spatula until the custard thickens (about 180 to 185°F / 82° to 85°C). Turn down heat and continue stirring vigorously for 15 seconds, then remove from heat and stir another 15 seconds. (The gum will have pre-thickened the custard, and the gelatin will thicken it a bit at around 140 degrees. Be sure to heat enough to thicken the egg yolk. It will be a bit subtle.)

-Pour the custard into the heavy cream. Put the vanilla bean back in. Chill thoroughly, at least 8 hours. If making a large quantity (more than 1 quart) chill in an ice bath before refrigerating.

-Strain with a fine strainer or chinois (important). Rinse and reserve vanilla bean for something else. Spin in the ice cream maker. With a multispeed machine, start on slowest speed. At end when ice cream firms up and begins to expand, raise speed until you get the volume you want (this recipe works best with a low overrun). Ideal drawing temperature is 23°F / -5°C.

-Harden for several hours (ideally overnight) in a cold freezer. Ideally freezer should be set to -5°F / -20°C or lower. Ice cream will have to warm up several degrees before serving. 20 to 30 minutes in the fridge works well. Ideal serving temperature is 6 to 10°F / -14 to -12°C.