

805

LIVING

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Summertime:
The Big Chill

SWEET ON SORBET

Ice down the summer heat with this fruity treat.

WHILE I'M NOT one for self-denial when it comes to food, I have realized in recent years that my nightly ice cream habit had to go. It could be my slowing metabolism (thank you, thirties), or it could be that I don't get enough exercise (inexplicably, wrangling kids doesn't yield the same results as a gym workout). For whatever reason, that big bowl of Häagen-Dazs dulce de leche at the end of the day was definitely catching up with me. I needed to find a waist-friendly replacement—and fast. So I tossed a pint of sorbet into my shopping cart and hoped I could make the switch.

In fact, sorbet has been a really refreshing change of pace: It's much more healthful than ice cream, since most sorbets are *naturally* dairy- and fat-free. And sorbet's intense flavors more than make up for the absence of all that cream—it's exciting to the taste buds without leaving you overstuffed afterwards. In fact, sorbet is one slim, chic frozen dessert compared to its considerably fluffier cousin. Häagen-Dazs makes some darn good sorbets (just try a scoop of mango alongside a scoop of raspberry and you'll see), and joining them in the frozen foods section is an increasing number of ice cream purveyors who are offering water-based flavors that will make you forget all about heavy cream—or at least not miss it quite as much.

While tart citrus sorbets can be served as a palate cleanser between courses if you like to entertain restaurant-style, I like sorbet best as a dessert: Pair two contrasting flavors (strawberry and lemon, for example) and serve with a light cookie, such as a macaroon or tuile.

Read on for some great places to find sorbet in Southern California—and a fantastic recipe for trying it at home.

AT THE MARKET

PICK UP PINTS OF THESE SORBETS AT YOUR LOCAL MARKET OR ONLINE.

They're perfect for serving as a light ending to a summer dinner party.

CARMELA ICE CREAM (323-319-6084; www.carmelaicecream.com) has three Los Angeles locations and is also sold at LA farmers' markets from Culver City to South Pasadena; most convenient is to order it online (it's shipped overnight). Some of the dozen-plus sorbet flavors this summer include blood orange, blackberry-vanilla bean, and Meyer lemon-basil.

CIAO BELLA (800-343-5286; www.ciaobellagelato.com), a New York company specializing in Italian-style frozen desserts, offers 10 of its sorbetto flavors packed in pints; among them are banana-mango, coconut, and strawberry-chardonnay. Look for it at Safeway, Gelson's, Whole Foods Market (some locations also sell Ciao Bella by the scoop), and online.

HÄAGEN-DAZS (800-767-0120; www.haagen-dazs.com) might be the most widely available brand of sorbet: You can find some of its half-dozen water-based flavors—including peach, strawberry, and chocolate—in most supermarkets. The brand's "reserve" label now features a Brazilian acai berry sorbet, too.

MASHTI MALONE'S (866-767-3423; www.mashti-malones.com) is based in LA (the scoop shop is on La Brea), but you can find pints of it at local Whole Foods stores and online, too. They make a pomegranate sorbet and a rose sorbet.

Oxnard's own **NATURAL CHOICE** (805-485-1127; www.ncf-inc.com) began making sorbet as a way to use up a bumper crop of local strawberries; they now produce organic sorbet in seven flavors—raspberry, strawberry, blueberry, banana, lemon, mango, and strawberry-kiwi. Look for it at Lassen's, Lazy Acres, and Whole Foods.



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Taste



IN THE KITCHEN

Make it at home with this classic recipe.

BERRY SORBET

This recipe comes courtesy of Dole Food Company, whose Dole Nutrition Institute (www.dolenutrition.com) is based in Westlake Village. We tested this recipe in a Cuisinart frozen-canister-style countertop ice cream maker, which worked very well.

- ¾ cup granulated sugar
- 2 tablespoons blackberry or raspberry preserves
- ⅔ cup warm water
- 1 package (16 ounces) fresh frozen blackberries or raspberries, thawed
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

Combine sugar, preserves, and water in medium mixing bowl, stirring until sugar dissolves. Puree blackberries or raspberries with lemon juice in food processor. To remove seeds, force through a fine strainer into bowl. Add sugar mixture and stir well to combine. Chill until cold.

Freeze according to ice cream machine manufacturer's directions. (Mixture may also be poured into shallow metal cake pan and put in freezer until solid; about 6 hours. Break into chunks and process in a food processor until smooth.)

Serves 6.

OUT AND ABOUT

If it's a single-size serving of sorbet you're craving, look no further than these local restaurants and scoop shops.

BEN & JERRY'S (802-846-1500; www.benjerry.com) has scoop shop locations in Simi Valley, Thousand Oaks, and Northridge; its pints are also available in grocery stores. Look for lemon, mango, and a chunky strawberry-and-kiwi-swirl sorbet.

HERE'S THE SCOOP (805-969-7020) in Montecito makes their own sorbets (and gelatos) on-site using fruit sourced mainly from local farmers' markets. As such, July is the perfect time to stop by to taste a variety of sorbet flavors like apricot, peach, plum, strawberry, mango, watermelon, and lemon-lavender.

MILK (323-939-6455; www.themilkshop.com) is a café, ice cream parlor, and bakery based in Los Angeles; at press time, they were planning on opening a Malibu location in October, so keep on the lookout for that. Some of this summer's sorbet flavors include mango-lime, mojito, and Bing cherry.

If it's light Asian flavors that appeal to your palate, **ONYX** restaurant, located in the Four Seasons Hotel Westlake Village (818-575-3000; www.fourseasons.com) is the destination: Don't miss the house-made yuzu sorbet or lemon-ginger sorbet.

PACIUGO GELATO CAFFÈ

(805-497-4449; www.paciugo.com) opened earlier this year at The Oaks. Paciugo has a number of sorbet flavors in addition to its gelato lineup; look for blackberry-cabernet, raspberry-lemon, and passion fruit, among others.

SIDECAR RESTAURANT

(805-653-7433; www.thesidecarrestaurant.com) serves a tangerine sorbet with a blood orange and honey tart; it's recommended by food writer (and 805 Living contributor) Sarene Wallace. ■