



Now that summer is here, it's finally time for grilling and chilling. For the chilling, there's nothing better than ice cream. We have great ice cream shops across the communities we serve (I've been to many), but sometimes it's a treat to make it yourself.

I like the ice cream makers with the freezable cylinders, and almost always have an extra cylinder in the freezer. They're compact, easy to store and easy to use – so you can make more ice cream. Double-walled easy-

to-scoop plastic ice cream containers are also handy.

There are lots of recipes, online and in cook books. It's hard to go wrong. Most recipes start with a cooked custard (lots of eggs, cream, milk and sugar), which you cool and then add a puree with whatever flavorings you like. If it tastes good while you're making it, it will taste great once it goes into the ice cream.

Here are some basic tips:

- Whatever recipe you use, you won't regret doubling it. (Keep an extra cylinder frozen and ready.)
- Whatever flavor ingredient you use, increase that too.
- Take advantage of fresh fruits when you can (berries, rhubarb, peaches, pears, pitted cherries, huckleberries), but frozen fruits work well too.
- Don't be afraid to use some different ingredients (balsamic vinegar with fresh strawberry; olive oil, broken cookies) – but give your family final sign off. (No gummy bears for me.)
- There's no such thing as too much lemon zest.
- Cook the custard until it's thick on the spatula. "Stir constantly" (put your phone down). Cool the custard completely, stirring from time-to-time – overnight is fine.
- Allow time for the finished ice cream to set up in the freezer before you serve.
- Homemade ice cream can get rock hard after a day or so in the freezer. I recommend moving it to the refrigerator 20 minutes before you serve it.

Be Rare



Fresh Strawberry Ice Cream

INGREDIENTS

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 ½ cups whole milk | 8 egg yolks |
| 2 ⅔ cups heavy cream | 1 ¼ cups sugar |
| ½ vanilla bean, split (or more, if you like) | 1 pint juicy strawberries (or as many more as you want) |

DIRECTIONS

- 1 Combine milk and cream in a large saucepan, add vanilla bean, and bring to a near boil, while stirring. Reduce heat and simmer for about five minutes.
- 2 In a medium bowl, whisk the egg yolks with one cup of sugar, until smooth.
- 3 Remove milk and cream mixture from burner and remove vanilla bean. (I scrape the seeds from the pod into the mixture.)
- 4 Whisk about one cup of milk mixture into the eggs to cure, stirring.
- 5 Pour egg mixture back into the milk and cream in the saucepan, stirring.
- 6 Return the saucepan to the burner, and cook over low heat, stirring constantly. (Put your phone back down.) Thicken. Do not boil.
- 7 Strain the mixture into a bowl, and chill well, stirring occasionally. (You can refrigerate overnight.)
- 8 Rinse and stem the strawberries, crush. (It's up to you how smooth or chunky to make it.) Stir in the remaining ¼ cup of sugar with the berries, and let sit in a cool place.

9 When you're ready, combine the custard and the berries in an ice cream maker, and churn for about half an hour (or until you can't wait any longer).

Variations

- This is a good recipe to double. Adjust the proportions of milk and cream to your taste.
- Rhubarb is a great addition at this time of year. You may need more sugar. (Anything else you like with strawberries works too – blueberries or blackberries for example.)
- Balsamic vinegar gives a combination of sweet and sour flavors, but it's not everyone's favorite flavor.

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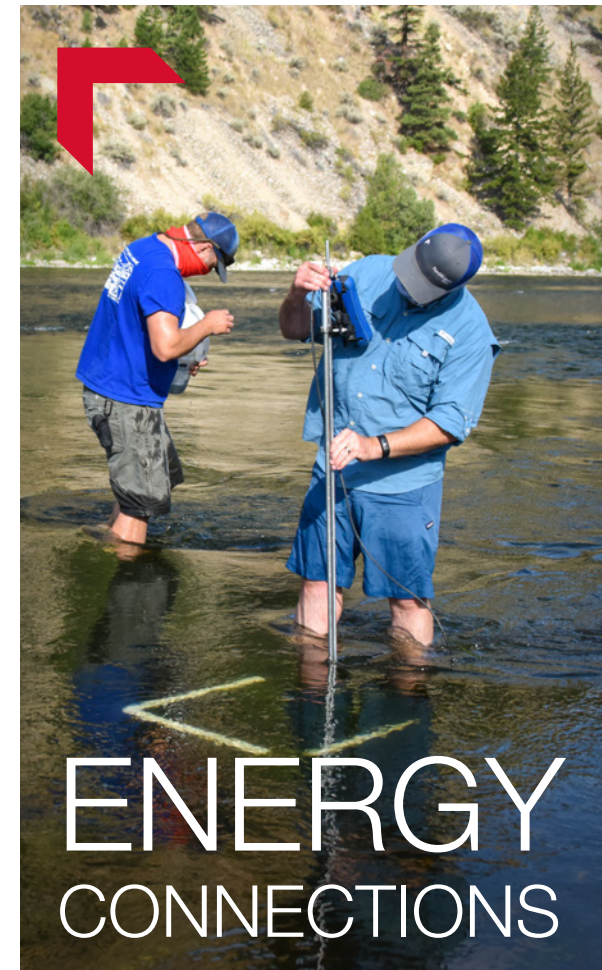


We are proud of the diversity in the communities we serve. To better serve the needs of some of our customers, we translate important customer information into two languages: Spanish and Karenic.

Estamos orgullosos de la diversidad en las comunidades que servimos. Para satisfacer mejor las necesidades de algunos de nuestros clientes, traducimos información importante del cliente a dos idiomas: español y karenic.

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LOOK INSIDE FOR INFORMATION ON:

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- Be alert near dams
- Get a free E+ Home EnergyCheck
- Fresh Strawberry Ice Cream Recipe
- Employee feature



How we monitor the health of Montana's rivers

Every summer, NorthWestern Energy's Environmental Group covers some 300 miles collecting macroinvertebrate samples throughout the Missouri-Madison river system.

Macroinvertebrates, or aquatic insects, offer clues about how a river is doing.

"It can tell us about the overall health of a river system," said Jordan Tollefson, water quality specialist with NorthWestern.

NorthWestern Energy started macroinvertebrate sampling around 2000, with some sites going back as far as 1996. It's one of the longest continuously running data sets in the state.

The group monitors 11 sites starting inside Yellowstone National Park and going all the way down river to bellow Morony Dam.

The data set allows us to see trends over time. Some of those changes are cyclical, such as droughts or high flows in the spring. Other trends allow us to see whether

management techniques are effective. For example, caddis fly numbers below Holter Dam have been on the rise since 2013. This is likely because of two high flow years.

The Hydro Compliance Team also looks at chlorophyll levels, which offer insight into the overall nutrient levels in a river. They look at sediment and fish data as well.

This large data set allows them to compare different factors to get a big picture of what's going on in the river system.

"Everything ties together," Jordan said.

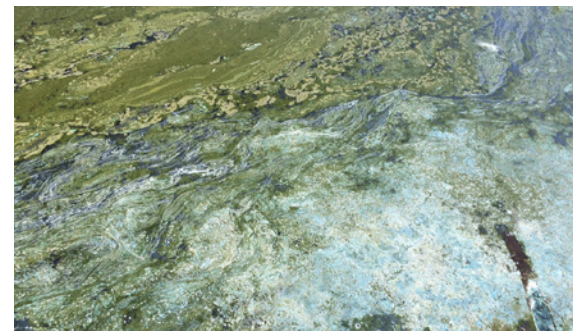
The macroinvertebrate sampling is done at the same time every year, in late summer when water is lower and easier to work in. It takes about three to four days to monitor all the sites. Various partner organizations, including Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks and the Montana Department of Environmental Quality, pitch in to help with the field work.

Stay away from blue-green algae

While most algae is not toxic, Montana does see toxic algae blooms on occasion. Blue-green algae blooms can occur anytime from May through October, but are most common during hottest summer months, according to the Montana Department of Health and Human Services.

Toxic blue-green algae can occur throughout Montana in any standing body of water that is exposed to the sun, including lakes, reservoirs and stock ponds. Certain conditions can lead to an algae bloom, including high levels of nutrients and warm water temperatures.

If you see blue-green algae, which can look like pea soup or green latex paint, stay out of the water. Don't allow pets to drink the water or children to play in it. If you do enter the water, rinse off as soon as possible with fresh water. If you encounter an algae bloom, report it online at hab.mt.gov or call 888-849-2938.



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Be alert near dams

Boating

Water levels can fluctuate rapidly near dams. Never take your boat past restrictive cables or warning signs. Depending on maintenance schedules and periods of high river flow, boat restraining systems upriver of a dam may not be in place. Never boat alone.

Fishing

If you fish from a boat below a dam, always wear your life jacket and leave your engine running. The water below a dam can boil up and trap or capsize a boat. Anchoring below dams is dangerous and should never be done. Never fish alone.

Wading

While wading, always wear your life jacket and use a walking stick in river channels. Never wade or swim alone.

If caught in the water or swept off your feet:

- Stay calm, lie on your back and don't try to stand up.
- Drop any items that weigh you down.
- Keep feet up and pointed downstream to avoid hitting rocks and entrapments.
- Go with the current and move diagonally across the current until you reach the shore.
- Roll onto dry land to drain boots or waders. Don't stand until the water is out of waders.
- If trapped on an island, signal for help. Don't risk crossing the river.