



Christina said: “The ice cream and frozen dessert market offers caterers the opportunity to increase the average spend per head while also satisfying the customers’ craving for something sweet, whether that be after a delicious meal or to enjoy on the go.

“As with the variety demanded across the rest of the menu, the key to maximising on the sales opportunity presented by desserts is to ensure customers can choose from a number of different flavours and styles, including ice cream and sorbet to cater for a range of tastes.

“When it comes to the provision of ice cream, the decision should be made as to whether a caterer is going to buy-in readymade ice cream or produce its own in house.

“By purchasing readymade ice cream, operators can ensure consistency, while purchasing from a renowned manufacturer ensures only the finest ingredients are used, and with the choice of flavours and varieties available continues to grow to meet demand, ice cream offers the perfect solution for those with a sweet tooth.

“Not over filling, yet refreshing, vibrant and capable of satisfying the cravings of both adults and children alike, ice cream provides a cost effective treat and offers excellent margins for the operator.”

Michele said: “Despite the economic crisis of previous years, consumers’ habits did not change dramatically when it comes to ice cream, frozen yoghurt or frozen desserts.

“Whilst they may have had to cut back and reduce purchase frequency to save money, there has been a tendency in the desserts’ sector to increase spend by trading up to luxury variants instead of trading down.

“This proves that consumers are also willing to pay more for quality products occasionally.

“Most frozen yoghurt products can be sold in a pot of various sizes, with or without toppings and are perfect for ‘on the go’ snacking.

“Quick snack options are a necessity for today’s busy lifestyles and there are endless solutions for customers to grab a quick bite to fill the hunger gap.





“Frozen yogurt products in particular have universal appeal when marketed correctly. Kids love all the excitement of choosing from different toppings, adults and the elderly love traditional flavours. Whilst women are often known to be more ‘conscious of what they are eating’, being able to offer frozen yogurt already gives them a healthy base product to add their favourite topping to.”

What products can businesses add to their menu to make sure they are keeping up with consumer trends?

Rob said: “The best way for operators to keep up with consumer trends is to produce ice creams and sorbets on site. Ice cream and sorbet machines are becoming increasingly popular and are easy-to-use.

“Creating specialist ice creams or sorbets on site can offer a point of difference to QSR and food-to-go venues and enable operators to adapt flavours to suit customer demand and to create signature flavours or dishes.”

Having previously highlighted the growing demand for flavours from yesteryear, Rebecca added that Suncream had launched three new luxury Italian-style Gelato Gold ice creams - lemon curd meringue, bubblegum & marshmallow and clotted cream - which are all made in a nut-free environment using a recipe which is suitable for vegetarians and those seeking a gluten-free product.

She said: “We expect these new ice creams to be particularly popular this summer as they are bang on trend in terms of flavour.

“If you invest time in developing your ice cream menu, there are some great opportunities out there to build sales.

“Make sure that it appeals to consumer tastes and lifestyles but also that it is realistically achievable within budget constraints.

“Great quality at an attractive price is a key driver within the sector but equally, don’t be afraid to push the boundaries by introducing new or unusual flavours. Stock as many flavours as is economically viable but consider the practicalities - the greater your range, the more freezer space you’ll need.”

Like Suncream, New Forest Ice Cream also specific flavours that are more popular with different generations.





Christina said: “While our scooped ice cream range is universally liked, there are specific flavours that are more popular with different generations. For example, the Bubblegum flavour or our Strawberry Spilt or Orange Lolly is a massive hit with our younger audience, whilst our more mature customers are more likely to go for something like Liquorice or Peach Bellini. Sorbets are again targeted at adults with flavours such as Sambuca and Champagne.”

However, Mike suggests that ice creams with a mix of old and new flavours are growing in popularity.

He said: “Recently, we discovered that when it comes to making serious profit margins in the ice cream industry, it is all about creating unusual and imaginative flavours - a ‘dessert with a difference’.

“One key trend that has emerged from our research is a fusion of old and new – ice cream with an alcoholic or ‘faux-alcoholic’ twist. In northern outlets, ‘stout’ in particular is finding increasing popularity, while southern consumers enjoy a fruitier ‘Rum and Raisin’ and ‘Amaretti Amaretto’. It is extremely important to understand your consumers and cater for their various taste choices. Be imaginative and creative in your menus with the marriage of flavours and create real serv-

“However, that’s not to say traditional flavours aren’t still an important staple for operators – a great vanilla ice cream can be excellent! What really counts and aids the bottom line is the overall quality of the product.”

Michele, highlighted the need for quick service restaurants to consider both luxury and health when choosing the products on their menus.

She said: “The desserts category can be polarised by those seeking pure indulgence and luxury versus those looking for a healthy or guilt-free treat.

“Frozen yoghurt desserts can satisfy both ends of the scale by being the base product that can be customised by the consumer to suit their need-state.

“Fresh fruit and granolas, for example, offer a more satisfying healthier angle but chocolate, confectionery and other funky toppings are also perfect for those seeking to satisfy their cravings for all things sweet.

“Frozen yoghurt is also a great base for milkshakes, smoothies and other frozen drinks which are becoming more and more popular especially in the food-to-go sector.





“The trend towards ‘free from’ can also be addressed with frozen yoghurt being a gluten-free option.

“Over the past years, there has been a rise in products such as dairy-free ice cream and frozen yoghurts. The former targets consumers who are lactose-intolerant or follow diets that restrict dairy intake.”

What products are available to ensure ice cream and frozen desserts are presented at their best and how do you choose what’s right for your business?

When it comes to presentation, choosing the crockery with care was the advice from our experts. Michele said: “This is probably the one sector where you can really have some fun with merchandising and presentation. Traditional crockery and glassware for ice cream/frozen yoghurt desserts can range in size and shape and even colour, making a lasting impression on consumers. In some outlets, the presentation of items can really create visual appeal and attract impulse purchase.

“Some outlets that sell our Coolberry Café frozen yoghurt have chosen to brand their soft serve machines and site them in a self-serve area. The colourful machine, is in itself an attraction for purchase.”

Rebecca added: “Plate appeal is key to satisfying the temptation factor so you need to take care with the presentation of ice cream and frozen desserts.

“Choose your crockery with care and make sure it complements the colour of the ice cream and size of the portion. Present it on a beautiful plate instead of in bowls or high-sided dishes which can squash the ice cream scoops, and decorate it tastefully with top quality ingredients.

“You could also try serving a tasting platter of different flavoured ice creams in shot glasses - mini portions will encourage your customers to treat themselves without over-indulging!

“Attractive presentation is also vital if you are to encourage spontaneous ‘to go’ sales of scooping ice cream. Make sure your freezer cabinets are kept spotlessly clean and well stocked at all times as the ice cream needs to be kept in optimum conditions and displayed attractively if you are to capture those impulse purchases.”





Mike agreed: “It would be a crime to let super-premium ice cream that tastes this good be served in any old glass or traditional bowl. Opting for cocktail glasses for example, with a long stem, which allows the temperature of the ice cream to remain unaffected whilst the drink is being held and also gives off a stylish aura. Additional items such as fresh fruit, peel, chocolate or sparklers top off the impressive appearance.”

Rebecca was also keen to point out that storing ice cream correctly was important as temperature abuse can affect the quality of the product.

To keep ice cream in optimum condition she advised these five easy steps:

- Only take the product out of the freezer just before it needs to be served – keeping your freezer at -18 C should enable the product to be scooped straight from the freezer.
- Keep the lid on if you are leaving it outside the freezer for any length of time – not only does it help with retaining the temperature but it keeps foreign bodies out!
- Return the ice cream to freezer as quickly as possible as air comes out of it when it begins to defrost, making the product both icy and hard to scoop when it needs to be used the next time
- Always keep ice cream below the fill level of the freezer – this is often missed and absolutely key – if not the temperature abuse happens slowly over time affecting the mouth feel and appearance.
- In a scooping freezer ensure the lids are put back on the tubs overnight - It is a milk based product.ocolate or sparklers top off the impressive appearance.”

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She added: “You also need to be clear on food intolerances and allergens – our ice creams are made in a nut free environment and the majority are gluten-free, egg-free and suitable for vegetarians – and talk to your supplier about the type of point of sale material that’s available, as that will help communicate what’s available in your establishment.”





What does the future hold in regard to ice cream and frozen dessert flavour trends?

Michele said: “The sector has been growing consistently, with growth coming from the premium sector of the market, and it is anticipated that double-digit growth will continue over the coming years. Any fall in purchase frequency would likely be offset by the demand for premium and luxury products.

“There is always plenty of innovation in the ice cream and frozen desserts market, which generates a great deal of excitement into the category and grabs the attention of experimental ‘foodie’ consumers who are keen to try new things.

“Sweet and salty flavours (as seen in the bakery market), sharp, bold flavours and even savoury flavours are all likely attract interest in the future.”

Rebecca said: “We’re currently developing a cookies & cream flavour. Our research shows that this flavour combination is a consumer favourite. Fruit based flavours are also always popular.”

Christina added: “Ice cream is one purchase that customers are happy to spend that little bit extra on if they are aware that they are eating something that offers a wonderful flavour and quality from a reputable brand.

“This is something that is more than evident following the recent recession when the sales of ice cream continued to increase despite the economic situation faced by the nation.

“In the summer months, the areas that do sell a large amount of ice cream tend to be places that may attract visitors such as tourist attractions and locations for days out.

“For example seaside resorts, parks, and attractions such as zoo’s, farms and theme parks, however many other quick service restaurants and grab-an-go businesses can still benefit from significant sales year round, a trend which we expect will only continue to grow.”

So, whatever the weather, and the economic climate, it seems consumers will always be sweet on ending their meal with an ice cream or frozen dessert.

And while the trio of vanilla, chocolate and strawberry retain their popularity, there is a growing demand for luxury and nostalgic flavours.

