

Blackwell's Organic Soy Gelato (Vegan, Gluten-Free)

By Hannah Kaminsky, My Sweet Vegan - Ever since world cuisine opened America's eyes to a whole new culinary realm, Italian food has been one of the most ubiquitous choices in everyday home cooking. Adored by cooks and consumers alike for ease of preparation and vibrant, fresh flavors, these dishes are so versatile that they can be modified to accommodate almost any dietary need. Unfortunately, the communal feasting often ends as the last savory course is polished off, as most traditional Italian desserts are impossible to recreate without copious amounts of eggs or dairy. Take gelato for instance- Rich and creamy, you would never think that this frozen confection could ever be any good in a vegan-friendly format; until now. Raising the bar for vegan products to a whole new level, Blackwell's seems to have come along at just the right time, riding the wave of increasing interest in animal-free foods, and offering some relief from this sweltering summer heat.

Noting the wide selection of enticing flavors listed online, I could barely contain my excitement as I waited for that fateful FedEx delivery. While this brand is sadly available in a limited number of stores at the moment, having that heavy cardboard box arrive at my doorstep was admittedly very convenient. No need to venture out into the heat and humidity when this delightful treat will come to you instead! Quickly unloading the contents directly into my freezer, the sheer number of pints that kept coming from this single package was jaw dropping. No less that eight different flavors in all, four of which being the innovative gelato that had so tickled my curiosity, and another four flavors of their other Italian-inspired sorbetto. Most curious about an eggless, dairy-free gelato, those pints were the first to be opened, and promptly emptied.

Beginning with the basics, it only seemed right that I sample the Vanilla first. Often disregarded as a bland flavor, vanilla is actually amazingly complex, so it's a good indication of whether or not the producer knows their beans. It is also usually the base of any other ice cream flavors, so you can get a good idea of what to expect from the rest of the line by just this one simple offering. Instantly setting eyes on those beautiful, bountiful flecks of real vanilla bean in this pint, I knew I was in for a treat.

Forcing a spoon into its frozen depths, it seemed a bit hard and icy at first, but given just a moment to thaw, it became the creamiest, dreamiest concoction I could have hoped for. Melting smoothly over my tongue, the vanilla notes were so intense; it was honestly like nothing else I had ever tasted. Forget what you think you know about vanilla before approaching this rendition- This is an entirely different animal altogether. Sweet and decadent but still cool and refreshing this creation does the humble bean justice at long last.

After demolishing that previous pint unaided, I was ready to move on to the next enticing flavor in my frosty freezer. Reaching in and pulling out the incredible indulgent-sounding Peanut Butter Chocolate Swirl, this pint practically leapt out on its own, begging to be eaten. Lifting the lid with high hopes, I have to admit that I was a little disappointed to see a spare, uneven dotting of chocolate, not the grand swirl that I had envisioned. Nonetheless, smelling strongly of peanuts, it was no surprise that its intense nutty flavors shone through brightly. Not so sweet, but as rich as pure frozen peanut butter, deeper roasted notes added to the myriad of complex nuances throughout this sophisticated gelato. With just enough fudge mixed in to add variety, it was easy to just continuously down spoonful after spoonful without tiring of the flavor. My only reservation is that I wish it had a slightly saltier hit, as I simply love a little salt in good peanut butter.

Moving back to the classics, Chocolate was next on my hit list. Uncovering a deep, dark, velvety brown color just beneath the plastic seal, I'm sure my eyes grew to the size of saucers, marveling at the incredible treat that was sure to come. Scooping out with the texture of chilly ganache, standard ice cream, vegan or not, couldn't even put a finger on the consistency of this stuff.

Quickly spooning a serious mound of it into my mouth, it took me a moment to consider this creation. For once, I wasn't struck with feelings of adoration for the flavor, and it was hard to pin down exactly what to make of it. An undeniably intense cocoa flavor permeated through every last molecule, but all the same, it seemed a bit; flat. Lacking the round, well-developed components of solid chocolate, there wasn't any sweetness I could detect, giving it a more 2-dimensional taste, much like plain cocoa powder. Don't get me wrong, it was still quite good and the pint was finished off all the same, but I might have appreciated a slightly more balanced flavor profile, and just a little bit more sugar.

Finally approaching my usual favorite, I simply couldn't hold back any long when it came to tasting the creamy tan contents of the container billed as Coffee. As an unapologetic lover of all things coffee, I knew that this would be an instant winner, but it turned out to be so much more than I had anticipated. Mellow enough that those not so fond of the stereotypically harsh flavor would also be able to enjoy it, this was better than any ice latte a coffeehouse might serve. Nothing like the bitter black cups of mud brewed daily, it had a very sweet and almost milky slant to it. As someone who make their coffee with about 1/3 cup of grounds to every cup of water like myself, I found this was still an incredibly delicious departure from the regular morning wake-up call, worthy of the dessert plate even without accompaniment.

Although my taste test was a fairly large portion, I found myself instantly going back for more, craving that amazing coffee goodness.

Delicious, cold, and intensely flavored overall, these Italian-inspired frozen desserts were just as amazing as I had dreamed. However, I'm not entirely sure that they are quite as rich as authentic gelato, lacking the thick, heavy texture that is synonymous with cream and egg yolks. That said, it's definitely in a whole different category from your average soy ice cream, and no matter what you want to call it, the bottom line is that it is darn good.

Where to Purchase: Blackwell's Gelato is amazingly available to purchase online for mail order! If you are lucky enough to live in the north east, it can also be found at select grocers and restaurants. Visit the Blackwell's Organic website for more details, to order, and for a store locator. Hannah Kaminsky is the author of the indulgent dessert cookbook, *My Sweet Vegan*. She also keeps a personal blog of crafts, baking and photography at [Bittersweet Blog](#).