

The Dairy-Free Library: Get Ready for [Vegan] Ice Cream Season!

Every Tuesday we will feature a review from our Dairy-Free Library. This week is a little special, not only because we are a day late, but also because I am doing a review / comparison of two brand new cookbooks that cover a similar topic. Enjoy ...

Within one week, I received not one, but two fabulous vegan “ice cream” cookbooks, Lick It! and The Vegan Scoop. As luck would have it, I don’t have an ice cream maker, but thanks to these incredible books I will be getting one very soon (this Cuisinart Ice Cream Maker is next on my ‘to obtain’ list!). However, there is no way I was going to wait any longer to tell you about these cookbooks, especially with Memorial Day Weekend and blazing sunshine just around the corner. I know how you all like to prepare for your seasonal sweets. Though the topic might seem narrow, these two books are actually quite unique. I am going to give you some objective information on each, to help you decide if one or both are best for your collection:

Lick It! Creamy, dreamy vegan ice creams your mouth will love by Cathe Olson

The Look:

This is an incredibly “usable” book. It holds open nicely on its own, even though it is traditional paperback; it has a nice clean feel with good sized writing that is easy to read while you move around in the kitchen; and it is visually appealing with two-color writing and attractive two-tone images.

The Chapters:

- Ice-cream parlor favorites – traditional and exotic
- Fresh and fruity – fruit ice creams and sherbets
- The lighter side – low fat ice creams, frozen yogurts, and sorbets
- Just desserts – pies, cakes, tortes, and crusts
- Breaking the mold – bombes and terrines
- Sweets and treats – sundaes, ice pops, cones, bonbons, bars, and ice cream sandwiches
- Bottoms up – shakes, sodas, and floats
- All the extras – sauces, toppings, and mix-ins

What I love about Lick it!:

As you can tell from the chapters, this book isn’t just about making ice cream; it’s about enjoying it in every way possible. I honestly couldn’t think of a single recipe missing from this book to create any ice cream dessert or sundae I wanted. Lick it! is literally a one-stop cookbook for summer dessert.

I love that Cathe always uses easy to find natural products in her recipes, plus, she mixes it up. For example, you can use plain white sugar in several of the recipes, but she almost always offers an option for using agave nectar in its place, and some of the recipes use other sweeteners, such as maple syrup.

There are so many soy-free options in this book! Lick it! offers numerous ice creams made with coconut milk, nut, or fruit bases, in addition to using alternate “milks.”

Potential Cons:

Lick it! does not have pictures of the finished ice creams, but this isn’t a problem for me, since I pretty well know what ice cream should look like and it means a more affordable cookbook. So, I didn’t find it a deterrent, but I know how addicted some of you are to pictures!

The Vegan Scoop: 150 recipes for dairy-free ice cream that tastes better than the “real” thing by Wheeler Del Torro

The Look:

This cookbook is all about visual appeal. My husband was drooling over it before I even got my hands on it! And if the changing pastel backgrounds and thick paper aren’t enough to draw you in, then the numerous ice cream photos will. There is an outer column that includes “Tasty Tidbits” where needed; these are extremely helpful. Wheeler follows a one recipe per page format for the most part which makes it very easy to follow, and with a little breaking in, it should hold itself open in your kitchen.

The Chapters:

- Classic flavors
- Fruity flavors
- Healthy flavors
- Asian flavors
- Caribbean and island flavors
- Novelty flavors
- Aphrodisiacal flavors
- Ice cream vessels and sauces
- Ice cream sides and desserts

What I love about The Vegan Scoop:

If Wheeler hasn't thought of the flavor, then it may very well not exist. For ice cream purists, this cookbook will have enough variations to keep your ice cream maker buzzing for the next three summers! He warms you up with basics like vanilla, chocolate, mint chocolate chip, and chocolate chip cookie dough, but before you know it, you are whipping up ice cream creations called pecan apple danish, New York Irish cream, and chocolate martini sorbet (must be 21 or over for some of these concoctions!).

As much as I don't find pictures a necessity in good cookbooks, they really are gorgeous in this one, making it a nice coffee table edition to entice guests for the dessert to come. There are not photos for every recipe, but for maybe a quarter or third of them.

Wheeler does offer some recipes to make your sundae complete, such as sauces, cones, brownies, and Belgian waffles … but this book focuses most seriously on concocting as many different flavors of ice cream as possible. If variety is the spice of life then ice cream couldn't get much spicier than The Vegan Scoop.

Potential Cons:

Alas, most of Wheeler's recipes rely on soy creamer and soymilk. While these ingredients are becoming so much easier to find, those who try to limit soy consumption (such as myself) or who are allergic will need to do some tinkering to come up with their own ice cream base. The good news is that the base he uses is pretty consistent throughout most of the book, so, if needed, you can simply enjoy the different flavor recipes he offers once you have your own soy-free base established.

Questions You Might Still Have:

But Are the Recipes Any Good?

I know what you are thinking, I haven't sampled any of the recipe for you! Here is what I have to say on that topic. I have tried many of Cathe Olson's recipes from her prior cookbook (one of my favorites) and her recipes are always delicious. And judging by the fact that Wheeler is practically world renown for his vegan ice cream parlor … well I think I can safely say that you can easily trust both cookbooks to produce delicious results.

No Ice Cream Maker?

While I definitely recommend purchasing an ice cream maker (I have made numerous feeble attempts without - and they are relatively inexpensive), Lick It! does include instructions for making ice cream sans machine. The Vegan Scoop doesn't seem to even go there.

What Special Diets Do These Books Cover?

Since they are vegan / vegetarian, both cookbooks are dairy-free (a.k.a. milk-free, casein-free, and lactose-free) and egg-free. As mentioned, if you need soy-free, then I would lean toward Lick It!. But, both books have a lot to offer gluten-free consumers. For nut-free consumers, Lick It! uses nuts and coconut in several recipes, but there are many recipes without; while The Vegan Scoop leans more toward nut-free, sometimes using nuts as additions that can be omitted, as the actual flavor (a.k.a. peanut butter ice cream), and only occasionally using a nut or coconut base.

Both of these impressive cookbooks are available on Amazon:

Lick It! – Retail \$14.95 - \$10.17 on Amazon

The Vegan Scoop – Retail \$19.99 - \$13.59 on Amazon

Both books are also available on Amazon UK and Amazon Canada.

A final word (or two): We will have reviews of these two cookbooks up in our product reviews soon. Also, keep an eye on GoDairyFree.org in the weeks ahead for sample recipes from each of these books.