

Soy Dream Frozen Dessert (Vegan)

"Soy Nightmare" - Submitted by the Bittersweet Blog

It all began innocently enough - The simple quest to sample various vegan ice creams, not necessarily to compare to the "real thing," but to see how they stacked up as an enjoyable dessert by themselves. How far wrong my search inadvertently veered, into that dark, unfriendly realm of vegan foods that make omnivores shudder and exclaim, "Ugh! With 'substitutes' like that, why would anyone ever go vegan?!" and further weakens my usually unfaltering belief that soybeans can be a reasonable substitute for just about anything that would usually be an animal or animal product.

I had previously bought the travel-sized boxes of soy milk also offered by Soy Dream, which I found to be perfectly decent, (Really, how could you make bad soy milk anyway?) So I was sadly surprised that the quality and taste of their "ice cream" left much to be desired.

French Vanilla

At first glance as I opened the lid, I thought that perhaps something went wrong when coloring was added to the product inside, or maybe it had gone bad some how? Staring me in the face was this creamy, yellow soy-based ice cream. Not like taxi cab yellow, but much more pronounced than I would expect for something labeled as "French Vanilla."

Digging in nonetheless, I found that the ice cream was at first touted a very bright vanilla taste, but as I continued to stuff my face, it soon became sickeningly sweet. How weird. As awful as it is, in my pre-vegan days, I had had to drink Ensure supplements frequently, but found the vanilla taste absolutely nauseating. Maybe this was due to the fact that one of the first ingredients was high-fructose corn syrup, followed by oil, and then more sugar. As much as I wanted to enjoy this, I really couldn't stomach much more than ½ cup of this at a time, at generously spaced intervals. Maybe if eaten only once a week, it's not completely vomit-inducing, but it just brings up some really awful memories for me.

Strawberry Swirl

Lifting the lid, I had to double check the label to make sure I hadn't grabbed the vanilla again, considering how pale the contents of the container were! At least it looked a little more natural, without outrageous added colors, so I hoped for the best as I spooned out a bowlful. I noticed there were even darker spots of pink, indicating the supposed existence of real strawberries.

At first bite, I was taken aback by the intense flavor. Not at all what I had thought based on its appearance. Unfortunately, it tasted extremely artificial. Nothing like strawberries found in nature, and more like those chemically enhanced children's fruit snacks, only frozen. The darker spots even tasted sour, not at all pleasant, really. As disappointed as I was with the vanilla, the strawberry was downright repulsive. My greatest regret is having the remainder of the pint to go through.

Admittedly, these are only two of the ten different flavors that are offered by Soy Dream, and in fact, I even have another one (Chocolate) sitting in my freezer, purchased by my mom. She reports that it's actually very enjoyable, quite contrary to my reactions towards the contents of the other cartons I explored. Comparing it to something akin to a chocolate sorbet, she went further to say that it feels almost light and airy, as opposed to the standard density of cow's milk ice cream.

Even after that glowing review I find myself too scared to give this brand another try. Maybe somehow I managed to pick only their worst varieties, and all the rest happen to be the cream of the crop, so to speak. And who knows? These flavors I reviewed could still strike your fancy, but I personally will not be buying them again.

Sometimes the best intentions aren't enough to produce delicious food, and while I admire the attempt and appreciate the effort to put more vegan items on the grocery store shelves; If this is a soy dream, I may have some trouble getting to sleep tonight.

Where to Buy: I believe Soy Dream is distributed throughout the U.S. and Canada, though their website only has a store locator for the U.S.