



Fresh mint and chocolate chip ice cream

Gelato con gocce di cioccolato e menta fresca

When I was a child I always gravitated towards mint choc chip. Now when I taste this flavour I am often disappointed by the artificial toothpaste-like flavour of the mint. I wanted to make a fresh-tasting ice cream that reminded me of my childhood, so the colours and flavours in this recipe are completely natural. Only use the leaves of the mint. The ice cream will become very fibrous if the stalks are used and the colour won't be such a vivid green.

Serves 4–6

50g fresh mint leaves
4 medium egg yolks
100g caster sugar
1 teaspoon cornflour

200ml double cream

400ml full-fat milk

100g good-quality, plain dark chocolate, finely chopped

Mint sprigs to decorate

1. Bring a small saucepan of water to the boil. Add the mint leaves and boil for 60 seconds. Drain and plunge the leaves into ice-cold water for a few minutes, then drain again. Pat dry with kitchen paper. Set aside.

2. Make a rich custard. Put the egg yolks and sugar in a large heatproof bowl and whisk for 2 minutes with an electric whisk until thick and pale. Add the cornflour and whisk to combine.

3. Pour the double cream and milk into a medium saucepan and gently heat until just below boiling point. Gradually whisk the hot cream and milk into the egg mixture. Pour the mixture back into the saucepan through a sieve (rinse out the pan first or the mixture can burn).

4. Remove 2 ladlesful of the custard and put in a food processor or blender with the blanched mint leaves. Blitz until the mint is very finely chopped and the mixture is bright green. Pour the mixture back into the saucepan with the rest of the custard.

5. Set the pan over a low heat and heat gently for 10 minutes, stirring constantly, until the custard is thick enough to coat the back of spoon. Do not boil, or the eggs will curdle.

6. Pour the custard into a shallow 3-litre rigid freezerproof container and leave to cool for at least 1 hour. Transfer to the fridge for at least 2 hours to chill.

7. Place the container in the freezer for 1 hour. Remove from the freezer and whisk the mixture. Return to the freezer for 1 further hour then whisk again. Repeat once more then during the final whisk add the chocolate. At this stage, the ice cream can be either left in the freezerproof container or transferred to a glass serving bowl. Return to the freezer for 1–2 hours until firm.

8. About 10 minutes before serving, remove from the freezer. Decorate with mint sprigs.