

DUBAI'S COOLEST ICE-CREAMS



Chocolate cranachan sundae at Fortnum & Mason

From camel milk to fresh chilli, we've licked our way through litres of ice-cream, gelato and frozen yoghurt to find our favourites in the city. Edited by *Penelope Walsh*

The naughtiest and nicest way to keep cool this summer, as the temperatures soar into the 40s and beyond, is undoubtedly with a scoop (or more) of ice-cream. While Dubai has long had a roaring trade in big-name brands from across the globe, in recent months we've seen an invasion of gourmet gelato joints, as well as a new high-tech trend for à la minute, uber-fresh ice-cream made with liquid nitrogen. We've eaten extravagant sundaes, camel milk concoctions, Iranian iced treats and even bargain basement cones at the world's best-known burger chains. Whatever you need to survive the summer, budget-friendly or grown-up and gourmet, we've found it, tasted it, and rated it here.

SHOW-STOPPING SUNDAES

Banana Royale at Morelli's Gelato

Scoops of caramel and vanilla gelato are topped with fresh banana, caramel sauce, a flake and a maraschino cherry, but to make it really special, we recommend swapping the vanilla scoops for coconut. This gives it a fresh, tropical lift without compromising all-important creaminess and preventing it from becoming overly rich. The super-silky gelato melts quickly, so by the end you'll be fishing pieces of banana from the soupy depths of the cavernous mocktail glass that the sundae is served in. The little edible chocolate pot that holds the dulce de leche sauce is a definite highlight, but sadly, also the root of our only complaint: there is nowhere near enough of it to cover the sundae.

Rating: 4/5

Dhs36. *The Beach, JBR, www.morelligelato.com (04 427 9618). Other location: The Dubai Mall (04 339 9053).*



Chocolate cranachan sundae at Fortnum & Mason

At Fortnum & Mason's upstairs ice-cream parlour, the selection of sundaes are not cheap. Take the 'ultimate white chocolate gold' recipe (topped with sevruga caviar and gold leaf) and it will set you back Dhs210. In other recipes, this London brand channels some Scottish spirit with a chocolate sundae version of Scotland's famous cranachan dessert. Here, your base of toasted oats comes mixed with a little crushed meringue and chocolate popping candy, topped with plentiful scoops of creamy chocolate ice-cream, raspberry sorbet, fresh cream and fresh raspberries. It's a combination that goes perfectly, and an adult version of indulgence, but the prices here are truly eye-watering.

Rating: 3/5

Dhs120. *Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Boulevard, Downtown Dubai (04 388 2627).*

Hot fudge sundae at The Cheesecake Factory

Anyone who has eaten at The Cheesecake Factory will not be surprised to learn

The diet killer: ice-cream doughnut sandwich at Jam Bar

This brand-new café, opened by Qbara's former pastry chef Elizabeth Stevenson-Hocks, specialises in handmade 'artisan' doughnuts, ice-cream and retro treats such as soda floats. The most outrageous item on the menu here is the ice-cream sandwich, which allows you to choose any filled doughnut, which is then sliced in half and stuffed with any flavour of ice-cream you choose. Opting for a cinnamon-doused doughnut (which is already filled with custard) and chocolate ice-cream, what we get looks like a mini burger. Stuffed to the brim, it's suffering from a doughnut-hernia, with custard bursting through the dough at the top. Eating this like a burger in its wrapper, the sensation is similarly messy, as the ice-cream begins to melt and ooze out a little around the sides. The result is no doubt a diet killer, but a surprisingly pleasant experience. Every time we take a bite, there's an explosion in the mouth of cinnamon and sugar from the dusting. The doughnut itself has a more dense and freshly prepared quality than the average commercial doughnut, and the oodles of creamy filling offset any sensation of dryness this might cause.

Dhs22. *The Dubai Mall, Downtown Dubai (04 330 8737).*

that the signature sundae here comes piled high and smothered in extras. Three scoops of vanilla Häagen-Dazs are, honestly speaking, more than enough for anybody, but at TCF they're topped off with approximately six inches of whipped cream and almond pieces, and it comes with a side dish of rich fudge sauce. Although the Dhs36 price tag is cheaper than a comparable sundae at the nearby Häagen-Dazs parlour, we still can't help but think that this is less of an indulgent treat than the many cheesecakes on offer and suggest looking elsewhere for a pure ice-cream fix.

Rating: 3/5

Dhs36. *The Cheesecake Factory, Mall of The Emirates, Al Barsha, www.thecheesecakefactory.com (04 419 0497).*



La Fragola Coppa at La Fragola Gelateria

Does fruit cancel out ice-cream? This sundae had equal amounts of both, so we felt that finishing off this towering creation must at least have been half-healthy. La Fragola Coppa, served in a wide, tall sundae glass was a riot of fresh strawberries, pineapple, kiwi and mango, tucked into creamy scoops of ice-cream – we detected strawberry and vanilla. The whole thing was topped off with squirry cream and rich strawberry sauce. Service was slightly slow, but when we peeked over the counter, the server was busily cutting up the fruit especially for us, so we knew the whole thing was genuinely fresh, fruity and fantastic.

Rating: 3/5

Dhs40 for sundae. La Fragola Gelateria, Souk Al Bahar, Downtown Dubai (04 4473628). Other location: Ground Level, Bay Avenue, Executive Towers (04 422 8105).

Peanut Butter Indulgence at Marble Slab Creamery

With no tables and chairs, the Mall of the Emirates branch of this American import is very much about getting a varied sundae on the go. With dozens of flavours and mix-in options (candies, sprinkles, biscuits, nuts, fruits and chocolates), there are literally thousands of combos. To keep things simple, we went for the ready-made Peanut Butter Indulgence. Eye-wateringly sweet but pleasingly creamy at the same time, all the ice-creams are freshly made on-site every day. A single helping easily feed a family making this a good pre or post-cinema treat.

Rating: 2/5

Dhs28. Marble Slab Creamery, Mall of the Emirates, Al Barsha, www.marbleslab.com (04 341 1182).



The Time Out Sundae at Reform Social & Grill

Exclusively made for us here at Time Out, to celebrate the very issue you hold in your hands, Reform Social & Grill's Time Out Sundae truly is something to behold (see the picture on the cover) and taste (read on). Made bespoke in a frozen approximation of our 'Time Out colours', it's a decadent mix of multi-textured chocolate brownie ice-cream – the chunks within either chewy or crunchy, depending on the mouthful – and beautifully sharp cherry ice-cream that offsets the richness with a punch of tartness. Inlaid with lashings of whipped cream and drizzles of deep cherry compote, it is, frankly, an absolute treat – and the perfect companion on a hot summer's afternoon lazing by the pool.

Rating: 5/5

Dhs45. Available until June 10. Reform Social & Grill, The Lakes, Emirates Hills, www.reformsocialgrill.ae (04 454 2638).



Knickerbocker glory at Retro Feasts

Those expecting a traditional tall glass bursting with ice-cream, syrup and whipped cream with a cherry and wafer on top might be slightly disappointed by the version served at Retro Feats. But at just Dhs20, it's a steal. The vanilla ice-cream is served in a small glass lined with tinned peaches and is topped with fresh blueberries, strawberry syrup and chopped mint. It's a unique take on the classic dessert and the fresh mint adds an unusually refreshing and cooling quality – a great antidote to the summer heat.

Rating: 3.5/5

Dhs20. The Beach, JBR, www.thebeach. retrofeasts.com (04 361 3596).

WIN...

A month's supply of gelato at Scoopi Café for you and a friend. The café has just launched new summer flavours such as fig, watermelon and tropical fruit. You can win a month of free scoops by answering the question below.

What does Scoopi Café use to freeze its ice-cream?

a Liquid nitrogen **b** A freezer **c** Snow

Enter at www.timeoutdubai.com/competitions until Wednesday June 3.

WIN!
Reform Social & Grill is giving away five exclusive Time Out Sundaes. For a chance to get your hands on one, enter our competition at www.timeoutdubai.com/competitions before June 3.

GROWN-UP SCOOPS

Belgian dark chocolate and vanilla at Godiva

Godiva makes delicious fine Belgian chocolates, so when it comes to ice-cream, the company simply sticks to what it's good at, serving just two flavours – chocolate and vanilla – made on-site and served with a restrained swirl of chocolate sauce and a thin square of dark chocolate. The dark chocolate flavoured ice-cream is rich and the vanilla acts as a classic complement to this sophisticated treat. The two flavours may not be as creative as some of the city's other offerings, but the richness of them will definitely appeal to a grown up palate.

Rating: 4/5

Dhs30 per cup. Citywalk, Al Safa Street (04 511 4670).

Coconut and hazelnut chocolate gelato at Saporì di BiCE

The selection is small and the flavours classic. Opt for the paper cups and choose as many flavours as you'd like to fill it – you pay per cup rather than per scoop. The coconut and hazelnut chocolate flavours prove to be a dreamy, indulgent mix; like a light and cooling nutty-flavoured chocolate Bounty.

Rating: 5/5

From Dhs13. The Beach, JBR, www.saporidibice.com (04 344 2550).



European chocolate at Scoopi Café

Don't be put off by the soft consistency of the tasters offered at this new ice-cream parlour on Jumeirah Beach Road. They are made fresh each day, and for display purposes only, since your chosen scoop will then be made fresh before your eyes using liquid nitrogen to freeze it. The process and helpful service makes this feel more like a boutique experience. Moreover, the finished product has an excellent, creamy, but not heavy consistency. Plus, because it's freshly made (with minimal ingredients and minus many additives used in commercial ice-creams), the flavour has a clean intensity of earthy cocoa to it. In addition to new summer flavours coming soon, you can also sample some extremely sophisticated-tasting Peanut Butter ice-cream here, too.

Rating: 5/5

Dhs15 per scoop. Jumeirah Beach Road, Umm Suqeim 2 (050 113 8497).

Hazelnut and salted caramel gelato at Grom

The nutty, sweet and salted flavours combine excellently in this fresh, natural and creamy gelato. Grom prides itself on inventive flavours – including some made with sheep's milk and eggs. It uses recycled and biodegradable materials in its cups and spoons, and 100 percent organic fruits grown on its farm, Mura Mura, in Italy, making this a delicious, guilt-free, guilty indulgence.

Rating: 5/5

From Dhs19. Box Park, Al Wasl Road, www.grom.it/en (no number).

Strawberry ice-cream at Ice Cream Lab

Yes, this is simply strawberry ice-cream, but this parlour is one of a new breed of Dubai eateries that use liquid nitrogen to freeze their product instantly before your eyes. So what it quite literally tastes like is fresh strawberries (complete with seeds and recognisable textures of fruit fibre) and cream. The result is still sweet and creamy in all the right measures. The downside to this ice-cream shop, though, is that there is no display case of tasters and staff are overly keen to upsell ('only a small cup? What about a waffle? What about toppings?').

Rating: 4/5

Dhs22 per small cup. The Dubai Mall, Downtown Dubai (056 344 5567).

Mr Freeze

It's all in the liquid nitrogen: Scoopi Café demonstrates its ice-cream freezing process



The process begins with cream poured into the mixer



The cream is cooled with liquid nitrogen applied from the outside



The liquid nitrogen-cooled cream is churned



Et voilà: nitro-goodness



FUNKY FLAVOURS

Camel milk gelato at Geewin Café

Geewin's small gelato stand, the only spot in the city exclusively selling camel milk gelato, overlooks the Creek from beside an Abra station. It's a pleasant spot to pause on a tour of the souks, with gelato to match. It doesn't have the silky smooth texture that you'll find in a traditional gelateria – it has an icier and less combined consistency – but the hazelnut flavour is rich, nutty and verges on chocolatey. And the camel milk makes it almost criminally creamy, too.

Rating: 4/5

Dhs23 per scoop. Creekside, near Deira Old Souq Abra Station, Deira (no number).

Fresh Green Chilli at Flavours

Add this to your ice-cream bucket list immediately. The flavour is a moreish combination of something sharp and sweet (not unlike what we imagine a sweet green pepper jelly bean would taste like), a hint of creamy pistachio with an unexpectedly refreshing kick. Not enough to set your mouth on fire but enough to give you a pleasant, prickly tingling sensation. It's most definitely sweet, but somehow there is a savoury undertone, too. Flavours also sells a number of traditional Indian options such as Kulfi, but the rose flavour filled with chewy pieces of rose petal and cashew is similarly sublime: crisp, creamy and not overly-perfumed as some rose flavours can be.

Rating: 5/5

Dhs7 per scoop. Flavours Ice Cream, Street 4a, Al Karama, www.flavoursicecream.com (04 397 8784).



Fresh Green Chilli at Flavours

Hokey Pokey at Burgerfuel

Burgerfuel pedals its ice-cream options as 100 percent natural, and the Hokey Pokey flavour doesn't necessarily disappoint. It's rich, it's smooth, it's sweet and it's creamy but other than that, it lacks any defining wow-factor. If you're passing the drive-through or visiting for the burgers, it will definitely make a satisfying dessert for the sweet-toothed among you, thanks to its big pockets of gooey toffee sauce. But on the whole, it leaves us with the impression that we could probably find the same thing in most toffee-flavoured tubs in a supermarket freezer.

Rating: 3/5

Dhs14 per scoop. Various locations including Jumeirah Beach Road, www.burgerfuel.com/uae (04 338 6924).

Salted caramel at Desert Island

So new is this gelato spot on Kite Beach that when we last visited, it didn't even have a phone number yet. The parlour has a varied selection of flavours on offer, but by far our favourite is the excellent salted caramel gelato, which is just as richly creamy as it is rich in flavour and perfectly balanced between sweet and salty. Just steer clear of the disappointingly icy tiramisu flavour.

Rating: 4/5

Dhs15 per scoop. Fazza Marine Club, Kite Beach, Umm Suqeim (no number).

...And now for guilt-free treats

Pecan Praline at Yogurtland

All of this fro-yo chain's flavours are either low-fat or fat-free, but only a couple are usually sugar-free – and according to modern science, sugar is the real culprit behind a world-wide obesity crisis. So, if you fancy a truly guilt-free treat while you're trawling the mall, head here. Sweet, creamy and (of course, artificially) caramely, even the most seasoned palettes would struggle to tell it apart from its more calorific cousin, Yogurtland's salted caramel pecan. Push the boat out and top it off with fresh raspberries, banana and real pecan crumbs for the win.

Dhs2.99 per 28.53g (1oz). The Dubai Mall, www.facebook.com/yogurtlanddubai (056 174 4081).



gelato isn't organic or anything fancy, but it is made with fresh cow's milk and cream. The Snickers gelato is a chocolatey delight packed with pieces of peanut, milk chocolate and caramel. There are no ice crystals in it, so you get a smooth finish with every mouthful. And the tub fits about three generous scoops.

Rating: 4/5

Dhs10 per small cup. Bacio Gelato, City Stay Hotel, Al Barsha, www.bacio-gelato.com (04 323 2949).

And even more...

Billo Ice-Cream

An ice-cream parlour, decorated in colourful Desi style, selling faloodas, and ice-cream flavours such as chikoo or rose.

Near Lamcy Plaza, Bur Dubai, www.billoicecream.com (04 396 4426).

Other location: Damascus Street, Al Qusais (04 259 2933).

Ice Factory

This ice-cream spot on JBR has a uniquely ethical philosophy. All materials used are recyclable or recycled, from the cups and spoons your ice-cream comes in, down to the staff uniforms and chairs you sit on. The company also donates a monthly percentage of their profits to local charity Dubai Cares.

The Walk, JBR, Dubai Marina, www.theicefactory.ae (055 889 4400).

Silk Gelato

This new gelato store serves a selection of flavours such as green apple, Oreo or Snickers.

European Business Center, Green Community, www.silkgelato.com (052 884 9610).



CASH-FRIENDLY CONES

Ice-cream cone at McDonald's

This simple treat is pretty straightforward. For just Dhs1 you get a small, sweet, vanilla ice-cream served in a wafer cone. It's a cooling and satisfying treat on the go and great value for money. It can, however, melt quickly due to its watery texture, but for the value of getting down to the cone, it's easy to just eat it faster.

Rating: 4/5

Dhs1. Various locations including Dubai Media City, www.mcdonaldsarabia.com/uae (600 588 885).



other great import to the area – saffron.

Rating: 4/5

Dhs5. Jaffer Biman Ali Cafeteria, Spice Souk, Deira (no number).

Mango Fusion at Burger King

In this limited-edition 'fusion' range, swirls (not scoops) of ice-cream are poured into a cup and 'fused' with a variety of flavours such as cookie and chocolate brands. The mango flavour complete with super-sweet sauce and chunks of fruit make this one of the best-value options in town.

Rating: 3/5

Dhs7. Burger King, Various locations including The Dubai Mall, Downtown Dubai, www.bk.com (600 522 224).

Snickers gelato at Bacio Gelato

For just Dhs10 you can't go wrong with the gelato in this little ice-cream shop. The

Iranjan faludeh at Jaffer Biman Ali Cafeteria

This hole-in-the-wall stall has been serving this iced Iranian treat to sweaty Spice Souk customers for more than 75 years. The mixture is a cup of frozen vermicelli, rosewater, lemon juice and rose syrup. It combines sweetness, aromatic flavour and fresh sharpness with an icy cold temperature and offers the perfect way to cool down while bargaining over Iran's

