

**Does refrigeration
kill the coronavirus?**
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The Journal



New Normal; Let's All Scream for the National Ice Cream Month

July 29, 2020 BY MEERA DOLASIA

US President Ronald Reagan proclaimed July National Ice Cream Month in 1984. Reagan's love for jelly beans, which were a staple offering during his 8-year-term in office, is well-documented. However, the country's 40th head of state also had another guilty pleasure — ice cream, which he described as "[a] nutritious and wholesome food." To give the delicious treat the respect it deserved, on July 9, 1984, Mr. Reagan signed Proclamation 5219, which declared July as National Ice Cream Month!

The decree urges citizens to observe the entire month, or at least the third Sunday of July — designated National Ice Cream Day — "with appropriate ceremonies and activities." This, as you might have guessed, means consuming as much of the frozen dessert as you can. As you go about performing your civic duty, here is some fun ice cream trivia to keep you entertained.

The origin of ice cream: There is no specific date of origin, or inventor, that has been indisputably credited with the dessert's creation. Some attribute it to the Persians, who made a sorbet-like treat by pouring grape juice concentrate over snow in 500 BC. The recipe is later believed to have evolved to include iced rose water, vermicelli, saffron, fruits, and other sweet flavors.



Jelly Belly Offered by Former President Regan to then President Clinton

The first records of milk-based ice cream, made using heated fermented milk, flour, and camphor, come from China's Tang dynasty (618 – 907 AD). However, it is the Arabs who are credited with inventing the modern-day recipe, which lists milk and sugar as the primary ingredients, in the 9th century. By the 10th century, the delicious concoction, made using milk, cream, flavored rosewater, dried fruits, and nuts, was purportedly a fixture in Baghdad, Damascus, and Cairo.

Ice cream in America



A milkman named Jacob Fussell opened the first ice cream factory in America (Credit: National Photo CompanyCollection/preservationmaryland.org)

Though Europeans discovered the creamy treat in the 16th century, the first mention of the dessert in the US was not till 1744, when Maryland Governor Thomas Bladen served strawberry ice cream to guests. However, it was difficult to make and store in the pre-refrigeration era and remained primarily a treat for the elite for many years. It was not until 1851, when a milkman named Jacob Fussell established the first factory in Pennsylvania, that ice cream became available to the masses.

But the nation has more than made up for the lost years. Americans are now the world's largest consumers of ice cream, eating an average of 48 pints per person and spending a total of \$5.47 billion annually on the dessert. The number is even higher if restaurant sales are included. Though California produces the most ice cream, the biggest customers, on a per capita basis, reside in Washington, DC, Rhode Island, and Wisconsin.

Popular flavors

Despite the emergence of over 1,000 ice cream flavors, vanilla remains a universal favorite (Credit: Baskin Robbins)

Though there are now over 1,000 recorded ice cream flavors worldwide, vanilla, followed by chocolate, tops the chart of favorites almost universally. Also, while adding unusual ingredients might seem to be a modern invention, the idea is not new. A cookbook penned in 1790 had recipes for Parmesan, ginger, and even brown bread-flavored ice cream!

Your favorite flavor reveals your personality

While you may think your choice of ice cream is just a function of your taste preferences, Dr. Alan Hirsch, founder of the Smell & Taste Treatment and Research Foundation, believes it is a reflection of your personality. Vanilla ice cream fans are impulsive risk-takers who are great at relationships, while those that like chocolate ice cream are lively, charming, and a little dramatic. Strawberry ice cream enthusiasts are believed to be introverted, while mint chocolate chip ice cream fans are ambitious and argumentative. Surprisingly, those who enjoy the multi-colored rainbow sherbet are labeled as pessimists, while rocky road ice cream lovers are engaging speakers and good listeners.

The science behind the painful ice cream brain freeze

Here is some good news for those that suffer from brain freezes — they can be avoided by understanding the science behind them. The affliction, officially known as sphenopalatine ganglioneuralgia, occurs when a cold food, or object, touches the roof of the mouth and causes the blood vessels between the mouth and brain to tense up. This traps the blood in the brain, resulting in the intense shooting pain that we call brain freeze. To prevent that from happening, simply press your tongue against the roof of the mouth. As the sensors warm up, the blood vessels will relax, allowing you to enjoy any cold food pain-free!

Does refrigeration kill the coronavirus?

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Some people are wondering if cold temperatures inside a fridge will kill the virus that causes COVID-19.

NJ Advance Media has launched a daily coronavirus question, a service in which our reporters provide answers to commonly asked questions about the epidemic that has hit hard in New Jersey.

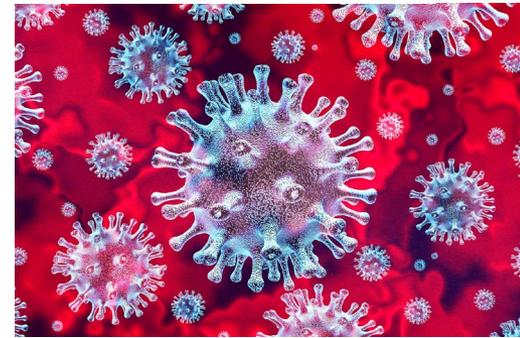
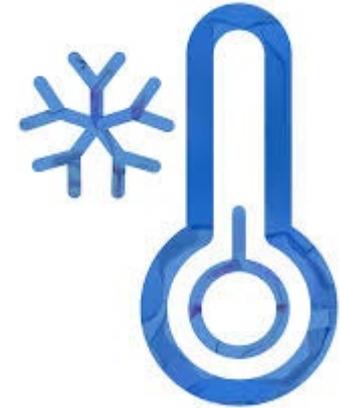
Today's coronavirus question is answered by Donald Schaffner, a professor and director of Rutgers' graduate food science program, Dr. David Cennimo, an infectious disease specialist who teaches at the Rutgers New Jersey Medical School, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Q: Does refrigeration kill the coronavirus?

A: Refrigeration is unlikely to have an effect on the coronavirus. According to Schaffner, the virus can survive for long periods of time under frozen conditions. If food were to become contaminated with high levels of the virus and then become frozen, the virus would potentially still be detectable for days or weeks.

But the risk of getting the virus from food is small. According to Cennimo, it doesn't seem likely that the virus can survive on food products — particularly because it doesn't seem like it can survive being cooked. That is in consensus with the CDC, which states there is no evidence to support transmission of COVID-19 associated with food.

The primary risk is with the packaging. Schaffner said those concerned about purchasing food packages contaminated by the coronavirus should wash or sanitize their hands prior to eating the foods in the containers. The CDC also says it is important to



always wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds for general food safety.

Overall, the risk of getting the virus from packaging seems minimal. According to Cennimo, he and other specialists are largely “getting away” from classifying these types of things as “vectors of transmission,” and the CDC states that because of poor survivability of coronaviruses on surfaces, there is likely very low risk of spread from food products or packaging.



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