

I Scream, You Scream, Americans Scream for... Chocolate Ice Cream

Chocolate is the favorite flavor, followed by vanilla and cookie dough/cookies and cream

ROCHESTER, N.Y. – July 14, 2009 – As summer heats up and Americans turn to ice cream as a way to cool off when the temperatures rise, over one-quarter (27%) say chocolate is their favorite flavor while 22% each say vanilla and cookie dough/cookies and cream. One in five (20%) say butter pecan/Swiss almond and 17% of Americans say their favorite flavor is mint chocolate chip. Lesser numbers say rocky road (14%), strawberry (13%), cherry vanilla (9%), coffee (9%), pistachio (8%) and peanut butter (8%), while 3% of Americans do not eat ice cream.

These are some of the results from The Harris Poll, a new study of 2,177 U.S. adults surveyed online between June 8 and 15, 2009 by Harris Interactive.

Different Tastes for Different Generations

When it comes to favorite flavors, there are generational differences. Two in five (41%) Echo Boomers (aged 18-32) say cookie dough/cookies and cream is their favorite flavor followed by 23% who say it is mint chocolate chip. Chocolate is the favorite for the other three generations, but for 24% of Baby Boomers (aged 45-63) and 28% of Matures (aged 64 and older) butter pecan/Swiss almond is the favorite, putting it as second for those two generations. After chocolate (29%), one-quarter (25%) of Generation Xers (aged 33-44) say cookie dough/cookies and cream is their favorite.

But How Do They Eat It?

When it comes to actually eating ice cream, under half (45%) say their favorite way to eat ice cream is in a cup while three in ten (29%) say it is in a cone. Two in five (18%) Americans who eat ice cream say their favorite way is as part of a sundae while just 2% prefer an ice cream sandwich. There is a slight gender difference here. Half of men (50%) say a cup is their favorite compared to 41% of women. But over one-third of women (34%) say they prefer a cone compared to 24% of men who say that.

What's On Top?

When it comes to favorite toppings, 57% of those who eat ice cream say it is hot fudge while 43% say nuts and 40% say whipped cream. Over one-third of Americans who eat ice cream (35%) say their favorite is caramel, while 31% say it is fruit, such as strawberries or bananas. Just under one in five say sprinkles (18%) are their favorite, 13% say candy bits and 12% say marshmallow while 16% don't use any toppings on their ice cream.

Again, some generational differences emerge as three in ten Echo Boomers (31%) say sprinkles compared to just 7% of Matures. Half of Matures (50%) say nuts are their favorites while just one-third (34%) of Gen Xers say the same.

TABLE 1
FAVORITE FLAVOR OF ICE CREAM

“What would you say is your favorite/second favorite ice cream flavor?”

Base: All adults

	Total	Generation			
		Echo Boomers (18-32)	Gen X (33-44)	Baby Boomers (45-63)	Matures (64+)
		%	%	%	%
Chocolate	27	21	29	30	29
Vanilla	22	17	23	23	24
Cookie Dough/Cookies and Cream	22	41	25	12	6
Butter Pecan/Swiss Almond	20	11	17	24	28
Mint Chocolate Chip	17	23	18	13	11
Rocky Road	14	10	14	15	17
Strawberry	13	11	12	15	14
Cherry Vanilla	9	7	6	11	13
Coffee	9	10	7	9	12
Pistachio	8	7	7	9	10
Peanut Butter	8	10	9	5	8
Black Raspberry	6	5	8	6	6
Peach	4	2	3	5	6
Seasonal, such as pumpkin or eggnog	2	3	1	3	1
Other	9	10	7	11	7
Do not eat ice cream	3	3	4	2	2

Note: Up to two responses accepted

TABLE 2
FAVORITE WAY TO EAT ICE CREAM

“What is your favorite way to eat ice cream?”

Base: All adults who eat ice cream

	Total	Gender	
		Male	Female
		%	%
Cup	45	50	41
Cone	29	24	34
Sundae	18	17	18
Sandwich	2	2	2
Other	6	8	5

Note: Responses may not add up to 100% due to rounding

TABLE 3
FAVORITE TOPPING FOR ICE CREAM

“What are your favorite ice cream toppings?”

Base: All adults who eat ice cream

	Total	Generation			
		Echo Boomers (18-32)	Gen X (33-44)	Baby Boomers (45-63)	Matures (64+)
		%	%	%	%
Hot fudge	57	59	54	59	53
Nuts	43	39	34	48	50
Whipped cream	40	41	43	38	38
Caramel	35	40	37	35	28
Fruit (strawberries, bananas, etc.)	31	35	25	29	38
Sprinkles	18	31	16	15	7
Candy bits	13	26	13	7	2
Marshmallow	12	16	11	12	7
Other	4	6	6	4	1
Don't use any toppings on ice cream	16	12	20	17	14

Note: Multiple responses accepted

Methodology

This Harris Poll® was conducted online within the United States June 8 and 15, 2009, among 2,177 adults (aged 18 and over). Figures for age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, region and household income were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents’ propensity to be online.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including sampling error, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments. Therefore, Harris Interactive avoids the words “margin of error” as they are misleading. All that can be calculated are different possible sampling errors with different probabilities for pure, unweighted, random samples with 100% response rates. These are only theoretical because no published polls come close to this ideal.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in Harris Interactive surveys. The data have been weighted to reflect the composition of the adult population. Because the sample is based on those who agreed to participate in the Harris Interactive panel, no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

These statements conform to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

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