

The skinny on ice cream



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Glorious, decadent ice cream treats are synonymous with summer — and some truly startling calorie counts. Picking your treats wisely, however, can mean the difference between 1,500 calories and a mere 120.

Whatever you do, watch out for the milkshakes. They are the worst contender for a summer treat. For kids, one milkshake is equivalent to a whole day's worth of calories. For adults, it's at least two meals. Avoid milkshakes, or share them, at all costs. But feel free to enjoy your gelato.

When it comes right down to it, plain old ice cream really isn't all that bad. The trouble comes from all the little extras such as syrup, sprinkles and whipped cream. A naked, half-cup scoop of ice cream will run you 150 to 220 calories, but the same ice cream in a waffle bowl with candy or cookie sprinkles, whipped cream and syrup can check in as high as 1,000 calories.

Almonds (typically a 25-gram serving, or about an eighth of a cup) will cost you 150 calories — about the same calorie count as two regular Oreo cookies. But you'll get healthy fats, some fiber and some protein compared to trans fat, no fiber and no other nutrients in the cookies.

Is premium ice cream better for you? It's likely to be made of fat-rich cream, but ice creams made of milk may contain more additives. If it's any help, ice cream parlor products are likely to contain fewer additives.

Know your ice cream and frozen treats

Popsicle: A Super Twin Popsicle (81 grams) contains just 60 calories. Sure it isn't creamy, but it'll remind you of childhood pleasures and it's hard to beat the calorie count.

Frozen yogurt: Frozen yogurt generally contains less fat than ice cream and weighs in with 100 to 120 calories for a half-cup serving compared to 150 to 220 for ice cream. Ben and Jerry's frozen yogurt is about 170 calories per half cup.

Soft ice cream: With more air and more liquid, soft ice cream's calorie count is similar to that of most light ice cream at 100 to 120 calories per half cup. Add a basic cone (about 35 calories) and dip it in chocolate, however, and the calorie count climbs quickly. A medium Dairy Queen soft ice cream cone (199 grams) contains 340 calories. Order it dipped in chocolate, however, and you've just added 150 calories and 10 grams of saturated and trans fat.

Gelato: Gelato is traditionally made with milk rather than cream, and therefore usually contains fewer calories than regular ice cream. A half-cup scoop of gelato, if made with milk, usually has just 120 to 150 calories compared to 150 to 220 for regular ice cream.

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The skinny on ice cream continued



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Sorbet: A half-cup of sorbet contains about 130 calories and, because sorbet does not contain milk or cream, is almost always fat-free to boot. Add a sugar cone, which is usually smaller than a waffle cone, and you add about 50 calories. A waffle cone or bowl usually tops out at 110 to 160 calories.

Ice cream: Regular ice cream contains 160 to 200 calories for a half-cup serving. Forty grams (a typical 1/6 cup serving) of hot fudge syrup adds 150 calories plus trans fat. An eighth of a cup of M&Ms adds 170 calories. A typical dollop or swirl of whipped cream adds about 45 calories.

Ice cream bars: A Fudgsicle bar (70 grams) has 100 calories. A Nestle vanilla drumstick (140 milliliters) has 310 calories, as does a Haagen Dazs vanilla and almond bar. Nestle ice cream sandwich Minis (60 milliliters) contain 90 calories, but the serving size is tiny and the treat is high in saturated and trans fat (2.1 grams).

Frappuccinos and Slurpees: A Grande (16 fluid ounce) Starbucks Coffee Frappuccino contains 240 calories, but a Grande Strawberries and Creme Frappuccino (16 fluid ounces) with whipped cream contains 570 calories with 15 grams of fat. A large (40 fluid ounce) 7-Eleven Slurpee has 20 teaspoons of sugar and 320 calories.

Other frozen treats: A large (378-gram) Wendy's chocolate Frosty contains 530 calories and is mostly milk, cream and sugar. A small (227-gram) Frosty has 320 calories. A large Dairy Queen Reese Peanut Butter Cups Blizzard (514 grams) contains 1,170 calories.

Milkshakes: Milkshakes, usually made of ice cream, full-cream milk and masses of sugar, are the emperors of calorie excess. Ice cream parlor milkshakes generally contain 1,100 to 1,500 calories. A small (338 milliliters) McDonald's chocolate milkshake contains 560 calories. A large (888 milliliters) McDonald's chocolate milkshake contains 1,160 calories.

Source: All calorie counts in this article come from either product websites or a registered dietitian.

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