



Ahhh... summer's coming. Temperatures will soon be in the 100s. Let's get rid of our masks (hopefully). Otherwise, how will we eat some Italian gelato?

Who Invented This Terrific Treat?

Asia? You must be kidding!

They discovered they could combine crushed ice with flavorings (aka, a carnival Sno-Cone). It was primitive but probably good for its time.

Egypt? You must really be kidding!

Five hundred years later, the Egyptian pharaohs offered their guests a cup of ice sweetened with fruit juice. (Still sounds like a carnival Sno-Cone but it was probably great in the desert heat.) But wait! How did they get the ice in the desert??

The Romans? Well, sort of...

Mt. Etna and Mt. Vesuvius really erupted when they helped put frozen desserts on the map more than 5,000 years ago. The Romans began eating the ice of the volcanoes covering it with honey (still a Sno-Cone, however, until a Sicilian chef came along).

But who really started it all?

This Sicilian guy invented gelato? He looks more like a wimpy poet!

Francesco Procopio Cutò was believed to have been born in Acitrezza, a small town (it's still there) near Taormina on



Francesco Procopio Cutò

the Sicilian coast. He played in the snow when he was a boy and he was one of the snow-with-honey-and-fruit-juice "ice cream" lovers. This is where he got the idea of developing gelato and he is credited with being the inventor of modern gelato.

He worked first as a fisherman, like his father. His grandfather, Francesco, was also a fisherman who built *gelatiere* machines (ice cream makers) part-time, when he was not fishing. Francesco-the-grandfather-eventually left his invention to his grandson. Francesco-the-grandson-tinkered with his grandfather's "ice cream" machine making improvements and eventually developed a machine that would produce gelato on a large scale. He wanted to make it big so he left Sicily and went to France. This was in 1686. Now you know how old gelato really is!

He opened a coffeehouse in Paris, Café Procope. That's where he started selling his gelato.

Look at the photo! It's still in Paris today at 13 Rue de l'ancienne Comédie, but it's a restaurant; no longer

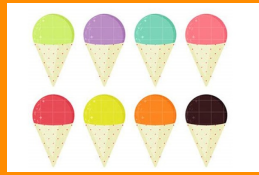


a Bohemian café. It quickly became the favorite of many important people: Voltaire, Balzac, Hugo, Robespierre, Napoleone and Benjamin Franklin to name a few.

The reason for the café's success was gelato. By replacing honey with sugar and adding a pinch of salt to make the ice melt more slowly, he greatly improved sorbets, while his grandfather's machine did the rest. He eventually got a royal "gelato-license" from King Louis XIV, giving

him a monopoly for producing the dessert.

Want to see how the ice cream is professionally scooped and patted?
Click here: [The professional gelato cone](#)



*That's how we went from
the primitive Sno-Cone...*



...to real gelato!

The rest, as they say, is history. Gelato has written a new chapter in culinary history as one of the greatest success stories in dessert innovations.

The next time you say, "It's hot, let's have a gelato!" and as you lick and slurp the silky treat, thank Francesco Procopio Cutò, a simple Sicilian cook who opened the first café in Paris selling gelato with a "gelato license!"

Want to see how it's made? [Here's how it's made](#)

So what's the most popular flavor of gelato in Italy? Send us your guess and we'll send out an answer in a future "Reaching Out..."

You're wondering if there's a prize, aren't you? We're not saying!

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