



FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE: "Talking much about oneself can also be a means to conceal oneself."

CONTACT US

Story ideas? Questions? Comments?
E-mail us at gamecockmixeditor@hotmail.com

I scream

A TEAM OF EXPERTS
RISKS MASSIVE WEIGHT
GAIN IN SEARCH OF THE
MOST UNIQUE ICE CREAM
FLAVORS IN COLUMBIA



PHOTO BY CHARLES TOMLINSON/THE GAMECOCK

The line went all the way to the door Monday night at the Marble Slab. The ice cream shop attracts many families.

BY JILL MARTIN AND CHARLES TOMLINSON
THE GAMECOCK

While we could walk down to the grocery store and buy a pint of the old standbys — chocolate, vanilla, chocolate chip cookie dough — The Gamecock isn't content with the conventional. We sent a couple of our hungriest staffers, along with a guest expert, to seek out the most unique frozen treats in Columbia.

The three of us — Editor in Chief Jill Martin; her roommate, fourth-year psychology student Whitney Gee; and Managing Editor Charles Tomlinson — visited a few of the city's prime spots for dairy desserts.

The Marble Slab

1230 Bower Parkway

We began our search at the Marble Slab, an ice cream shop ironically located two spots down from Jenny Craig, an exercise club.

At \$3.38 for a small waffle cup or cone with one "mix-in," it isn't cheap; but the flavors make it worth it. Varieties such as peppermint, cheesecake and sweet cream have helped to make this eatery popular. On the night we visited, the line went all the way to the door.

Graham Sizemore, 7, a "professional" ice-cream eater according to his mother, combined his coffee ice cream with Oreo cookie pieces and gummy worms — a combination only a 7-year-old could appreciate.

Graham's professional opinion of the taste was "good." And "I like Cheerios." Unfortunately, however, Cheerios are not yet offered as mix-ins at the Marble Slab.

Homemade, all-natural ice cream and ingredients make the Marble Slab unique, said Brad Guster, a Marble Slab employee and USC student.

"Everything is made fresh and made daily," he said — even the waffle cones.

Ben & Jerry's

2901 Devine Street

This chain is known for wacky flavors like Chunky Monkey and One Sweet Whirled. If it has a weird name, it's probably popular, said employee Lee Snelgrove, a second-year philosophy and Russian student.

A small cone or cup here costs \$2.45; and small means small. If you come with a big appetite, you'd better bring a big wallet. Or just come on free cone day, April 29.

If you like a lot of stuff in your ice cream, this is the place to be. Phish Food ice cream includes chocolate ice cream, marshmallows, caramel swirls, fudge and fish-shaped chocolate chips. One Sweet Whirled combines caramel and coffee ice cream with marshmallows, caramel swirls and coffee-flavored fudge chips.

The Chunky Monkey flavor — banana ice cream

with fudge chunks and walnuts — tastes a bit simpler than some of the other varieties, but the banana works well with the other ingredients.

Phish Food, though, was a little too syrupy, and One Sweet Whirled included a surprise ingredient: a small piece of paper.

The restaurant attracts plenty of teenagers and college students.

Suzy Johnston, a Dutch Fork High School student, drank a Cappuccino Cooler. She said it was her second visit. "The service is really quick," she said, "It's not like the Marble Slab, where you have to wait an hour and a half."

Adriana's Gelateria

721 Saluda Ave.

Things got a little more interesting down in Five Points. The frozen dessert at Adriana's Gelateria, at 721 Saluda Ave., is different because it's not ice cream, it's gelato.

"It's got a different texture, and I think it's better than ice cream," employee Lauren Rickman said.

Gelato has a third less butterfat than ice cream and half as much air. That's evident in the taste: smooth and packed with flavor. Even the chocolate tastes different here.

"Sometimes, it tastes like Jell-O pudding pops," Rickman said. The flavor is so thick, it's almost like eating pudding — but more like the homemade variety than the stuff out of a box.

Adriana's workers mix the gelato in a machine with flavorings straight from Italy. Interesting flavors include ginger, tiramisu and almond.

"It's good quality because it's expensive," Rickman said. A small gelato costs \$2.29, but the servings are generous.

Because Adriana's stays open late and also serves coffee drinks, it also attracts the college crowd.

Midlands Tech student Jonathan Key said the gelato is softer and easier to eat than regular ice

cream. With typical ice cream, Key said, "you can pound it for weeks on end, stick it in the microwave, and it's like, 'Damn, it's still not soft.'"

The Blue Cactus

2002 Greene Street

We ambled, bellies stuffed, over to the Blue Cactus. Though the restaurant serves up traditional dairy ice cream, the flavors are hardly traditional. Red bean, green tea and ginger are the most popular flavors, said owner Lloyd Reese.

The red bean was very sweet, while the green tea was subtle. Because it isn't overwhelming, the Blue Cactus' ginger could be easier to get through than a cup of Adriana's ginger gelato, which is wonderfully sweet and spicy, but shouldn't be eaten in large doses.

The ginger ice cream also contains little bits of ginger root. And if you pour Blenheim's ginger ale over it, said Reese, you can have a ginger ice-cream float. "If you like ginger, it's the ultimate," he said.

Their ice cream was the cheapest out of the places we visited.

"You get a heck of a scoop for \$1.81," said USC graduate Catherine Blackwell, who was sharing a cone of ginger ice cream with Natalie Mudd and her daughter, Rhea, outside the Blue Cactus.

By the end of our trip, we were so full of ice cream that we could hardly even move enough to write this. But there's a world of flavor in Columbia, and we hope we've shown that it's worthwhile to forgo that blasé scoop of chocolate for a more exotic flavor of ice cream once in a while.

Comments on this story? E-mail gamecockmixeditor@hotmail.com

Mark Sheldon, 1,
takes the safe route
with a small cup of
vanilla ice cream.

PHOTO BY JILL MARTIN/
THE GAMECOCK



A rainbow of flavors

The Marble Slab: Cheesecake, peppermint, sweet cream

Ben & Jerry's: Chunky Monkey, One Sweet Whirled, Phish Food

Adriana's: Ginger, almond, tiramisu

The Blue Cactus: Green tea, red bean, ginger

... you scream