



OPINION

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NATION

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spark of hope

DIY luscious, satiny ice cream

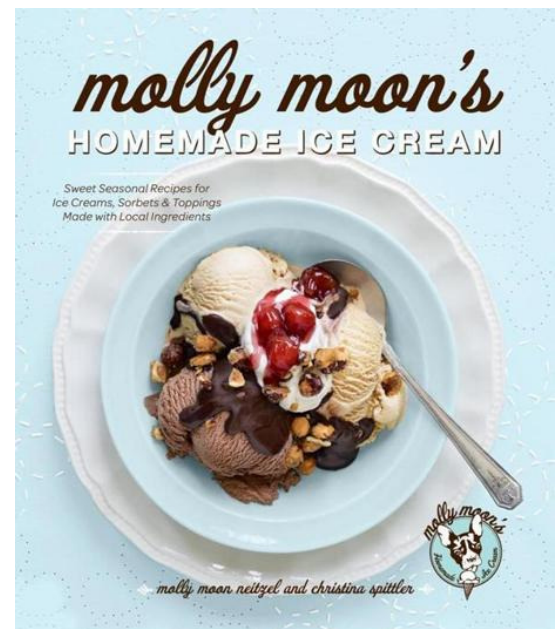
By **T. Susan Chang** | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT AUGUST 26, 2014

These days, ice cream feels less like an indulgence than a requirement. Some days, you may feel like eating nothing but. You could go to the nearest ice cream shop (there are enough of them) or pick some up from the supermarket.

But making ice cream at home is an easygoing, plush alternative. Fresh ingredients and custom blends are just the beginning. The real prize is the luscious, satiny texture of just-made ice cream, which will shock you if you're new to it.



Molly Moon strawberry.



A DIY book.

Ice cream makers are relatively affordable. You can typically find them for about \$50 from kitchen appliance manufacturers like Cuisinart or Hamilton Beach. The principle is simple: pour custard into a frozen canister and the machine churns it with a simple paddle to aerate it. Remembering to freeze the canister the day before (or just store it in the freezer) is the hard part.

There are many ways of arriving at an ice cream custard. The most traditional (often called “French style” ice cream) is probably also the most intimidating. This is thickened with egg yolks, which have to be handled with some care so that they don’t curdle. Tempering the yolks by whisking in a bit of hot custard to equalize the temperature, and straining the custard are easy enough once you’re used to the process. And “Philadelphia style” ice creams, made without egg, don’t require those steps at all; frozen yogurts and sorbets are simpler still.

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For many years, I used David Lebovitz’s “The Perfect Scoop” as a go-to reference for basic custard recipes. But more recently, some popular ice cream operations have been disclosing their secrets to home cooks. “Molly Moon’s Homemade Ice Cream,” by Molly Moon Neitzel of the Seattle-based chain with coauthor Christina Spittler, shares some shop favorites, like honey lavender, salted caramel, and maple walnut, along with edgier choices like baby beet or tomato-basil sorbet. All are eggless, though most still have a flavor-building cooking step.

“Ample Hills Creamery,” by owners Brian Smith and Jackie Cucuna, is another self-titled debut. The four-year-old Brooklyn shop is making a name for itself with exuberantly composed selections. Custards are yolk-based, often with skim-milk powder for a denser, creamier result, and named in freewheeling fashion: “I Want to Marry This!” (maple-bacon ice cream) or “Gather ’Round the Campfire” (s’more flavors).

The best-known ice cream entrepreneur these days may be Jeni Britton Bauer of Jeni’s Splendid Ice Creams, now a chain with nationwide distribution. Her second book, “Jeni’s Splendid Ice Cream Desserts,” focuses more on elaborate confections than straight-ahead custards, but the unexpected marriages (pumpernickel ice cream, cumin honey) and exceptional texture (thanks to cornstarch and cream cheese) are still there. And

since I learned Jeni's custard-cooling technique from the first book — Ziploc in an ice bath — I've never used another.

Maybe you'll find yourself venturing into the far frontiers of creamery, making your own cones, stockpiling extra canisters and leftover egg whites in the freezer, baking extra cookies for ice cream sandwiches. Maybe you'll stick with a plain, cool, fresh homemade vanilla. Either way, with the time you've saved not driving to the nearest scoop shop, you can start another batch — for tomorrow.

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A DIY book.