

Granité

Today's kitchen is full of new preparation techniques. But it's sometimes nice to go back to the most primitive way of making ice cream; simple and easy but more than delicious.

The consumption of ice cream goes far back into history, even to old China. The ice cream man then did exactly the same as what Indians in the Andes do today: get ice from the mountains, shave it and mix it with fruit puree and/or honey. The old Romans did the same, creating the myth of Italian ice cream preparation. The name granité comes from the Italian word grana meaning grainy.

SORBET OR GRANITÉ

On first sight sorbet and granité look the same. However there is one huge difference: the structure. A sorbet is made in an ice cream machine; a granité is frozen as a solid mass. A regular granité contains less sugar than a sorbet with a ratio of one part sugar and four parts liquid. The liquid is often a combination of water and fruit puree, coffee or tea. Liquid containing alcohol is used as well, although alcohol freezes at lower temperature and that should be taken in consideration. The watery mass is poured in a bowl or on a plate, frozen and scraped off regularly.

SUGAR

The function of sugar is very important in a granité. The more sugar, the longer the freezing time. Too much sugar and the granité would not freeze; too little sugar and it will be hard to scrape off. Most of the time a sugar content of 8 to 11o Baumé is the target but sorbets have a 17 to 20o Baumé and that's why there is a difference in structure. Instead of sugar, honey or syrup can be used.

FRUITS

For a granité based on fruit, syrup is mixed with a puree and brought to the right Baumé temperature. It is also possible to have fruit juice, peel or other parts of the fruit cook in the syrup. Besides alcohol or fruits, one can also use other ingredients. Herbs and spices can be added to the syrup as well, as long as the Baumé temperature is respected.

FREEZING OF ALCOHOL

The rule of thumb is that every degree of alcohol needs one degree Celsius to freeze. A granité is especially suited for working with alcohol, but don't forget the rule of thumb as above.

