



## LEAF & FLOWER CUSTARD ICE CREAM MASTER RECIPE

MAKES ONE QUART

*By infusing aromatic leaves and flowers into the custard base we can create unusual flavors, producing perfumed and subtle-scented ice creams such as rose, or more robust flavors like peppermint. The more plant material used, the stronger the flavor. Additionally, the longer we steep the leaves and flowers in the custard base, the stronger the flavors. However, at some point certain plants may impart a bitter or astringent note that may not be desirable. Also be aware that the heated cream and milk can rot outside of refrigeration, so if steeping for longer than an hour, reheat the mixture to a gentle simmer for a few seconds after each hour passes. Reheating will also increase the flavors released by the plants. Most likely you'll want to use sweet, floral, minty or fruity smelling plants for making ice cream, but you can use any edible aromatic — even pungent or spicy ones such as garlic, ginger or sage — to create surprising taste variations.*

**2 cups heavy cream (grassfed and organic, if possible)**

**1 cup milk (grassfed and organic, if possible)**

**½ cup sweetener, or to taste, such as maple syrup or Sucanat**

**2 tightly packed cups fresh aromatic herb of choice, finely chopped: Use leaves and/ or flowers and discard stems.**

**If flowers are larger, like roses, remove their calyx.**

**6 egg yolks (fresh, pasture-raised and organically fed)**

**Pinch of sea salt**

**Optional: 1 teaspoon Vanilla Extract (p. 215), rum, cognac or other liquor**

1. Combine cream, milk, sweetener and herb of choice in a non-reactive pot and cover. Over low heat, bring mixture to a gentle simmer, stir well, cover and turn off heat.
2. Let mixture steep, tightly covered, for 10 minutes to 4 hours.\* If steeping the plant material for longer than an hour, reheat to a gentle simmer for a few seconds after each hour passes. If the mixture has cooled while steeping, reheat it gently and very briefly before proceeding to the next step.
3. In a 3-quart heavy-gauged-bottom pot, gently beat egg yolks with pinch of salt, then, whisk two tablespoons of the mixture into egg yolks. Whisk in another two tablespoons of mixture. Whisk the remaining mixture into the egg yolks.
4. Place pot over very low heat and stir the custard constantly until it begins to thicken, about 7–10 minutes.
5. Strain the custard through a fine-mesh sieve, squeezing out any remaining liquid from the plant material. Stir in optional ingredient.
6. Chill the custard in a covered container to 40°F. (At this point the custard ice cream base can be stored in the refrigerator for up to 3 days.)
7. Process custard in an ice cream maker following the manufacturer's instructions.
8. Serve immediately or store in the freezer.

**\*The length of time to steep the mixture** depends on one's taste preference and the volatility of the chosen herb. Different plants, as well as different plant parts, release their flavor, aroma, color, and other characteristics at varying speeds. As a general rule, **steep flowers for 10–30 minutes, leaves ½–4 hours, and roots, barks, berries and seeds ½–4 hours**, keeping in mind that frequently tasting the mixture as it steeps is the best way to tell when a good flavor has been achieved.

**Coconut Milk Variation:** For a **dairy-free version**, use **3 cups of coconut milk** in place of the dairy.

### Dried Leaf and Flower Variations

Make Leaf & Flower Custard Ice Cream **with freshly dried leaves and flowers** by replacing the fresh herbs with ¼ of the amount of dried. So for each quart of ice cream, **use ½ cup (½ – ¾ oz by weight) dried leaf or flower** (unless otherwise directed; see specific plants below).

### Aromatic Seed, Bark & Roots Ice Cream

To make ice cream **with fresh or dried aromatic seeds, barks and roots** such as sweet cicely seeds, fennel seeds, sassafras root bark, and cinnamon bark, in general **use 1–2 oz (by weight) of freshly, coarsely crushed seed, bark, or root** in place of the fresh aromatic herbs and follow the directions above. Keep in mind if an herb is strongly aromatic, less may be needed.



### Some aromatic ice cream flavors (with plants featured in this book) and their steeping times:

- **Anise hyssop leaf** (and **flower** if available): steep ½–1 hour.
- **Lemon balm leaf** (and **flower** if available): steep 1 hour.
- **Mint leaf** (and **flower** if available): steep 1½–2 hours. Apple mint (mild), peppermint (strong), spearmint (moderately strong).
- **Sweet cicely fresh-green seed**: use 2 oz seed, steep about 1½ hours (subtle anise-like flavor).
- **Rosa rugosa flower petals** or other highly scented rose variety: steep ½ hour (subtle flavor).
- **Bee balm leaf** (and **flower** if available): steep 5–20 minutes (floral, spicy).

### Other aromatic ice creams (with plants not featured in this book):

- **Aniseed**: steep 1–2 hours.
- **Basil** (Italian, lemon and sacred varieties): steep for 2 hours.
- **Cardamom seed**: steep about ¾ hour.
- **Cinnamon**: steep 1 hour.
- **Fennel seed**: steep 1–2 hours.
- **Ginger root**: use only ¼ cup fresh root or ⅛ cup dried root per batch and steep for 1–2 hours.
- **Lavender flowers**: use only ¼ cup per batch; steep for just 10–15 minutes (as a bitter — though not unpleasant — flavor emerges quickly).
- **Lemon verbena leaves**: steep 1–2 hours.
- **Star anise**: steep ¾ hour.

## HERBAL FLAVOR VARIATIONS

### Lemon Balm Custard Ice Cream

Use 2 cups heavy cream (grassfed and organic), 1 cup milk (grassfed and organic), ½ cup maple sugar, 2 cups finely chopped lemon balm leaves (and flowers if available), 6 egg yolks (fresh, pasture-raised and organically fed) and follow directions for Leaf & Flower Custard Ice Cream above, allowing the lemon balm to steep in the mixture for 1 hour.

### Heavenly Spice Custard Ice Cream

Use 2 cups heavy cream (grassfed and organic), 1 cup milk (grassfed and organic), ½ cup maple syrup (dark Grade C), 6 egg yolks (fresh, pasture-raised and organically fed), and the following spices (coarsely and freshly crushed) if possible: 1½ teaspoon cinnamon (preferably Ceylon), 1 teaspoon ginger, ¾ teaspoon cardamom, ¾ teaspoon coriander, ½ teaspoon nutmeg, ⅛ teaspoon clove. Follow directions for Leaf & Flower Custard Ice Cream above, allowing the spices to steep in the mixture for 1 hour.

### Sacred Basil (Tulsi) Custard Ice Cream

Use 3 cups milk (grassfed and organic), ½ cup Sucanat, 2 cups finely chopped tulsi leaves (and flowers if available), 6 egg yolks (fresh, pasture-raised and organically fed) and follow directions for Leaf & Flower Custard Ice Cream above, allowing the tulsi to steep in the mixture for 2 hours.