

Dish Omaha – June 18th, 2025

Jeff: Time now for Dish Omaha with KVNO's resident foodie, Diane Watson. Good morning, Diane.

Diane: Good morning, Jeff. Boy, summer is here.

Jeff: It's here.

Diane: And when it's hot, you want to stay cool. So I want to ask you, are you a frozen treat fan?

Jeff: Yeah, leaning toward ice cream as a kid, of course.

Diane: Okay, sure.

Jeff: You know, the ice cream truck would go by.

Diane: Oh my gosh, the ice cream truck.

Jeff: And you'd want to get a snow cone or something.

Diane: Exactly.

Jeff: But more ice cream.

Diane: Yeah, okay.

Jeff: Or gelato.

Diane: Well, ice cream, the history of it dates back to ancient China. In 200 BC, they used to mix rice and milk and pack it in snow to freeze. So, all these cultures took it on their own and changed it. So, in the Persian Empire, they made what they called sharbe, which was fruit syrup with snow. In the medieval Middle East, they added sugar. So that was the first time it got sweet. And then, of course, I know you're going to guess, Renaissance Italy, what are they known for?

Jeff: Gelato.

Diane: Gelato. And for these ancient cultures, this treat was only made for the elite. So even in 1600s France, crème glacée, also for the elite. In the United States, George Washington—

Jeff: That's not fair.

Diane: Well, it got better, and I'll tell you why. I agree with you. In the U.S., George Washington was such an ice cream fan, he spent \$200 one summer on ice cream.

Jeff: Wow.

Diane: Which was a lot of money.

Jeff: In that day? Yeah.

Diane: Yes.

Jeff: Wow.

Diane: So, in 1843, the hand-cranked churn democratized ice cream, made it available to everyone, invented by a woman. And one of the first mass-produced type of organizations was Dairy Queen, which has been around since 1938.

Jeff: Wow, that's minute, yeah.

Diane: So, I'm going to just give you a quick rundown on the difference of the treats. Ice cream, which is the staple, made with cream, milk, sugar, and egg yolk. And it's churned at a high speed, and it has the highest fat content. Custard, also cream, milk, sugar, egg yolks, about the same fat, but it's churned slowly. So, it's actually served slightly warmer, so it's creamier. Gelato is milk, sugar, sometimes cream. It's got a lower fat, also churned slowly, so there's less air, and it's denser and silkier.

Jeff: It's always interesting, the differences, the slight differences that make a big difference in the taste.

Diane: Oh, isn't it amazing? I often wonder if I could do blind tasting, if I could pick out which—

Jeff: Oh, let's do that.

Diane: There we go.

Jeff: Right now.

Diane: Yogurt, frozen yogurt, is fermented milk and sugar. The fat varies. It can be tangy, but it's got a little probiotic health benefit for you. Sherbet, also sometimes called sherbert, fruit juice or puree with water, just a little dairy, very little fat, slightly creamy. And then the healthiest selection is sorbet, which is fruit juice, puree, and sugar. No dairy at all. So if you're lactose intolerant, that's a good way to go. It's icy, it's smooth, it's fruity.

Jeff: It'll cool you down on a hot day.

Diane: It sure will. We've got some great spots around town to think about getting a cone or something over the summer. Coneflower, as you know, in Blackstone and Millwork Commons, just opening in Elkhorn, which is great.

Jeff: Yes. So exciting.

Diane: They have a farm-to-cone philosophy, which I think is just such a great way to put it. Of course, they've got their locally-invented Butter Brickle, and they do all kinds of cool collaborations. They've done one with Archetype Coffee.

Jeff: Yeah.

Diane: Such yummy stuff. Ted and Wally's, we've probably all been in Old Market and in Benson. They've been around since 1984, which was amazing to me. Their ice cream has a high butter, fat, and minimal air content, so it's very creamy. They have done more than 3,000 flavors in their tenure.

Jeff: They must have kept track, I guess.

Diane: And why wouldn't you?

Jeff: Why wouldn't you?

Diane: I would say the favorite that I've had was Guinness.

Jeff: They had a Guinness?

Diane: Guinness ice cream.

Jeff: With actual beer?

Diane: Yeah, I think they took the alcohol out of it, so you could walk around and be okay.

Jeff: And was it more beer or more ice cream?

Diane: It was ice cream, but yeah, it was unique. Look for it, I would say. E Creamery in Dundee, you probably know, started out featured on Shark Tank. They do ice cream, gelato, and sorbet. Now you know the difference between all those. And they're kind of known for their nationwide shipping and custom flavors and personalized pints and cups.

Jeff: And there's that bench across the street.

Diane: Oh, I was going to ask if you remember. Tell the story.

Jeff: Warren Buffett and Sir Paul McCartney had some E Creamery ice cream and sat on that bench.

Diane: Yes. Yes. Exactly. And, of course, you can't think of Omaha ice cream without mentioning Zesto. They're still around. They're in Florence and Cherry Hills. They have been around for 70 years.

Jeff: So, I grew up near the Zesto that was on 13th Street.

Diane: Oh, by the stadium.

Jeff: Near the old Rosenblatt Stadium. And they had something called birch beer. It was sort of like root beer. You could do a birch beer float.

Diane: Now I want to float.

Jeff: I know.

Diane: Well, they do floats, malts, shakes, freezes, all the things. I think the thing that strikes me the most, you started talking about the ice cream truck. You know, there's so many childhood memories connected to ice cream. When I was a kid, I grew up in Dundee. And it was a big deal when my mom let me walk up to the Baskin Robbins.

Jeff: Oh, yeah.

Diane: That's now Blue Line Coffee.

Jeff: Blue Line, yeah, of course.

Diane: And I would pick my daiquiri ice, my scoop of daiquiri ice. You know, so the other thing that I think—

Jeff: That's a sign of freedom.

Diane: Yes, it is.

Jeff: Go get ice cream.

Diane: Get out of my hair. Ice cream sales spike during the College World Series right now and during the Berkshire Hathaway meeting. Now, can you guess what sells the most during the Berkshire?

Jeff: I do have no idea. Money-flavored ice cream? No, that would be terrible.

Diane: The Dilly Bar.

Jeff: The Dilly Bar. Oh, of course.

Diane: The Dairy Queen Dilly Bar. I'm going to go get one. Hey, by the way, I'm heading out this weekend to go to the Aspen Food and Wine Classic. Oh, can't wait to. We're covering that festival for KVNO, so I'll have much more for you next week.

Jeff: Yes, can't wait. Diane Watson, KVNO's resident foodie for Dish Omaha.

Diane: Thanks, Jeff.