



We, in these islands, have become more adventurous in our taste but I had to refuse the offer of ice cream with baked beans – on their own is fine with me but just not together !

I have to confess to near addiction to ice cream whereas baked beans, for me, is more like a last resort.

Frozen desserts similar to ice cream have been around for a long time. In the Persian Empire around 500 BC they had a version which was flavoured with honey and nectar. In China around 200 BC they had a dessert made with milk and rice frozen using snow.

Its introduction into Europe may have been by various means but credit is given to the Venetian, Marco Polo, who travelled extensively along the Silk Route to China between 1271 and 1295 as a merchant, explorer, writer and ambassador to Kublai Khan for nearly two decades – at a time of discovery of the eastern world of culture, civilization and expansion. As a writer it was believed that he had stretched the truth about his travels but, questioned on his deathbed, by his priest, he said “I have not told the half of what I saw and did”.

In the Ice creams and water ices were being made in Italy in the 1600's and were served in England at a banquet for King George II, as a luxury item, in 1671. Italian confectioners in London in the mid 1700's became renowned for their ice creams. But it wasn't until the 1850's USA, that innovation with mechanical refrigeration and motorized delivery vehicles, started its development into being a mass market product.



Other or similar forms exist in other parts of the world. In the Indian sub-continent there is “Kulfi”, originally from the Mughal period, which has a denser and creamier texture with nuts and fruit. In Iran they have “Faloodah” (with different spellings) which is similar to a sorbet with vermicelli rice noodles, rose water and lime juice. In Madeira they have “Nikita” a combination of pineapple ice cream, with pineapple or other juices and light/white beer (sometimes wine).

Referencing the Italian connection, the word “Gelato” is in common use for all types of ice cream but is actually a form made using more milk and less cream, stored at a higher temperature giving it a softer taste. Granita from a Sicilian origin is a semi frozen dessert with sugar, water and various flavourings similar to a sorbet.

It seems that ice creams became increasingly accessible here in the 1950’s with vanilla, chocolate and strawberry flavourings being the favourites – with the neopolitan block being an “exotic” shared family treat – other flavours were available also.

The UK & world favourites are still vanilla, then chocolate and strawberry now followed by mint choc chip, salted caramel, rum & raisin, pistachio (personal favourite), and raspberry. BUT, the most popular flavours in this country are NOT ice cream ! They are: Cheddar cheese, curry, bacon, strawberries, honey, garlic & chicken masala – then salt & vinegar crisps.

As always these are just opinions, backed by some research, which you may not agree with or have your own opinions – have your say if you wish – always welcome

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