

GELATO JONNY

Have your ice cream and eat it



Hello to you all, and firstly I hope you are keeping well - it seems that we have never used this phrase more often than in the last 3 months, but we all use it and we mean it. So, what is all this about having your

ice cream and eating it? Don't we all do that anyway? Like many of us, I have had more time to think recently and I have reflected on conversations I have had with a variety of customers over the last couple of years. The subject for discussion in this article is about 'free from' ingredients and when to use them and, perhaps more importantly, when to promote that you have used them, but how does that relate to having your ice cream and eating it I hear you ask?

Perceptions of ice cream/gelato and sorbets

We have talked in previous articles about the fact we all buy with our eyes. We have examined the impact of the aesthetics and display in our ice cream cabinets, whether it is the colours or the decorations or finishing touches. What I want to highlight this month is what our brain is telling us and our sometimes-misplaced preconceptions. I am referring to customer's reactions in response to reading a particular flavour is made using 'free from' ingredients and recipes. We have looked at veganism and different milks, even touching on only having a notice saying 'allergens

catered for please ask' rather than labelling each 'lactose free', 'gluten free' or 'sugar free' recipe. The question is why? I think the best way to explain this is to relate an experience I had with a customer earlier this year...

"Are you sure this is lactose free?"

I was working with a family business who were particularly keen on including a larger number of sorbets in their cabinet than I would normally recommend, due to their own personal experiences of allergens, lactose intolerance etc. We had made a number of different flavours when their daughter came in (who was lactose intolerant) so we gave her a taste of the chocolate sorbet. Instead of delight, though a flash of panic crossed her face as she asked, 'are you sure that was the sorbet not the ice cream?' Having reassured her it was indeed the sorbet and she wasn't about to have a lactose reaction she was simply amazed at how creamy and smooth it tasted. In fact, as is obvious from her reaction, anyone would have thought it was an ice cream not a sorbet.

What happens when you see a 'free from' label?

The description above almost shows the reverse effect of what I am talking about - not believing a lactose free product could taste so creamy. Although those with allergens rejoice when they realise they can enjoy ice cream, sorbet or gelato without adverse reactions, these customers are still in the minority, making up a small percentage of the ice cream eating market. Whilst this is a hot topic

on social media, and this small minority do have some of the loudest voices, we should make sure we don't frighten off the larger majority of customers who have the freedom to eat whatever they choose. By labelling particular flavours as 'free from... lactose, nuts, gluten, sugar etc' potentially the majority will immediately rule them out as options as they perceive that they will not taste as good. As a test - would you have even read this article if I had entitled it 'free from' ice cream?

Quality made ice cream, gelato and sorbets

My point here is that if you make good quality creamy sorbets and 'free from' gelato or ice cream, it doesn't have to be only those with allergens who consume it and enjoy it. I am not saying don't make ice cream for the minority, I am simply saying don't broadcast to everyone that is it for the minority. The benefits of this are twofold - you will probably have less waste as you won't get left with the 'free from' pans and you won't put off the majority. As long as you have clear signage so those with allergens know to ask which flavours they can safely eat, then everyone is happy and you really can have your ice cream and eat it!

See you next time for the latest scoop. In the meantime, stay safe as you reopen your doors.

Jonny
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