



BBQs, ice cream, and picnics - oh my!

Summer eating conjures up idyllic visions of fresh salads, ripe fruits, and grilled veggies. However, those warm-weather gatherings and outings can sometimes lead to less healthy food and drink choices. Here are some common pitfalls and how to navigate them:

Grilling: If hot dogs and sausages are your go-to, consider adding more whole foods to your plate. Save processed meats for occasional treats and prioritize plant-based options—corn on the cob, marinated vegetable skewers, bean burgers, and tofu. Instead of beef or pork, grill firm, thick-cut fish like salmon, tuna, large shrimp, or snapper. Use a grilling basket or foil for smaller items like sliced onions and peppers to prevent them from falling through the grate.

Drinks: Summer coolers are often filled with soda, lemonade, sweet tea, juice, beer, and hard seltzers. While refreshing, these drinks can quickly add up in sugar and calories! Opt for calorie-free choices like unsweetened tea, seltzer, and water. If you indulge, choose light beer or 100-calorie hard seltzers, and stay hydrated by drinking water between alcoholic beverages.

Ice Cream: Summertime is synonymous with ice cream cones! Enjoying a frozen treat occasionally is fine, but making smart choices is key. Choose a small soft serve cone with about 300 calories instead of a 1000+ calorie triple scoop brownie sundae. For a healthier option, try a refreshing fruit sorbet or homemade "nice" cream made from frozen ripe bananas.

Picnics and Potlucks: Summer gatherings often feature calorie-laden dishes that can derail your healthy eating. Instead of heavy pasta salads and fried foods, bring a nutritious dish to share, such as a quinoa salad with fresh veggies or a fruit platter. Fill your plate with lean proteins, whole grains, and plenty of vegetables, and enjoy indulgent treats in moderation.

Remember, staying healthy over the summer doesn't mean skipping seasonal treats. It means making wise choices most of the time while allowing for occasional indulgences.

Basic Banana Nice Cream



Ingredient:

- 2-3 ripe bananas

Instructions:

1. Peel the bananas, slice, and place in a freezer zipper bag or in a freezer-safe container. Freeze the banana slices for at least 4 hours, or until they are completely frozen.
2. Place the frozen banana slices in a food processor or high-speed blender. Blend until the bananas break down into a creamy, soft-serve ice cream-like consistency. This may take a few minutes, and you might need to scrape down the sides occasionally.
3. You can serve the nice cream immediately for a soft-serve texture, or transfer it to a container and freeze for an additional 1-2 hours if you prefer a firmer texture.

Variations:

You can customize your nice cream by adding different flavors and mix-ins. Here are a few ideas:

- Chocolate Nice Cream: Add 1-2 tablespoons of cocoa powder during blending.
- Berry Nice Cream: Add 1 cup of frozen berries (such as strawberries, blueberries, or raspberries) to the bananas before blending.
- Peanut Butter Nice Cream: Add 1-2 tablespoons of peanut butter during blending.
- Mint Chocolate Chip Nice Cream: Add a few drops of peppermint extract and a handful of chocolate chips close to the end of blending.