



Words  
**Laura Price**

# SUGAR & SPICE & all things ICED

With hard-up and health-conscious diners increasingly choosing just one course, desserts can be a tough sell. But chefs are fighting back with tempting new serves. *Restaurant* gets the scoop on 15 new trends in desserts and ice creams

## ❶ *Ice cream sandwiches*

Already a big trend in the US, the ice cream sarnie is now taking off in the UK. Restaurant chain Prezzo, for example, has teamed up with artisan gelato maker Gelupo to offer the Gelato Burger - two scoops of gelato in a toasted brioche bun (above).

## ❷ *Savoury twists in desserts*

The sweet-meets-savoury trend is coming into play in desserts and puddings, says Gordon Rae, general manager at the newly refurbished Crown & Anchor in Chiswick, west London. "Our apple

and blackberry crumble with thyme and pistachio has gone down an absolute storm," he says. Some chefs are going one step further by incorporating an entire savoury dish into a sweet. At Le Champignon Sauvage in Cheltenham, David Everitt-Matthias makes a Thai green curry sorbet and mango dessert with all the usual ingredients, plus added sugar, for a unusual end to a meal. Candied bacon - rashers baked with brown sugar - is also becoming popular on menus and can make an interesting sweet/savoury addition to certain puds.

## ❸ *Take-out desserts*

With customers increasingly going out for one course only, takeaway can be a good solution. The Creperie in Brighton serves both sweet and savoury crepes and waffles, but manager Donna Asplin says most people take away their desserts. At Titchwell Manor in Norfolk, head chef Eric Snaith has set up a retro bicycle outside the front of the hotel serving ice cream and toppings to entice diners in, while Wagamama also offers its desserts, including its sweet onigiri rice balls and cheesecakes, as takeout options.

**4 Ice creams in cones**

"More restaurants have started to move towards cones, rather than plates or bowls," says Jim Valenti, sales manager at Suffolk-based Criterion Ices. "A modest portion of ice cream looks better served in this manner. Some are using miniature cones and serving a selection."

**5 Deep South desserts**

"Americana is very popular at the moment and we're really embracing the foodcultures of the southern states," says Simon Brigg, owner of Porky's BBQ in Camden, north London. "We're doing a chocolate pecan pie, which is pretty key to that part of America. I got the recipe off a friend of mine's grandmother in Alabama, so it's authentic, and I put a little twist on it by adding chocolate."

**6 Healthier kids' desserts**

"With kids, the trend at the moment is about encouraging them to eat well," says Juliette Joffe, co-founder of Giraffe. The child-friendly restaurant chain has just launched a new children's menu with a low-fat banana split sundae topped with pumpkin and sunflower seeds and honey. "It's important in a kids' menu that as well as keeping it healthy, you make it look attractive," says Joffe.



Split seconds: Giraffe's desserts appeal to children

**7 Frozen yoghurt**

It's not just kids who are looking for a slightly healthier fix - frozen yoghurt has taken off in a big way for adults too. Brazilian casual-dining chain Cabana says frozen yoghurt is its best-selling dessert and comes in a series of rich flavours such as doce de leite (the Portuguese spelling for dulce de leche) and peanut butter.

**8 Herbs & spices**

Chefs are experimenting with herbs and spices in desserts, with Cyrus Todiwala's Assado restaurant serving flavours such as nutmeg, coconut with cardamom and Belgian chocolate with ginger, all developed by Criterion Ices. At Titchwell Manor in Norfolk, head chef Eric Snaith is using a cumin caramel popcorn as an ice cream topping.

**9 Gluten & dairy-free options**

With more and more restaurants now offering gluten-free starters and mains, it's no surprise that gluten-free desserts are also in demand. "You're catering for different markets now," says Giraffe's Joffe, whose restaurant's adult desserts



Currying favour: Le Champignon Sauvage's Thai-inspired dessert



Free spirit: Cabana's gluten-free Nega Maluca chocolate cake

menu includes a new gluten-free chocolate tart. Lizzy Barber, one of the owners of Cabana, says the Brazilian chain's gluten-free Nega Maluca chocolate cake sells extremely well, and The Creperie's Asplin reports that dairy-free sorbets from Gelato Gusto are very popular.

**10 Alcoholic ice creams**

"People are generally getting much more adventurous with the desserts they choose," says the Crown & Anchor's Rae. His restaurant serves a "for adults only" Sipsmith sloe gin Eton mess, which is proving popular. Most spirits, especially whisky and brandy, work well in an ice cream, according to Criterion Ices' Valenti. "A sorbet is more difficult because the alcohol affects the texture more. But with ice cream, as long as the spirit has a distinct flavour and character, it'll come through quite well."



Crunch time: cones of Criterion's peach melba ice cream

**11 Indulgent afters**

Although the economy is recovering, diners are still of the mindset that if they go out and spend money they want to indulge. Giraffe's Joffe says that chocolate brownies are making a big comeback at her restaurants, and the dessert is also going down a storm at Camden's Porky's. Here brownies come served as part of a sundae, with additional chocolate sauce, chocolate ice cream and more chocolate.

**12 Liquid nitrogen**

"A lot more liquid nitrogen is being used for desserts because it's been televised a few times and lots of chefs want to grasp that technology," says Le Champignon Sauvage's Everitt-Matthias.

**13 Pre-desserts & tasting sequences**

Assiettes are out; pre-desserts and tasting dishes are in. "Assiettes were very nineties and naughties," says Everitt-Matthias. "Sometimes it was loads of a chef's desserts just thrown on to a plate with no real sense of actually constructing something." Instead, chefs are turning to a sequence of pre-desserts and small main desserts that allows them to have closer control over the diner's experience and move between bitter, acidic and sweet.

**14** *Tea-inspired gelatos & tarts*

The trend for tea as an ingredient in everything is fast catching on. The Crown & Anchor has developed a strongly flavoured Earl Grey tart, and The Noodle House in Soho is selling a range of tea-inspired creations such as citrus ginger tea gelato and chrysanthemum and goji berry. "Tea is a quite naturally sweet product, as long as you stay away from the black teas," says general manager Richard Mackay. "We're currently playing with a raspberry, liquorice and hibiscus tea dumpling."



Crowd pleaser: The Noodle House's sharing plate

**15** *Desserts in miniature*

In keeping with tasting desserts in high-end restaurants, some casual dining outfits are also catering for diners who want a small taste of something sweet after a big meal. Brazilian chain Cabana has developed a 'candy box' of Brazilian sweets that can be shared or eaten alone. "We thought it would be nice to have something that gives you a taste of the Brazilian sweet, that you could almost have as petit fours with your coffee," says Lizzy Barber.

# Sweet somethings

New products for the pastry section

**Erlenbacher Cream Triangle Slices**

☑ Desserts maker Erlenbacher has launched three new flavours of its Cream Triangle Slices. The triangles now come in raspberry and cream cheese, strawberry and buttermilk, and mandarin and cream cheese, and fit the growing demand for fruit-topped desserts and slightly lighter creams.

[erlenbacher.co.uk](http://erlenbacher.co.uk)



**Merangz**

☑ Shropshire-based husband and wife team Brian and Leanne Crowther have expanded their meringue offering to include Merangz Bites and Merangz Nests. They are made with hand-separated free-range egg whites and come in a range of flavours including Madagascan vanilla and Belgian chocolate.

[thelittleroundcakecompany.co.uk](http://thelittleroundcakecompany.co.uk)



**Galbani and President desserts**

☑ Galbani and President have created new dessert ranges. Galbani's offer includes tiramisu au mascarpone and panna cotta, while President has created two French-style crème brûlées in vanilla pod and salted butter caramel varieties that are made with real cream and which are ready to use in 10 minutes.

[lactalisfs.co.uk](http://lactalisfs.co.uk)



**Bidvest 3663 Reset desserts**

☑ Bidvest 3663's new Reset desserts use molecular gastronomic techniques that allow for simple finishing in the kitchen. The range includes tiramisu and gluten-free versions of lemon posset, pot au chocolat and crème brûlée.

[3663.co.uk](http://3663.co.uk)

**Carpigiani soft-serve range**

☑ Carpigiani has launched its XVL soft-serve line, including both compact and robust floor-standing machines. The XVL 1 is ideal for single flavours, while the XVL 3 has a twin-hopper design for double flavours. The machines can be used in commercial kitchens or for self-service front-of-house set-ups.

[carpigiani.co.uk](http://carpigiani.co.uk)



**New Mövenpick flavours**

☑ Mövenpick Ice Cream is launching two new flavours for this summer - cinnamon and yogurt. Head of marketing Julia Jones says the yogurt flavour will suit customers who are looking for a lower fat dessert and that it works well when served with fresh fruit.

[movenpick-icecream.com](http://movenpick-icecream.com)

**Bridor de France bite-sized eclairs and profiteroles**

☑ Bridor de France has launched Bout'Choux, two collections of bite-sized choux pastry patisseries. 'Les baby religieuses' come in six flavours including salted caramel with yellow crumble, while 'les baby eclairs' are available in six flavours, including lemon with mint chips.

[bridordefrance.com](http://bridordefrance.com)

