

SCOOPED FOR JOY: THE UK'S LOVE FOR ICE CREAM



"A COLD CLOUD OF HAPPINESS" THE SENSORY THRILL OF ICE CREAM

Consumers are drawn to the sensory contrast of cold, creamy smoothness and surprising bursts of flavour. This combination makes ice cream stand apart from other desserts, creating a unique and memorable eating experience. Ice cream's uniqueness is rooted in its ability to surprise and delight both kids and adults.

"A cold, sweet, and cloud-like frozen dessert."
(Female, 42)

"It's cold and creamy and can come in many flavours." (Female, 45)

"It frozen which makes it cold and it melts as you eat it." (Female, 35)

IF YOU'VE NEVER HEARD OF ICE CREAM...

Imagine a treat that's cold, creamy, and melts softly on your tongue—like a cloud sinking lightly. It comes in endless flavours, from chocolate and vanilla to wild new creations, and you can add all sorts of toppings or mix-ins. It feels both refreshing and indulgent.

Eating ice cream isn't just about taste—it's about the happiness and nostalgia it brings, reminding you of childhood parties, sunny days, and moments shared with family and friends. Every bite feels like enjoying happiness.

So, ice cream is more than just food—it's a cold, creamy celebration in every scoop!

SCOOPED ICE CREAM AS AN EMOTIONAL ANCHOR

Scooped ice cream's power lies in its ability to evoke joyful memories and reinforce family bonds. The act of sharing ice cream becomes a ritual that brings generations together, making each scoop a bite of happiness. These emotional connections make the experience of eating scooped ice cream more meaningful than other desserts.

“Going out to the ice cream van as a child... all the kids from the street, running outside for icecream.” (Female, 45)

“The chocolate sundae placed on the picnic blanket in the back garden. The children were scrambling to eat it with spoons, and the husband was busy taking pictures.” (Male, 30)

“Being at home in the summer... being with my family and sharing a tub.” (Female, 34)

SPOONFULS OF INDULGENCE – WHEN ICE CREAM MEANS MORE THAN DESSERT

Scooped ice cream is viewed as a special treat or indulgence rather than an everyday snack. The act of scooping, customising, and serving creates a sense of occasion or ritual. Consumers treat scooped ice cream as a reward—adding emotional value beyond taste.

“It feels like an indulgence as I don’t eat too much of it.” (Female, 22)

“It was a rare treat when the van would visit whereas other treats were available most of the time from the home.” (Female, 45)

“Having a tub can be very tempting to finish it all!” (Female, 34)

WHY SETTLE? FLAVOUR FREEDOM IS THE NAME OF THE GAME

The opportunity to experiment and personalise makes scooped ice cream a dynamic treat. This diversity not only satisfies cravings but also fosters a sense of adventure. Customising scoops with toppings or mix-ins is a major draw, especially for family occasions. Seasonal and location-based flavours add a “discovery” element.

“Scoop a spoonful of vanilla ice cream and decorate it with strawberries and nuts—the process itself is like creating a work of art.” (Male, 30)

“I like ones that have different things in it like caramel, biscuits, chocolate etc.” (Female, 45)

DOUBLE THE SPOONS, DOUBLE THE FUN

Scooped ice cream is rarely eaten alone; it's strongly associated with sharing. Sharing creates a happier atmosphere and enhances the enjoyment. Family, partners, and friends are common companions for ice cream moments.

“I don't ever tend to eat ice cream alone, it's always something to share, so I guess it's that which brings happiness.” (Male, 33)

“When sharing ice cream with my daughter and watching her contented expression licking her lips, this sweet sharing makes an ordinary moment special.” (Male, 30)

“Spending time together and laughing.” (Female, 34)

FRESH FROM THE TUB

Freshness is a top reason for choosing scooped over packaged ice cream. On-site preparation or visible signs of freshness (like local production) boost trust in quality. Freshness isn't just about taste—it's a sign of quality and care. Many participants trust ice cream made on-site or freshly scooped, linking it to a superior, more pleasurable experience.

“The ice cream at the local shop is made on site so I know it's fresh.” (Male, 33)

“Scooped seems fresher. Something you don't have as much at home so feels special.” (Female, 22)

“Scooped ice cream is just creamier than the packaged.” (Female, 19)

CLEAN SCOOPS, HAPPY HEARTS: THE HYGIENE FACTOR

Cleanliness is non-negotiable for UK consumers. A spotless shop and careful service instill confidence, while poor hygiene can instantly lose a customer—no matter how tempting the display. Visible signs like staff wearing gloves or face masks, and clean counters, are reassuring.

“Observe whether the store clerk is wearing gloves and masks during operation.”
(Female, 42)

“Sometimes if the utensils are not clean, I wouldn’t recommend going to that shop.”
(Female, 18)

“If scoops are clean, servers are wearing gloves.” (Female, 19)

THE PRICE TAG DILEMMA – IS A SCOOP WORTH THE SPLURGE?

Many consumers are willing to pay more for a special, fresh scoop, but there's a limit. Value and affordability are key, especially for families or frequent buyers, with price-sensitive shoppers choosing packaged ice cream more often.

“Price does make me think twice about buying.” (Female, 40)

“I have to be drawn to the flavour... and promotions are a huge help. I'll buy ice creams I can't usually afford if they're on promotion.” (Female, 45)

“The price is fair in my opinion.” (Female, 30)

SEASONALITY & THE SUMMER SURGE – WHEN CRAVINGS PEAK

Summer is the season of ice cream. The weather-driven craving means brands and shops can expect surges in demand—particularly for scooped options—on sunny days and holiday periods.

“Summer heat relief, a mouthful of ice cream is super refreshing.” (Female, 39)

“Ice cream is cold so its refreshing on a hot day.” (Female, 35)

“When eating it in summer it helps cool you down.” (Female, 21)

SAY YES TO THE SCOOP-UNKNOWN!

Curiosity leads many to try new and unique flavours, especially when they're scooped. The thrill of discovery is stronger with scooped than with packaged ice cream. This adventurous spirit is especially pronounced when travelling or during special occasions.

“Yes, I am very willing to... surprise brought by curiosity and unknown flavors.” (Female, 42)

“Different countries have different flavours or the same flavours but made in a different way, so it's interesting to taste how the countries have their own idea of ice cream.” (Female, 18)

“I think my palate has evolved through the years and I'm much more open to new flavours.” (Female, 45)

WHY THE FREEZER SECTION CAN'T COMPETE

Packaged ice cream is great for convenience, but it rarely delivers the fresh, indulgent, and social experience of scooped ice cream. Packaged ice cream is seen as less fresh, less customisable, and less special. Some participants find packaged ice cream too artificial or too sweet.

“Packaged ice cream is easy to carry and eat at any time, but it lacks the fresh experience of on-site scooping.” (Female, 42)

“Packaged ice cream has a distinct freezer taste to it.” (Female, 18)

“The packaging is easily damaged and affects the mood of consumption.” (Female, 42)

WHEN FREEZER TUBS SAVE THE DAY

Packaged ice cream meets a different consumer need—convenience. When the craving strikes at home or scooped options are out of reach, supermarket tubs deliver satisfaction with minimal fuss. Promotions and brand variety also support packaged purchases.

“I can keep it in the freezer at home and eat it when I want to.” (Female, 45)

“Portable and easy to store.” (Female, 39)

“I have to be drawn to the flavour (I have my favourites)... I’ll buy ice creams I can’t usually afford if they’re on promotion.” (Female, 45)

THE VEGAN SCOOP GAP

Vegan consumers feel left out of the scooped ice cream experience due to limited options. Availability of labelled, affordable vegan scooped ice cream would open new markets. Packaged options are currently preferred for dietary clarity.

“I no longer buy/eat scooped ice cream because I am vegan and there are never vegan options for scooped ice cream.” (Female, 45)

“As long as they were not too expensive I would happily try most flavours.” (Female, 45)

“I wish there were more vegan ice cream options available.” (Female, 45)

THE ULTIMATE SCOOP

Scooped ice cream's power is in its emotional resonance—nostalgia, togetherness, and reward. Freshness, variety, and social sharing are non-negotiables for UK consumers.

Price, convenience, and dietary needs remain important, but scooped ice cream's experiential magic is hard to beat.

Opportunities exist to expand into vegan, premium, and more adventurous flavour territories.

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