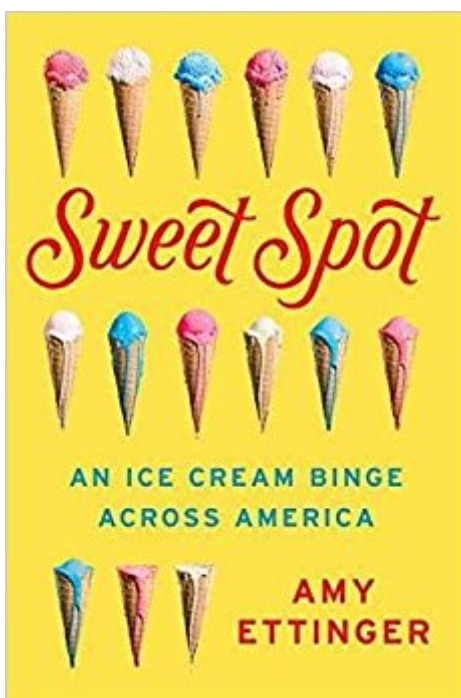


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Sweet Spot: An Ice Cream Binge Across America



Synopsis

A journalist channels her ice-cream obsession, scouring the United States for the best artisanal brands and delving into the surprising history of ice cream and frozen treats in America. For Amy Ettinger, ice cream is not just a delicious snack but a circumstance and a time of year frozen forever in memory. As the youngest child and only girl, ice cream embodied unstructured summers, freedom from the tyranny of her classmates, and a comforting escape from her chaotic, demanding family. Now as an adult and journalist, her love of ice cream has led to a fascinating journey to understand ice cream's evolution and enduring power, complete with insight into the surprising history behind America's early obsession with ice cream and her experience in an immersive ice-cream boot camp to learn from the masters. From a visit to the one place in the United States that makes real frozen custard in a mammoth machine known as the Iron Lung, to the vicious competition among small ice-cream makers and the turf wars among ice-cream trucks, to extreme flavors like foie gras and oyster, Ettinger encounters larger-than-life characters and uncovers what's really behind America's favorite frozen treats. Sweet Spot is a fun and spirited exploration of a treat Americans can't get enough of—one that transports us back to our childhoods and will have you walking to the nearest shop for a cone.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Praise for Sweet Spot [Ettinger's] richly entertaining, easy-to-read narrative is infused with history, recipes and the science behind what makes for delicious—and sometimes

not-so-delicious flavors....Ettinger piles on double and triple scoops of fun information that offers literary deliciousness for ice cream lovers everywhere. "Shelf Awareness" A breezy, appealing book...you don't have to be a foodie to savor [Ettinger's] tribute to a summer staple...Her travelogue is a scoop of fun for everyone. "BookPage" In this breezy part memoir, part frozen-treat homage, journalist Ettinger takes readers on a tour of some of her favorite ice cream memories...A light, fun read for those who want some ice cream history along with their sundae. "Library Journal" Ettinger's book will be a vicarious treat for fellow addicts. "Kirkus Reviews" Sweet Spot is an American epic told by an adventurous soul with an ice cream obsession. Wonderfully entertaining, witty and smart, superbly researched, and filled with a colorful cast of ice cream aficionados and fanatics, this book feels destined to become a classic for foodies and history buffs alike. "Elizabeth McKenzie, author of The Portable Veblen" Amy Ettinger has written such a charming and passionate love story that you'll feel like maybe ice cream is what you need more of in your life. Because it's also a world view in a cone, this book, and it's just what we need right now: equal parts comfort and thrills, luscious escapism and delightfully obsessive reality, and pure, cover-to-cover yumminess. "Catherine Newman, author of Waiting for Birdy and Catastrophic Happiness" An energetic romp through the history of ice cream in America. Science, politics, race, gender, class "Ettinger considers it all as she interviews ice cream icons, idealists, and innovators. With strong reporting full of heart, Ettinger takes us beyond sugar and cream to bring us the full story of America's favorite dessert." "Jessica Fechter, New York Times bestselling author of Stir" Whether chasing down butter pecan frozen custard in Cream City, USA, Mister Softee slugfests in Brooklyn, or candy cap mushroom gelato made from water buffalo milk in northern California, Amy Ettinger gets the scoop on ice cream's rich and wonderful past, present, and future. "Rien Fertel, author of The One True Barbecue

Amy Ettinger is an essayist, journalist, and editor. She has written for the New York Times, New York magazine, The Washington Post, Salon, and the Huffington Post. She lives in Santa Cruz, California, with her husband and daughter.

Too little about ice cream - too much about Amy

This is a book about my absolute favorite food in the world. Like Ettinger, it's like crack for me. I can never have enough ice cream. If, like me, you are a freak for this cold treat, snap this book up and learn all about the crazy and fascinating history of its rise across America. I learned so much about

how ice cream, frozen custard and gelato is made, about ice cream trucks, about the challenge of pasteurization and so much more. Ettinger weaves meticulous (and delicious) research amidst her memories of growing up as an ice cream lover, creating that emotional connection that I know ice cream has for me.

Do you love ice cream too? Author Amy Ettinger went on a cross-country journey to find the best ice cream. And in her new book, *Sweet Spot*, she shares everything she learned. From finding out that Haagen Dazs came from Brooklyn and was named by Reuben Mattus, who wanted a "Danish sounding" name (my biggest disappointment reading this book), to learning all about ice cream base (pre-made or homemade?), to obsessively testing her own recipes, Ettinger set about to find out everything she could about the great love of her life, ice cream. Ice cream is more than just a comfort food. It's a journey back to childhood, an excursion through our best memories, a trip to comfort and love and joy. It was part of our birthday parties, our summer picnics, our holiday meals, and hot summer nights. And it's what Amy Ettinger lives for, so her journey to find the best ice cream is as complete a journey as you can imagine. Talk about the ultimate summer reading! Ettinger takes us through history lessons and science classes, to learn where our favorite frozen treats come from and how they're put together. She explores the world of ice cream shops, ice cream trucks, soda fountains, frozen custard, ice cream sandwiches, gelato, and froyo. And she even looks at some of the crazy adult-only ice cream flavors that include alcohol or proteins like insects or foie gras (a brilliant idea, says this girl, whose local ice cream shop just teamed with one of our city's best bbq restaurants to offer a burnt ends ice cream, topped with barbecue sauce). Through mind-numbing ice cream tastings, ice cream maker failures, freezing disasters, Ice Cream School, and even a carjacking, Ettinger persevered to offer us a tasty volume of facts, memories, ideas, flavors, and even recipes, like her Ice Cream Cake by the Ocean, Arnie's Ballpark Chocolate Ice Cream, and her NGB2 (Not Going Back to) Milwaukee Butter Pecan Custard. *Sweet Spot* is everything you wanted to know about your ice cream, in a charming, fun, fascinating book that you can read with a spoon in your hand. Galleys for *Sweet Spot* were provided by Penguin Group, Dutton, through NetGalley.com, with many thanks.

I've despised frozen yogurt since its first wave of popularity in the 1980s, when it tried so unsuccessfully to mimic the whipped fatty creaminess of my childhood obsession. My own mother, who has never, to my knowledge, turned down a dessert item, can't stand it either. The few times I've eaten it, I've come away feeling deprived. I experience a

desolate, empty feeling that is so much worse than mere hunger. The yogurt cruelly mocks the unofficial motto of all ice cream lovers: "Fat! Makes the world taste good." --- pp 223-224

So there! When it comes to ice cream author Amy Ettinger is a stickler for quality. She knows what she likes and second best or inferior quality product simply will not do. With the proliferation of artisanal ice cream shops across the country it would appear that an awful lot of Americans would agree with her. Recently, Amy decided to embark on a fascinating journey in search of frozen bliss. She chronicles her exploits in the entertaining new book "Sweet Spot: An Ice Cream Binge Across America". Not only will you discover where some of the best and most unusual ice cream in the country can be found but you will learn why Americans have been obsessed with the stuff since George Washington was President. Many ice cream aficionados will tell you that it is all about the base. This may well be true but as Amy Ettinger reveals in "Sweet Spot" for most operators the cost is prohibitive. Making ice cream first requires the production of a basic pasteurized custard base, in which milk, cream, sugar, and egg yolks are heated together until the base reaches a specific temperature. Pasteurization of ice cream is required by the government for businesses selling ice-cream products to the public. I think Amy was genuinely taken aback by how few creameries actually prepare their own base. One that still does is Penny Creamery in the author's hometown of Santa Cruz, CA. Amy visited with owners Kendra Baker and Zachary Davis who explained how it is done. Meanwhile, the overwhelming majority of creameries must rely on a premade ice cream base. And as you will discover lots of delectable ice cream concoctions are fashioned from these premade bases.

Amy Ettinger's cross-country tour included a stop in the city of Milwaukee where they make some of the best frozen custard in the nation. She visited three of the most popular stands in the city, namely Gilles, Leon's and Kopp's and compares and contrasts their offerings. One of the flavors that certainly got my attention was the "Bark in the Dark" frozen custard offered by Kopp's "dark chocolate custard with dark chocolate sea salt almond bark. Yum! Yum!

In Chapter 5 entitled "Bad Blood, Good Humor" Amy Ettinger introduces her readers to a character known as "Maria the Ice Cream Girl". Maria Campanella peddles her ice cream novelties from a truck in the Bensonhurst section of New York City. Her family has been doing business in that part of town for 70 years. You will quickly discover why this is an incredibly difficult way to eke out a living. Now it seems that gourmet ice cream sandwiches are all the rage these days. Ettinger travels to Culver City, CA to introduce us to Natasha Case and Freyer Estrella owners of Coolhaus. Your mouth will water as you contemplate sinking your teeth into one of their sumptuous creations. Finally, we learn why the old-fashioned soda fountain seems

to be making a comeback with some new-fangled drinks. Very interesting indeed! For the most part I found *Sweet Spot: An Ice Cream Binge Across America* to be an informative and highly-entertaining read. But Amy, kindly consider putting a lid on the political commentary. It's a book about ice cream! I find that no matter what topic liberal authors write about they just can't seem to help themselves. It is never a good idea to insult a significant portion of your intended audience. Nonetheless, this is the kind of light summer reading that most people would enjoy on the beach or at the cottage. Recommended!

I found this book to be very informative, breezy and entertaining throughout, and I learned a lot. Who knew that there was a university that taught people how to make ice cream? I don't want to spoil any of the many surprises in these pages but I will just say this: you may never look at ice cream, a familiar American treat, in quite the same way again.

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