

We Tried It: Spam Ice Cream

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What happens when you use Spam as an ice cream mix-in? Our odd-ice-cream-eating managing editor mixes up a batch to find out.

By Tara Cox September 07, 2018

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Around the office, I'm known as an adventurous ice cream eater, to say the least. So far this summer, I've sampled flavors such as [pickle ice cream](#) and [ketchup & mayo ice cream](#). So when an email about "Maple & Brown Sugar Spam Ice Cream" arrived in my inbox, my eyes widened with excitement. Could this be good? I'm definitely a fan of both things, so... maybe they'd be good together as well?

Normally, my ice cream adventures require me to trek across town to try something a restaurant has dreamed up, but for this recipe, I only had to go as far as my own kitchen. [The recipe](#) was created for the Kentucky State Fair at a local competition under the larger Great American Spam Championship. Shelby Bush, a home cook with no professional training took home first place under the contest's "Sweet and Savory" theme. With credentials like that, I couldn't wait for it to be the inaugural recipe in my new ice cream machine. Yay!



Ice Cream Maker + Spam = A Yummy Dessert!

As an editor for a food magazine, I'm proud to admit, I do not hate Spam. I actually like the stuff; not in an "I eat it every day" way, but in a, "Sure, I can get down with Spam & Eggs" kind of way. It seems to me poor Spam suffers from a reputation issue — I'm convinced if you ground it up and served it on crackers to an unsuspecting crowd as a hipster "pate," it would get more love. Plus, Hawaiians love Spam — and I trust Hawaii.

Americans' relationship with the jiggly meat started as a love affair during World War II but eventually hit a fork in the road, veering off into the love and (love to) hate categories. Over time it has risen to iconic status; developing a following with its own museum and

celebrations around the country. Meanwhile, other places around the world such as Guam, and Southeast Asia have unironically embraced Spam, creating a crossover appreciation for staples such as Hawaii's Spam Musabi back here in the contiguous states.

Back to the ice cream, though. The recipe was easy to make. I started out sautéing tiny cubes in a brown sugar, maple syrup, and vanilla mixture. I was thinking this isn't so different from some sort of a candied bacon thing — and then remembered I was supposed to be using *bacon*-flavored Spam, which my NYC grocery store doesn't carry. But c'est la vie, I'm a Spam purist anyway. After resisting the urge to crack an egg or two atop the meat and call it brunch, I let it the cubes cool and started on the vanilla bean ice cream. Next the whole thing mingled in the machine and off to the freezer it went to harden during an overnight snooze. The chant to that old Monty Python sketch was on repeat in my head.



Voila! Spam ice cream served in a Spam can!

Surprisingly, this flavor was fun! The creamy ice cream offset the salty meat while the sweet maple syrup bridged the gap between savory and sweet. It didn't taste like a bunch of meat just fell in my ice cream, rather the cooked cubes rested comfortably in the cold concoction. Although still mostly a novelty flavor, it was intriguingly good. The true test was when I brought some over to a dinner party where a chef and a wine expert were in attendance — two people with incredible palates. And you know what? Both were pleasantly surprised and ate their entire portions. I'll take it! Spam, elevated.

Ready to try it yourself? Get the recipe for Maple & Brown Sugar Spam Ice Cream here.

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