July is National Ice Cream Month

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On average, Americans eat about 23 gallons of ice cream each year, according to the International Dairy Foods Association (IDFA). July is National Ice Cream Month, which some might see as a good excuse to eat even more ice cream.

In 1986, President Ronald Reagan declared July as National Ice Cream Month, with the third Sunday in July designated as National Ice Cream Day. Reagan's proclamation called for Americans across the country to observe the events with "appropriate ceremonies and activities."

The IDFA recommends several ways for people to celebrate the special month and day by hosting ice cream parties, trying different ice cream flavors and inventing their own ice cream flavors using toppings and sauces.

The History of Ice Cream

The first mention of ice cream in the United States was in a 1774 letter by Maryland Governor William Bladen. In the summer of 1790, George Washington spent roughly $200 on ice cream. In those early days, ice cream was primarily an occasional treat for the rich.

Nancy Johnson patented the first hand-cranked ice cream maker in 1843. In 1851, Jacob Fussell opened the first ice cream factory. The invention of refrigeration helped keep ice cream cold and new inventions, technologies and techniques made ice cream available to the general public.

Here are a few interesting facts about ice cream:

- Vanilla is the most popular ice cream flavor.
- The ice cream float was invented in 1874.
- Italo Marchiony invented the ice cream cone in 1896.
- It takes about 50 licks to finish an average ice cream cone.