

Ice cream in winter? Totally cool

CHICO — On brisk and biting winter days most people like to stay in, cuddle under a warm blanket and drink a hot mug of tea, cider or coffee. Well, I am not like most people. Instead I choose to go out, expose myself to the elements and eat bone-chillingly cold ice cream.

Someone once told me that eating cold foods actually makes people warmer. When the cold is introduced, the body works harder to warm up and therefore the body temperature increases. I don't know if this is really true or not, but it kind of makes sense, so let's just go with it.

Cold Stone Creamery, downtown at 146 Broadway St., seemed like the perfect destination for a creamy and cold mid-afternoon snack. When I walked in the door I was slightly surprised to find that there were a few other crazies willing to eat ice cream, too.

For those who have never visited Cold Stone, it's pretty neat. Workers will scoop up the flavor of ice cream selected by the customer and smear it on an ice cold stone counter, then the worker mixes in the topping or toppings of choice. This, of course, is what sets Cold Stone Creamery apart from other ice cream parlors and gives it the name.

I was pleased to see that the ice cream parlor had expanded its menu since my last visit. Not only does Cold Stone scoop up ice cream, it also serves other ice cream-inspired treats such as cupcakes, pies, smoothies, blended coffee drinks and ice cream cake.

Some of the items can be a bit pricey, such as the ice cream cakes that range in price from \$19.99 to \$49.99, but the smoothies, shakes and other blended drinks are reasonably priced in the \$5 range or less.

One funny little quirk about the ice cream parlor is the sizes of the ice creams. They have fun names such as Like It, Love It and Gotta Have It instead of the typical small, medium and large.

Usually when I go into Cold Stone I get a Like It size with one mix-in, but today I was feeling a little bit extravagant so I decided to try a sundae. I ordered the

Banana Split Decision, which was comprised of sweet cream flavored ice cream, banana, strawberries, toasted almonds, fudge and whipped cream. The sundae was \$4.86.

I always feel bad buying a scoop or two of frozen deliciousness for nearly \$5 at an ice cream parlor when I know darn well I could buy an entire carton for less at the grocery store. But my worries are soon put to an end when I bite into the creamy goodness that Cold Stone serves in those little red cups.

The sweet cream was, well, creamy and sweet. The tart red strawberries and firm banana pieces worked well with the ice cream because they cut through the sweetness, which may have been nearly unbearable without the fruit. The almonds lent a smoky flavor and a nice crisp and crunchy texture to the sundae that peanuts, the usual sundae topper, seem to lack. The chocolate syrup was ordinary but still tasty.

Overall, the experience at the restaurant was fabulous. The service was awesome, the sundae was scrumptious, and I left with a warm fuzzy feeling instead of shivers. Maybe that cold food theory really is true, maybe not. But I'll continue eating ice cream in winter, regardless.

Genny McLaren is a senior at Chico State University and a former managing editor at the Orion, Chico State University's student newspaper. Each week she has just one hour's worth of minimum wage to spend at a local eatery, weighing in on restaurant fare, wait staff and atmosphere. She can be reached at gen.mclaren@gmail.com.

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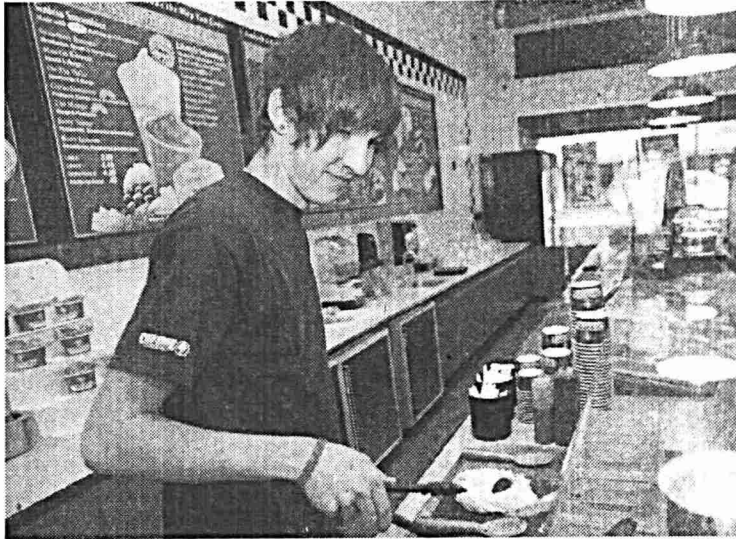
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ColdStone Creamery
 146 Broadway St.

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Spencer Hart serves up some mint ice cream and oreo mix in at Coldstone Cremery on Dec. 31.

Jason Halley
Staff Photo