In 1984, President Ronald Reagan designated July as National Ice Cream Month and the third Sunday of the month as National Ice Cream Day. He recognized ice cream as a fun and nutritious food that is enjoyed by a full 90 percent of the nation's population. In the proclamation, President Reagan called for all people of the United States to observe these events with "appropriate ceremonies and activities."

Vanilla continues to be America's flavor of choice in ice cream and novelties, in both supermarket and food service sales. This flavor is the most versatile, mixing well with toppings, drinks and bakery desserts. America's top five favorite individual flavors are vanilla, chocolate, cookie 'n cream, strawberry and chocolate chip mint.

However, ice cream flavors are only limited by the imagination. Manufacturers, scoop shops and chefs constantly come up with new and exciting flavors for their customers. To keep consumers looking to see what's next in the freezer case, individual processors often release limited time "seasonal" flavors, such as gingerbread, peppermint or caramel ice cream for the November/December holidays.

While the majority of ice cream sales have long been regular-fat products, ice cream manufacturers continue to diversify their lines of frozen desserts in order to fit into various lifestyles – often called "better for you" products. Consumers can find an array of frozen desserts to fit specific dietary needs or wants, such as reduced-fat, fat-free, low-carb, "no sugar added", added calcium or other nutrients, or lactose-free ice cream. Novelty/single-serving products are also an important part of this trend, as some consumers prefer the pre-packaged portion when counting calories, carbs or fat grams.

However, most consumers are looking for an indulgence when eating ice cream. Therefore, ice cream manufacturers make sure to offer a full selection of premium and super premium products in innovative flavors and with such mix-ins as cookies, brownies, candies and cake.

No matter what the occasion—a child's birthday party, an elegant dinner or a casual family get-together —ice cream is a wonderful treat that adds to the celebration. It can be served at the end to the meal, as a snack or even as the main attraction at parties.

Today's on-the-go families are opting for simple, elegant entertaining. The less time spent in the kitchen, the better. Ice cream is an easy, delicious and, if desired, fancy solution. Old favorites – sundaes, root beer floats, banana splits, milkshakes, pie a-la-mode, and ice cream cones – are among the most popular and simplest choices. However, serving ideas for ice cream are only as limited as your imagination!

Ice cream is even more delicious when topped off; try hot fudge, chocolate, caramel or even a special liqueur. Add some whipped cream, nuts, fresh summer fruit, sprinkles or cookies for a real treat. A "build-your-own sundae" party is a great way to get everybody in on the fun any day of the week. And don't forget the cherry!

If there is no occasion coming up, invent one! Don't forget that July is National Ice Cream Month