

Cookies and Cream Ice Cream

4	cups	Half-and-half
2	cups	Whipping cream
1	cup	Granulated sugar
6	inches	Vanilla beans (= 1 six-inch bean or 2 three-inch beans)
1	pound	Nabisco Oreos

1. Break the Oreos into quarters. You'll see how to use fingers and thumbs to do it quickly. Feel free to munch a few. Put them into a freezer.

2. Carefully split the vanilla beans by taking a sharp knife and cutting them open lengthwise from end to end. (Notice the nifty little seeds inside the beans. Whenever you've had high quality vanilla ice cream, you may have seen the seeds; they're one thing that makes the difference between this sort of ice cream and the stuff at the market that ought to be sold on the household adhesives aisle.) (You may skip the beans and add 2 Tbsp of vanilla paste instead. It has the little seeds as well. Vanilla paste is **not** vanilla extract or vanilla sauce or a vanilla visa. Do not embarrass yourself with some dumb substitute.)

3. In the top of a double broiler, combine 2 cups of the half-and-half and 1 cup of the whipping cream with the sugar and the vanilla beans. Put the remaining half-and-half and cream into your freezer.

4. Cook this for 10 minutes, stirring fairly constantly. Make sure the cream does not scorch. Several times, fish out the beans and with the very end of each bean in your hand, squeeze the bean between the edge of the pot and the side of your knife. Actually, you are pulling the bean through the slit formed by the pot edge and knife with the effect of scraping the little seeds out and squeezing some of the vanilla gook out of the softened beans. Drop the beans back into the pot so that they soften further between scrapings.

5. Scrape the beans one last time and then toss them. Cool the mixture off by putting the top of the double broiler into a pan of ice water. Change the ice a few times. All of the heat you can remove now will save time later. When the temperature is about 100 degrees F, add the rest of the half-and-half and cream that you stored in the freezer.

6. Put the mixture into your ice cream freezer and crank (or add electrons). Stop before the mixture is totally stiff.

7. Stir the frozen cookie pieces into the mixture. The ice cream alone is about 1/2 gallon and the cookies will add several more cups so you should either use an ice cream canister that holds 1 gallon or a similarly sized container that is freezable. Try to equidistribute the cookies but don't spend so much time that the ice cream starts to melt.

8. Put the ice cream into a freezer for several hours to harden.