

Fruit Split. Screwball. Nobbly Bobbly. Flake 99. Calippo. Twister. Rocket Lolly. Solero. Knickerbocker Glory.

If words are really just noises we shape with our tongues and mouths, then the above words are the sounds of our summers; delicious, bombastic and even mildly violent names that, yes, we carefully shape and make disappear with our tongues and mouths. They are names that carry flavour and memory, names that hold the aching weight of hot shoulders and resting grandparents, of our small bare feet burning on sidewalks. They are the names of places we long to return, knowing they have fallen out of reach.

I cannot think of many other foods that have such a Pavlovian hold on our senses. Turkey and roast potatoes maybe. Or perhaps Yorkshire puddings. But these contain the cold and dark of winter, the linger of sherry heaviness and sleep. Ice cream though—ice cream is vehemently alive, an olfactory burst of bees and scraped knees, an epidermal evocation of beach sand and your father's gentle strength lifting you high

above the waves. And what of the distant song of an ice cream van approaching through the haze of a July day when the tar is melting and the grass is so thick between your toes? I am nearing 45 years old and even now, even now that looping, wobbling tune—seemingly unchanged for eternity—shoots an arrow of excitement into my heart and makes me want to rush outside and subject myself to the tough decision between ice lolly or ice cream.

Ice cream—whatever form it takes—is the sticky trickle between your fingers; it's the soggy blandness of the cone and the final chocolatey lick of the stick; it's the dangerous mystery of dry ice fog and the tragedy of a dropped blob dissolving away under an indifferent sun. It's the sting of a wasp and the swift shadow of a seagull passing; it's the cold glass and hum of a fridge in some forgotten holiday town that sometimes shows up in your loneliest dreams; it's the seaside sandwiches your mother made and cut into fours, and the cool shapes of light coming through the trees on a sweltering Sunday.

Perhaps this is why we're so willing to queue for it. There is something about a line of adults waiting for ice cream that suggests the shape of a faded mischievousness, a restlessness—an urgency—to possess and ingest an aspect of ourselves that we wish hadn't been so eroded by all our grown-up duties and cares. So when it's our turn, we pick the ice cream we want, the particular name we hope will transport us back to an era when this was the most pressing decision we were faced with. And for those few minutes between first and final lick we remember that long ago we were all just children.

Indulge in the taste of summer with these local ice cream gems:

Baboo Gelato: Artisanal treats crafted with Dorset's finest ingredients and Italian expertise. Find them at select spots in Dorset and Somerset, or visit their kiosks in West Bay and Lyme Regis.

Purbeck Ice Cream: Lovingly made on a farm nestled amidst Dorset's picturesque landscapes. With over 40 varieties, there's something for everyone, including their delightful Jurassic Range supporting the local community.

Pamphill Dairy: Homemade delights, created with the freshest ingredients from Dorset. Available year-round from their farm shop and café in Wimborne.

New Forest Ice Cream: A longstanding favourite known for its quality and freshness across several counties. Enjoy a taste of perfection delivered straight from Lymington.

