

SOUTHWEST EDITION

Sunset

LIVING IN THE WEST | HOME | TRAVEL | FOOD | GARDEN

Summer grilling special

- + Tangy chicken skewers
- + Our 3 best potato salads ever
- + Mouthwatering ribs



Grilled chicken skewers with romesco sauce and saffron couscous

Santa Barbara's uncrowded beaches
Where to play, stay, and relax

Patio retreats
5 great designs, 1 easy step-by-step plan

JULY 2007

\$4.99US \$6.50CAN



0 72440 10140 1

80

The Fourth of July in Boulder, Utah, means horseback rides and ice cream sundaes.

Features

80 | Sundae social A Utah town unites for ice cream with hot fudge piñon sauce and other irresistible toppings

86 | Garden for all ages This all-in-one landscape has a patio firepit, vegetable beds, and a children's play "island"

92 | Cabin on the range Simple design suits a Montana studio with a panoramic view

96 | Willamette Valley Oregon backroads lead to a world of fresh produce and great wine

In every issue

6 | FROM THE EDITOR

10 | WEB EXCLUSIVES

13 | JULY IN THE WEST Favorite ideas for the month, including Tahoe fireworks, trails with a swim, succulent secrets, an inviting outdoor nook, corn with mustard seed, and more

104 | THE NEXT FRONTIER

Why aren't we visiting our great national parks?

130 | RESOURCES

133 | THE DIRECTORY

142 | THE SUNSET VIEW

Pam Houston on Colorado

Cover stories

CHICKEN SKEWERS page 124

POTATO SALADS page 120

RIBS page 110

SANTA BARBARA BEACHES page 22

PATIO RETREATS page 45

ON OUR COVER For a perfect summer dinner, serve chicken with smoky romesco sauce and couscous (page 124) and fennel-pepper slaw (page 110). Photograph by Leigh Beisch; food styling by Dan Becker; prop styling by Sara Slavin



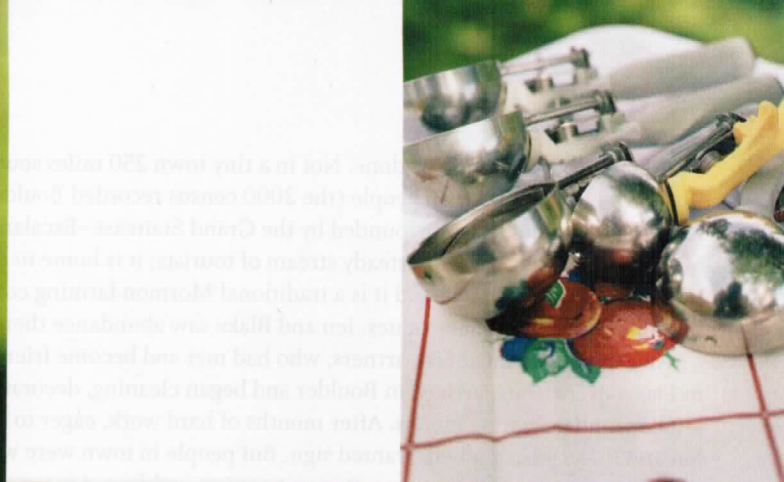
Sundae social

How two newcomers charmed a small Utah town with ice cream, sauce, and sprinkle

BY LAVINIA SPALDING RECIPES BY JEN CASTLE AND BLAKE SPALDING

THE REMOTE TOWN OF BOULDER, UTAH, dishes up all the ingredients of a rural Fourth of July: American flags wave from fence posts, flatbeds—typically reserved for hauling farm supplies—are reborn as parade floats, and children compete in watermelon-eating contests. But at Hell's Backbone Grill, the town's award-winning restaurant, the ingredients that matter most are the ones sprinkled and spooned on ice cream.

When Jen Castle and my sister, Blake Spalding, moved to Boulder in 2000 to open the restaurant—named for a nearby bridge—they had two missions: to serve organic, regional food made from scratch, and to run their business according to the Buddhist ethics that they embrace.



A town gathering

CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE Drizzling cajeta caramel on ice cream; scoops at the ready; Hell's Backbone Grill staffer Sean Hayes puts some muscle into scooping; restaurant co-owner/co-chef Jen Castle supplies the whipped cream; co-owner/co-chef Blake Spalding with niece Emma; cinnamon sugared almonds; town residents (from left) Susana, Emili, and America Holladay. **OPPOSITE** Blake, author Lavinia Spalding (in pale pink top), and restaurant staffers get ready to serve.



Friends said it couldn't be done. Not in a tiny town 250 miles south of Salt Lake City with more horses than people (the 2000 census recorded Boulder's population as 180). And yet Boulder is surrounded by the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, which attracts a steady stream of tourists; it is home to the eco-friendly Boulder Mountain Lodge; and it is a traditional Mormon farming community, rich in soil, produce, and pioneer values. Jen and Blake saw abundance there.

And so the two business partners, who had met and become friends while catering in Flagstaff, Arizona, arrived in Boulder and began cleaning, decorating, stocking the kitchen, and designing menus. After months of hard work, eager to open their doors, Jen and Blake posted a help-wanted sign. But people in town were wary. They'd had a contentious history with other restaurant owners and feared more culture clashes and misunderstandings. Jen and Blake's sign got virtually no response.

With the usual method not working, it appeared a more neighborly approach was in order. "In a small Mormon town, you meet people by attending church," says Jen. "We're not LDS [members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints], so that would have felt inauthentic. For us, hosting a party was the natural solution, and an ice cream social was the kind of event that included everyone. We wanted to inspire trust."

Jen and Blake hung posters inviting everyone. Then they set up tables outside, waited nervously with gallons of ice cream, and watched in shock as carloads of families arrived. The mayor later told them he'd never seen so many townspeople gathered in one place. Gradually, locals started visiting the restaurant and applying for jobs. With help from a few Flagstaff friends, the restaurant was soon fully staffed.

Today Hell's Backbone Grill is Boulder's largest employer, with 35 workers during the peak tourism season. I live here full-time now, having traded San Francisco for Boulder in 2005. The restaurant has its own organic farm, which our brother now runs, and we published a popular cookbook, *With a Measure of Grace: The Story and Recipes of a Small Town Restaurant* (Provecho Press, 2004; \$30).

Meanwhile, the ice cream social has become an annual tradition. It has also grown to include a talent show, with acts ranging from cowboy poetry to car-alarm impressions. Last year, two earnest young girls belted out "Battle Hymn of the Republic," after which a restaurant employee performed a bongo-backed interpretation of Gil Scott-Heron's poem "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised." Between these acts, a cowboy hypnotized a chicken.

As evening fell, everyone gathered beneath a magnificent desert sky to enjoy a fireworks extravaganza sponsored by the lodge. It was the cherry atop a perfect day. **INFO** Hell's Backbone Grill (\$\$\$; at the Boulder Mountain Lodge, 20 State 12 N., Boulder, UT; 435/335-7464) serves breakfast and dinner every day from March 15 through Thanksgiving; to-go picnic lunches are also available.

The recipes

Jen and Blake don't make their own ice cream for the social—even Boulder is too big for that—but they serve local ice cream and make all the toppings from scratch. Here are recipes for some of their favorites, along with two ice cream recipes that they reserve for entertaining at home.

Vanilla bean ice cream

Studded with vanilla seeds, this ice cream has intense flavor.

PREP AND COOK TIME 1 hour, plus at least 6 hours of chilling and freezing time
MAKES 1½ qts.; 12 (½-cup) servings

NOTES You'll need an ice cream maker with a 2-qt. capacity.

2 vanilla beans
2 cups each heavy cream and whole milk
7 egg yolks
¾ cup sugar
¼ tsp. salt
1 tsp. pure vanilla extract

1. Split vanilla beans lengthwise and scrape out seeds. In a 4-qt. saucepan over medium heat, bring cream, milk, and vanilla seeds and pods to a simmer.
2. Remove cream mixture from heat and let steep 20 minutes. Meanwhile, put egg yolks, sugar, and salt in the bowl of a

standing mixer and whisk at medium-high speed until mixture is thick and pale yellow, 2 to 3 minutes.

3. Return cream mixture to medium heat and bring just to a simmer. Remove from heat and pour through a strainer into a clean bowl; discard vanilla pods. With mixer running on medium speed, pour ½ cup cream mixture into egg mixture. Slowly drizzle in remaining cream mixture, continuing to mix as you go.

4. Pour this custard into saucepan. Return to stove and cook over low to medium-low heat, stirring with a wooden spoon, until custard thickens a bit and reaches 170° on a thermometer. Pay close attention to the temperature: At 180°, it will begin to curdle.

5. Pour custard into a bowl; stir in vanilla and set bowl in an ice bath (a larger bowl of ice and cold water). Let cool, stirring occasionally, 10 minutes. Cover with plastic wrap and chill for at least 1 hour and up to 1 day.

6. Freeze custard in an ice cream maker according to manufacturer's instructions. Transfer to an airtight plastic container and freeze until hardened, at least 5 hours.

PER ½-CUP SERVING 246 CAL., 70% (171 CAL.) FROM FAT; 3.8 G PROTEIN; 19 G FAT (11 G SAT.); 16 G CARBO (0 G FIBER); 87 MG SODIUM; 184 MG CHOL.

Mexican chocolate ice cream

Mexican chocolate, usually described on the package as "Mexican chocolate drink mix," is a spiced chocolate bar that's commonly melted for hot chocolate. It gives the ice cream a pudding-like texture.

PREP AND COOK TIME 1 hour, plus at least 6 hours of chilling and freezing time

MAKES 1½ qts.; 12 (½-cup) servings

NOTES Look for Mexican chocolate (sold in boxes of five or six disk-shaped bars) at Latin markets or in the Latin foods aisle of large supermarkets. You'll need an ice cream maker with a 2-qt. capacity.

½ vanilla bean
2 cups each heavy cream and whole milk
9 oz. Mexican chocolate (such as Ibarra; see Notes), coarsely chopped
2 oz. unsweetened chocolate, coarsely chopped
2 cinnamon sticks
5 egg yolks
½ cup sugar
¼ tsp. salt



Community spirit

CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE

Once folks start lining up for sundaes, it can take an hour to serve them all; Emma Spalding with a rooster from her Aunt Blake's chicken coop; fireworks in the field next to the Boulder Mountain Lodge; Mexican chocolate ice cream with hot fudge piñon sauce and spiced piñon brittle; last year's talent show featured more than 50 performers; America Holladay and Emma Spalding wait for the show to begin.



Vanilla bean ice cream,
Mexican chocolate ice cream

1. Split vanilla bean lengthwise and scrape out seeds. In a 4-qt. saucepan over medium heat, bring cream, milk, Mexican chocolate, unsweetened chocolate, cinnamon sticks, and vanilla seeds and pod to a simmer.

2. Remove cream mixture from heat and let steep 20 minutes. Meanwhile, put egg yolks, sugar, and salt in the bowl of a standing mixer and whisk at medium-high speed until egg mixture is thick and pale yellow, 2 to 3 minutes.

3. Return cream mixture to medium heat and bring just to a simmer. Remove from heat and pour through a strainer into a clean bowl; discard cinnamon sticks and vanilla pod. With mixer running on medium speed, pour 1/2 cup cream mixture into egg mixture. Slowly drizzle in remaining cream mixture, continuing to mix as you go.

4. Pour this custard into saucepan. Return to stove and cook over low to medium-low heat, stirring with a wooden spoon, until custard thickens a bit and reaches 170° on a thermometer.

5. Pour custard into a bowl and set in an ice bath (a larger bowl of ice and cold water). Let cool, stirring occasionally, 10 minutes. Cover with plastic wrap and chill for at least 1 hour and up to 1 day.

6. Freeze custard in an ice cream maker according to manufacturer's instructions. Transfer to an airtight plastic container and freeze until hardened, at least 5 hours.

PER 1/2-CUP SERVING 346 CAL., 62% (216 CAL.) FROM FAT; 3.8 G PROTEIN; 24 G FAT (13 G SAT.); 30 G CARBO (0.7 G FIBER); 86 MG SODIUM; 149 MG CHOL.

Hot fudge piñon sauce

Ground pine nuts lend a buttery flavor and pleasing texture.

PREP AND COOK TIME 35 minutes

MAKES 4 cups; 32 (2-tbsp.) servings

NOTES Piñon nuts, grown in the Southwest's high desert, are the intensely flavored cousins of the more common Italian pine nut. Either variety works well here. You can make the sauce up to 1 week ahead; refrigerate in an airtight container, then gently rewarm over medium-low heat.

1 1/2 cups shelled piñon or pine nuts (see Notes)

1/2 cup sugar

1/4 cup unsweetened cocoa

1/4 tsp. salt

1 1/4 cups heavy cream

1 cup light corn syrup

1 tbsp. distilled white vinegar

1/3 cup semisweet chocolate chips

2 oz. unsweetened chocolate, coarsely chopped

1/4 cup butter

1 tbsp. vanilla extract

1. Pulse nuts in a food processor until coarsely ground (the texture of couscous).

2. Sift sugar, cocoa, and salt into a medium saucepan. Add 3/4 cup warm water and stir to combine. Bring mixture to a simmer over medium heat, stirring until smooth.

3. Add cream, corn syrup, vinegar, and chocolate chips. Raise heat to medium-high and boil mixture for 8 to 10 minutes, swirling occasionally, until slightly reduced (mixture will be thin and sticky); remove from heat. Stir in unsweetened chocolate, butter, vanilla, and pine nuts. Serve warm.

PER 2-TBSP. SERVING 142 CAL., 61% (86 CAL.) FROM FAT; 2 G PROTEIN; 9.6 G FAT (4.4 G SAT.); 14 G CARBO (0.8 G FIBER); 50 MG SODIUM; 17 MG CHOL.

Cajeta caramel sauce

Cajeta, a Mexican caramel made from goat's milk, is mildly tangy and great on ice cream.

PREP AND COOK TIME 35 minutes

MAKES 3 cups; 24 (2-tbsp.) servings

NOTES Look for canned evaporated goat's milk at most grocery stores; fresh goat's milk is sold at natural-foods stores and often at large supermarkets. Refrigerate sauce in an airtight container for up to 2 weeks. The sauce will form crystals as it chills, but you can dissolve them with 5 minutes of gentle boiling.

4 cups sugar

1/3 cup unsalted butter

1/2 tsp. salt

1 cup canned evaporated goat's milk or whole fresh goat's milk (see Notes)

1. In a saucepan, combine sugar with 1 cup water. Bring to a boil over high heat, swirling occasionally to dissolve sugar.

2. Once sugar has dissolved, boil mixture, swirling occasionally (do not stir), until it has a medium amber color and honeylike consistency (if mixture appears to be browning too fast, lower heat to medium). Remove pan from heat and stir in butter and salt. Slowly pour in goat's milk (mixture will bubble furiously) and stir until smooth. Let cool slightly, then spoon over ice cream.

PER 2-TBSP. SERVING 164 CAL., 18% (29 CAL.) FROM FAT; 0.3 G PROTEIN; 3.2 G FAT (2 G SAT.); 34 G CARBO (0 G FIBER); 58 MG SODIUM; 9.2 MG CHOL.

Spiced piñon brittle

This crunchy topping gets a delicately spicy flavor from chili powder and cloves.

PREP AND COOK TIME 30 minutes

MAKES 3 cups; 12 (1/4-cup) servings

NOTES Though this recipe isn't difficult, it does require vigilance. When cooking the sugar, be sure to stir constantly—it can burn easily. Store in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 2 weeks.

3/4 cup shelled piñon or pine nuts (see Notes for hot fudge piñon sauce, at far left)

1 1/2 cups sugar

1 tsp. chili powder

1/2 tsp. each ground cloves and salt

1. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper and grease paper well.

2. In a small frying pan over low heat, toast nuts until they turn light golden brown, 7 to 10 minutes.

3. In a nonstick frying pan over medium heat, combine sugar, chili powder, cloves, and salt. Cook, stirring constantly, until mixture is smooth and dark brown. If mixture is darkening too quickly, remove from heat, stir well, then return to heat. When sugar is entirely melted, stir in nuts.

4. Quickly pour mixture onto parchment paper and spread 1/8 to 1/4 in. thick. Let cool until hard, then break into pieces.

PER 1/4-CUP SERVING 147 CAL., 28% (41 CAL.) FROM FAT; 2.1 G PROTEIN; 4.5 G FAT (0.7 G SAT.); 26 G CARBO (0.5 G FIBER); 99 MG SODIUM; 0 MG CHOL.

Cinnamon sugared almonds

If you've never tried your hand at candied nuts, this simple stir-and-bake method will boost your confidence.

PREP AND COOK TIME 30 minutes

MAKES 4 1/4 cups; 17 (1/4-cup) servings

NOTES Store in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 2 days.

2 cups sliced almonds

3/4 cup sugar

1 tbsp. cinnamon

1. Preheat oven to 325°. In a bowl, combine ingredients with 1/4 cup water.

2. Spread mixture on a parchment-lined baking pan; bake 10 minutes. Stir with a metal spatula (mixture will be thick), then spread again and bake until sugar is browned, about 10 minutes more.

3. Cool on baking sheet, then crumble.

PER 1/4-CUP SERVING 100 CAL., 52% (52 CAL.) FROM FAT; 2.2 G PROTEIN; 5.8 G FAT (0.5 G SAT.); 11 G CARBO (0.5 G FIBER); 1.4 MG SODIUM; 0 MG CHOL. ■

1. Split vanilla bean lengthwise and scrape out seeds. In a 4-qt. saucepan over medium heat, bring cream, milk, Mexican chocolate, unsweetened chocolate, cinnamon sticks, and vanilla seeds and pod to a simmer.

2. Remove cream mixture from heat and let steep 20 minutes. Meanwhile, put egg yolks, sugar, and salt in the bowl of a standing mixer and whisk at medium-high speed until egg mixture is thick and pale yellow, 2 to 3 minutes.

3. Return cream mixture to medium heat and bring just to a simmer. Remove from heat and pour through a strainer into a clean bowl; discard cinnamon sticks and vanilla pod. With mixer running on medium speed, pour $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cream mixture into egg mixture. Slowly drizzle in remaining cream mixture, continuing to mix as you go.

4. Pour this custard into saucepan. Return to stove and cook over low to medium-low heat, stirring with a wooden spoon, until custard thickens a bit and reaches 170° on a thermometer.

5. Pour custard into a bowl and set in an ice bath (a larger bowl of ice and cold water). Let cool, stirring occasionally, 10 minutes. Cover with plastic wrap and chill for at least 1 hour and up to 1 day.

6. Freeze custard in an ice cream maker according to manufacturer's instructions. Transfer to an airtight plastic container and freeze until hardened, at least 5 hours.

PER $\frac{1}{2}$ -CUP SERVING 346 CAL., 62% (216 CAL.) FROM FAT; 3.8 G PROTEIN; 24 G FAT (13 G SAT.); 30 G CARBO (0.7 G FIBER); 86 MG SODIUM; 149 MG CHOL.

Hot fudge piñon sauce

Ground pine nuts lend a buttery flavor and pleasing texture.

PREP AND COOK TIME 35 minutes
MAKES 4 cups; 32 (2-tbsp.) servings

NOTES Piñon nuts, grown in the Southwest's high desert, are the intensely flavored cousins of the more common Italian pine nut. Either variety works well here. You can make the sauce up to 1 week ahead; refrigerate in an airtight container, then gently rewarm over medium-low heat.

$\frac{1}{2}$ cups shelled piñon or pine nuts (see Notes)

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup unsweetened cocoa

$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. salt

$\frac{1}{4}$ cups heavy cream

1 cup light corn syrup

1 tbsp. distilled white vinegar

$\frac{1}{8}$ cup semisweet chocolate chips

2 oz. unsweetened chocolate, coarsely chopped

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup butter

1 tbsp. vanilla extract

1. Pulse nuts in a food processor until coarsely ground (the texture of couscous).

2. Sift sugar, cocoa, and salt into a medium saucepan. Add $\frac{3}{4}$ cup warm water and stir to combine. Bring mixture to a simmer over medium heat, stirring until smooth.

3. Add cream, corn syrup, vinegar, and chocolate chips. Raise heat to medium-high and boil mixture for 8 to 10 minutes, swirling occasionally, until slightly reduced (mixture will be thin and sticky); remove from heat. Stir in unsweetened chocolate, butter, vanilla, and pine nuts. Serve warm.

PER 2-TBSP. SERVING 142 CAL., 61% (86 CAL.) FROM FAT; 2 G PROTEIN; 9.6 G FAT (4.4 G SAT.); 14 G CARBO (0.8 G FIBER); 50 MG SODIUM; 17 MG CHOL.

Cajeta caramel sauce

Cajeta, a Mexican caramel made from goat's milk, is mildly tangy and great on ice cream.

PREP AND COOK TIME 35 minutes

MAKES 3 cups; 24 (2-tbsp.) servings

NOTES Look for canned evaporated goat's milk at most grocery stores; fresh goat's milk is sold at natural-foods stores and often at large supermarkets. Refrigerate sauce in an airtight container for up to 2 weeks. The sauce will form crystals as it chills, but you can dissolve them with 5 minutes of gentle boiling.

4 cups sugar

$\frac{1}{3}$ cup unsalted butter

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt

1 cup canned evaporated goat's milk or whole fresh goat's milk (see Notes)

1. In a saucepan, combine sugar with 1 cup water. Bring to a boil over high heat, swirling occasionally to dissolve sugar.

2. Once sugar has dissolved, boil mixture, swirling occasionally (do not stir), until it has a medium amber color and honeylike consistency (if mixture appears to be browning too fast, lower heat to medium). Remove pan from heat and stir in butter and salt. Slowly pour in goat's milk (mixture will bubble furiously) and stir until smooth. Let cool slightly, then spoon over ice cream.

PER 2-TBSP. SERVING 164 CAL., 18% (29 CAL.) FROM FAT; 0.3 G PROTEIN; 3.2 G FAT (2 G SAT.); 34 G CARBO (0 G FIBER); 58 MG SODIUM; 9.2 MG CHOL.

Spiced piñon brittle

This crunchy topping gets a delicately spicy flavor from chili powder and cloves.

PREP AND COOK TIME 30 minutes

MAKES 3 cups; 12 ($\frac{1}{4}$ -cup) servings

NOTES Though this recipe isn't difficult, it does require vigilance. When cooking the sugar, be sure to stir constantly—it can burn easily. Store in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 2 weeks.

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup shelled piñon or pine nuts (see Notes for hot fudge piñon sauce, at far left)

$\frac{1}{2}$ cups sugar

1 tsp. chili powder

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. each ground cloves and salt

1. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper and grease paper well.

2. In a small frying pan over low heat, toast nuts until they turn light golden brown, 7 to 10 minutes.

3. In a nonstick frying pan over medium heat, combine sugar, chili powder, cloves, and salt. Cook, stirring constantly, until mixture is smooth and dark brown. If mixture is darkening too quickly, remove from heat, stir well, then return to heat. When sugar is entirely melted, stir in nuts.

4. Quickly pour mixture onto parchment paper and spread $\frac{1}{8}$ to $\frac{1}{4}$ in. thick. Let cool until hard, then break into pieces.

PER $\frac{1}{4}$ -CUP SERVING 147 CAL., 28% (41 CAL.) FROM FAT; 2.1 G PROTEIN; 4.5 G FAT (0.7 G SAT.); 26 G CARBO (0.5 G FIBER); 99 MG SODIUM; 0 MG CHOL.

Cinnamon sugared almonds

If you've never tried your hand at candied nuts, this simple stir-and-bake method will boost your confidence.

PREP AND COOK TIME 30 minutes

MAKES $4\frac{1}{4}$ cups; 17 ($\frac{1}{4}$ -cup) servings

NOTES Store in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 2 days.

2 cups sliced almonds

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar


1 tbsp. cinnamon

1. Preheat oven to 325°. In a bowl, combine ingredients with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water.

2. Spread mixture on a parchment-lined baking pan; bake 10 minutes. Stir with a metal spatula (mixture will be thick), then spread again and bake until sugar is browned, about 10 minutes more.

3. Cool on baking sheet, then crumble.

PER $\frac{1}{4}$ -CUP SERVING 100 CAL., 52% (52 CAL.) FROM FAT; 2.2 G PROTEIN; 5.8 G FAT (0.5 G SAT.); 11 G CARBO (0.5 G FIBER); 1.4 MG SODIUM; 0 MG CHOL. ■



Vanilla bean ice cream with cajeta caramel sauce and cinnamon sugared almonds, and Mexican chocolate ice cream with hot fudge piñon sauce and spiced piñon brittle