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Local Lactose-Free Ice Cream Company Launches Pints

Leona's Ice Cream Sandwiches is growing their portfolio of lactose-free ice cream products.

PITTSBURGH, PA February 21, 2017 – Leona's Ice Cream, a Pittsburgh-based ice cream company making 100 percent lactose-free super premium ice cream with 100 percent real dairy, is adding pints to their current offering of ice cream sandwiches. Leona's Ice Cream Sandwiches took Pittsburgh by storm in 2014, quickly changing the face of ice cream novelties.

Leona's Ice Cream pints come in five initial flavors, Vanilla, Chocolate, Coffee, Cinnamon Oatmeal Lace and Fresh Mint Chocolate.

"We choose the first five flavors because they are a mix of the classics and customer favorites," says co-owner Katie Heldstab. "In addition to the five year-round flavors we will offer seasonal rotating selections using the best fruits and flavors our area has to offer."

The pints, like Leona's Ice Cream Sandwiches, are offered at select restaurants and retailers in the Pittsburgh metro and surrounding areas. Initial stores include: 52nd St. Market, Bryant Street Market, The Food Shoppe, Feast on Brilliant and Sunny Bridge Natural Foods. For a full list of locations carrying sandwiches, visit www.leonaspgh.com.

Lactose-Free And Real Dairy?

Katie, one of Leona's owners, is lactose intolerant and found no joy in the alternatives. She wanted super premium, gourmet ice cream with interesting flavors and responsibly sourced quality ingredients. When Katie found nothing, her wife and business partner, Christa Puskarich, encouraged her to solve the problem—make it herself.

Katie isn't alone, 30-50 million Americansⁱ and approximately 65 percent of the human population has a reduced ability to digest lactose after infancy.ⁱⁱ

After a year of research, they launched Leona's Ice Cream Sandwiches. Dedicated to quality ingredients they use dairy from grass-fed, heritage breed cows raised in Pennsylvania and locally sourced flavors. The simple addition of a natural enzyme breaks down lactose, the sugar found in dairy that is difficult to digest. The enzyme doesn't change the taste or texture of the final product. Leona's *tastes like real ice cream because it is real ice cream.*

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Unique Packaging

Leona's ice cream isn't standard, neither is the new pint packaging. It's a box.

"We decided on boxes for our pints for several reasons," remarked Christa Puskarich, co-owner. "The shape evokes pleasant memories of times past while helping us stand out among the sea of competitors. It's also practical, a square pint fits tightly on shelves for space-starved retailers as well as over-stuffed home freezers."

Leona's Pint Flavors

Vanilla Ice Cream: Real vanilla beans and pure Madagascar bourbon vanilla extract create an intensely smooth flavor.

Chocolate: Guittard 63% dark chocolate and handmade caramel blend to make this rich, fudgy ice cream all that chocolate should be.

Coffee: Pittsburgh's own Zeke's Coffee provides their classic Royal Blue, a dark roast blend of Indonesian and South and Central American beans. We steep them in cream to make our coffee ice cream taste like a frozen latte.

Cinnamon Oatmeal Lace: Vietnamese cinnamon lends its vibrant, sweet flavor to the ice cream. It's studded with our signature oatmeal lace cookie crumbles.

Fresh Mint Chocolate: Locally grown, pesticide free mint steeped in cream and flecked with 63% Guittard dark chocolate.

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ⁱ "Lactose Intolerance | NIDDK." *National Institutes of Health*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, June 2014. Web. 13 Feb. 2017.

ⁱⁱ Lactose intolerance - Genetics Home Reference." *U.S. National Library of Medicine*. National Institutes of Health, n.d. Web. 13 Feb. 2017.

Founded in 2013 after attending the prestigious Penn State Creamery Ice Cream Short Course, Leona's Ice Cream began making super premium ice cream. Both ice cream sandwiches and pints are made with 100 percent real dairy and are 100 percent lactose-free – so every belly can enjoy. The small team handcrafts every flavor, makes every mix-in and bakes every cookie in their Wilkinsburg, Pennsylvania scratch kitchen. Leona's is sold in more than 30 regional retail and restaurant locations.

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