

WORKING WITH PASSION

**A GUIDE TO OPENING A GELATO SHOP OR MAKING GELATO
IN YOUR COFFEE SHOP, PASTRY SHOP OR RESTAURANT**



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INTRODUCTION

Have you decided to open a gelato shop? Fancy selling gelato in your bar, restaurant or pastry shop? That means you too are **passionate** about gelato and moved by the desire to do something creative. Because if you are looking to make a good gelato, **research, innovation and creativity** are going to be crucial.

Indeed, everyone's becoming aware that **traditional Italian gelato is a healthy food in its own right**, that it has great nutritional value, so much so that it's moving away from being just a seasonal product to being something to enjoy during the winter or even as a lunchtime snack.

Searching for new flavours, satisfying new demands, making cutting-edge, imaginative gelato recipes using quality ingredients, taking a leaf out of the book of tradition and craftsmanship – all that and more in a gelato artisan's daily toil.

That said, like any other business scheme, opening up a gelato shop and providing a genuine Italian gelato, means taking on an all-round entrepreneurial vision, given that the initial investment can be quite substantial. We hope that this Guide will help you to clear up various issues and to discover the world of hand-crafted gelato, to see gelato as a commercial opportunity for points of sale looking for an exciting new delicacy, **historically rooted in our country's traditions** just as much as pizza and pasta.

Opening a gelato parlour is an important decision that requires you to take various aspects into consideration. And if the first question is "where?", equally important are training and development, the initial investment, the ingredients and the machinery; you need to have a good grasp of the regulations and to have a pretty clear idea of what marketing strategies to adopt. Because just like in all sectors of excellence: given that there's so much competition, there's more to success than just making delicious gelato!

The aim of this manual is to give anyone thinking of starting up a business in the traditional Italian hand-crafted gelato sector the guidelines that help to navigate through the complex universe of gelato and to establish contact with the finest Italian suppliers and training schools.

Please don't hesitate to contact us at **ask@italiangelato.info** for any further details on any of these topics or to ask for any contact information we might have to help your business grow.

Enjoy your reading!

The Staff at Italiangelato.info

ABOUT US

The **Ilgelatoartigianale.info** website was created for anyone who wants to get into the artisanal gelato business or to serve gelato in their own bar, pastry shop, restaurant.

An online constantly updated Guide with useful information on how to open a gelato parlour which includes the required bureaucratic steps, the main training schools and the best suppliers/manufacturers in the sector, the machinery/equipment you need and the types of ingredients used.

This website is the result of a partnership between the Italian Exhibition Group – SIGEP, the international trade fair for artisanal gelato, confectionery and bread, and coffee, and Unione Italiana Food's Gelato Ingredients Group.

The following producers of ingredients for gelato and pastry shops all belong to Gelato Ingredients Group:

<u>ALVENA</u>	<u>AGRIMONTANA</u>	<u>BIGATTON PRODUZIONE</u>	<u>CITTÀ DEL GELATO</u>	<u>COM.PR.ITAL.</u>
<u>FABBRI 1905</u>	<u>GEI – AROMITALIA</u>	<u>GELDUE</u>	<u>GIUSO</u>	<u>GRANULATI ITALIA</u>
<u>LA PREFERITA</u>	<u>LEAGEL</u>	<u>LINEA GEL ITALIANA</u>	<u>MANE ITALIA</u>	<u>MEC3</u>
<u>MEUCCI IGINO</u>	<u>MONTEBIANCO</u>	<u>NESTLÈ ITALIANA</u>	<u>NOCCIOLE MARCHISIO</u>	<u>NUOVA TRADIZIONE</u>
<u>OSTIFICIO PREALPINO</u>	<u>PRODOTTI RUBICONE</u>	<u>TORRONALBA</u>	<u>UNIGEL</u>	<u>UNIGRÀ-MASTER MARTINI</u>



WANT TO GET INTO THE GELATO BUSINESS?

Here is an overview of the main issues that the Guide will be delving into.

The traditional Italian gelato market is very competitive, and if you're going to make a name for yourself, you're going to need not only a good high-quality product, but you'll have to do your research, innovate and offer a variety of products. In addition, you might wish to consider selling other pastry products, such as frozen desserts and gelato cakes alongside your classic gelato, or offering typical bar products, from coffee to aperitifs. In fact, remember that gelato shops sometimes work for just a few months of the year, while gelato cafés can afford to stay open all year round. However, even when gelato is consumed 365 days a year, product variety is a way of ensuring higher sales.

But hold on – the main thing is to understand the differences and choose the right solution for the entrepreneur making the investment, for the local area and for the type of clientele you are looking to attract.

It is also worthwhile starting to understand what **types of gelato** are available today and the differences between one solution and another, so as to get an idea of what products to base your business on.

Traditional Italian gelato is one of Italy's best loved exports, the result of a winning combination of fine Italian ingredients and an excellent supply chain. For a **hand-crafted gelato**, you'll need to mix **everyday ingredients** (milk, cream, sugar, water, fruit) with **others specifically designed for making gelato** (base, milk powder, alternative sugars). In the case of creams, the craft recipe is amalgamated through a heating and chilling process known as pasteurization, which not only binds the various ingredients together but also reduces the bacterial load until it reaches permitted levels that are absolutely safe for the consumer to eat.

This process can take place either in a unit known as a pasteurizer, which is usually made up of a 60- or 120-litre tank, or else through a process whereby smaller quantities of gelato can be made as soon as the chilling step in the pasteurization process has come to a close.

Using the pasteurizer, the mixture can be left to stand for between 6 and 12 hours in a phase known as maturation that enables the bonds between the various ingredients in the mixture to stabilize.



Once the maturation process is over, or after the chilling step in the combined cycle, the gelato is produced in a phase known as batch freezing, in which the mixture is vigorously blast-chilled, incorporating air into it to create the pleasantly creamy structure we are all familiar with. Depending on the recipe, the temperature at the end of the batch freezing cycle may vary from -8°C to -12°C .

Fruit gelato can be made with milk or, more frequently, as a sorbet with water. In the latter case, the pasteurization process is unnecessary and the ingredients are incorporated with powerful mixers before the batch freezing process. Gelato temperatures are mainly determined by the amount of sugar used and are usually slightly lower than in creams. After this step, in order to ensure that it is at its best, the gelato is often placed in a blast chiller before being stored and displayed. This can occur either in display cases where the gelato can be seen by customers, or else in Pozzetti-style closed wells.

Traditional Italian gelato, which has been so successful in Italy and around the world, therefore requires a range of machinery, equipment and display cases, which we will discuss later, and enables a wide range of flavours to be served up and presented, even in large quantities.



One special type of gelato is Soft-Serve Gelato otherwise known as Express Gelato.

This is produced in a machine that serves gelato whenever a customer requests it and immediately produces the same amount as has just been sold. This avoids the whole storage phase with all of its investment and gelato quality issues. The softness derives from the fact that in most cases these machines are equipped with a pump that increases the amount of air in the gelato, thereby making it 3-4 °C warmer than hand-crafted gelato.

On the down side, a soft serve machine can normally only produce two gelato flavours plus the mix, thus limiting the number of flavours available. Machines of this type are either used in bars and gelato parlours to offer yoghurt flavours with variegations or to offer soft-serve gelato made with Italian ingredients.

Soft-serve or espresso gelato is the most innovative version – a creamy gelato made light and soft by being mixed with air (in a process known as overrun) served at -6 °/7 °C. It requires less equipment, and smaller, cheaper machinery than traditional gelato, but the offer is limited to a small number of flavours, which can be enriched with a whole host of so many other ingredients such as granules, toppings, nuts, candied and fresh fruit. Suitable for bars, restaurants, and self-service gelato parlours, but also for non-specialized gelato parlours, in which gelato is just one of the products sold, together with petits fours, coffees, chocolate and pancakes... Fewer flavours, but also less space and lower investments without sacrificing any perfect freshness, as the mix, which has the same ingredients as traditional gelato, is creamed at the last moment, just before serving. In short, as well as involving lower costs, less knowledge of production methods and less work, while maintaining top quality in the finished product, soft-serve gelato is an interesting solution both in Italy and elsewhere.

Frozen yoghurt is a delightfully fresh product, which features at least 20% fresh yoghurt added to the base mix, which can then be garnished with all sorts of ingredients, ripples, granules, toppings, nuts, candied and fresh fruit. Frozen yoghurt uses the same technology as soft-serve gelato: a batch freezer with a slightly higher cooling point than on the machines used for traditional gelato, which works between -6 and -7°C, leaving a creamy sensation on the palate. The more air is incorporated into the base, the lighter your gelato will be. Frozen yoghurt is a product that is proving extremely popular in various parts of the world. In Italy, it's more of a hit in seaside resorts and its success is ensured by its fresh yoghurt flavours and its potential for creating imaginative, colourful combinations that customers find delicious and fun, as no two tubs or cones come out the same. The perfect replacement for a meal on a long, sunny summer day.



Gelato cakes and frozen desserts as well as cold petits fours are a perfect opportunity for all types of business, from gelato parlours to pastry shops. **Gelato cakes**, for example, are an excellent alternative to classic pastry cakes: fresh and tasty, they make it possible to use a wide variety of different ingredients. They have a base made up of two or three flavours of traditional Italian gelato, embellished with very tasty ingredients, which are often not found in traditional gelatos, such as dried fruit or sponge, solid chocolate-based decorations or mirror glazes.

Another fascinating category is made up of **frozen petits fours**: from pralines to mignons, all the great classics of Italian pastry can be combined with traditional Italian gelato. Gelato cake is a very complete and remarkable dessert.



Another timeless classic of cold pastries is the *semifreddo* or **frozen dessert**, which is made with the same ingredients as traditional Italian gelato and which, despite being served at -16°C to -18°C stays soft and creamy, ideal for eating with a spoon. To a base made up of egg yolks and whipped cream, add sugars, thickeners and stabilizers and finally flavoured pastes for cream or fruit flavours. Decoration and combinations are crucial for a delicious, top-quality product that is also a treat for the eye.

Gelato on a stick and gelato biscuits street food is back in vogue, a creative variant on the Italian tradition of cones and tubs. It is also a useful addition to the menu of any traditional gelato parlour.

From “paletteria mexicana” to classic gelato on a stick, there are seemingly endless ways of coming up with new products to satisfy the tastes of adults and children alike. There are plenty of machines on the market that – in



the blink of an eye – will create the perfect serving of gelato for this type of product. You can also pour freshly creamed gelato into silicone moulds and pop it into a blast chiller for a few minutes to lower the temperature of the gelato sticks, which will need to be put on show in a separate display case and at lower temperatures than traditional gelato. Gelatos on a stick can be either fruit- or cream-based. In the former, the percentage of fruit can range from 20 to 70% depending on the type of fruit you want to use, while when it comes to creams you're very much spoiled for choice. Both fruit- and cream-based gelatos on a stick can be covered with melted chocolate and decorated with granules of dried fruit and coconut flakes or whatever your imagination can come up with.

The gelato biscuit is a delicious alternative, which can be served in various sizes: from larger biscuits that you can customize with creams and glazes, to mini-sized products which give customers a tasty morsel of gelato. Much loved by young and old alike, they are often displayed in vertical showcases in a huge variety of flavours, together with gelatos on a stick or modern cakes.

COSTS AND INVESTMENTS

In general, people looking to open a gelato parlour are passionate about the sector and moved by the desire to do something creative. That said, opening up a gelato shop means taking on an “entrepreneurial” risk – given that, according to the original idea, the initial investment can be quite substantial. That is why it is so important to come up with a clear strategy, calculating investments, costs and income, risks and opportunities.

When looking at the costs of opening up a gelato parlour, we need to start from the **product range**: as we have just seen, traditional Italian gelato can be made in various ways, in addition to the classic tub – in the form of gelato on a stick, or modern cakes, frozen desserts, coffee or chocolate gelato, granitas or smoothies. You could decide to make just a few creamy express gelato flavours just as happens for soft-serve gelatos, instead of a wide range of flavours for traditional Italian gelato. The choice of what type of products to serve may also be dictated by the size of your premises, whether it has a workshop or not, which will make a huge difference in terms of the original outlay, especially with regard to choosing machinery and equipment, the renovations needed to be carried out and licenses.

The offer needs to be defined, understanding what initial investments, costs and revenues will be involved, drawing up a detailed plan of the entrepreneurial formula that will be used.

WHERE TO OPEN A GELATO PARLOUR

If the investments are sizeable, the first analysis to carry out is to decide where to open. This is one of your most important decisions, and to get it right, we advise doing some **geomarketing**, i.e. assessing the best location for you in relation to the geographical circumstances and the presence of competitors. First you should weigh up the area: pedestrian or shopping streets, waterfront promenades, and streets leading to schools are all regarded as excellent places for passing traffic, but sometimes the rents can be excessive. You should also take into account how many gelato parlours there are in the immediate vicinity; if you are looking to open a gelato shop where your customers can sit down to eat, and not just take away, easy parking in the vicinity is a big plus.

What is more, if we take into consideration the fact that 50% of sales at a standard gelato parlour comes from take-aways, while it is a good idea to look for an area with plenty of passers-by, with offices, schools and universities, it should also have a place where customers can park in the vicinity of the parlour, hop out and purchase themselves some of your gelato.

A gelato shop in the city center can charge more, while a point of sale on the outskirts has to adjust its prices to the income of the neighborhood's residents, which may well be lower.

CAFES, RESTAURANTS, PASTRY SHOPS: EACH TO HIS OWN GELATO

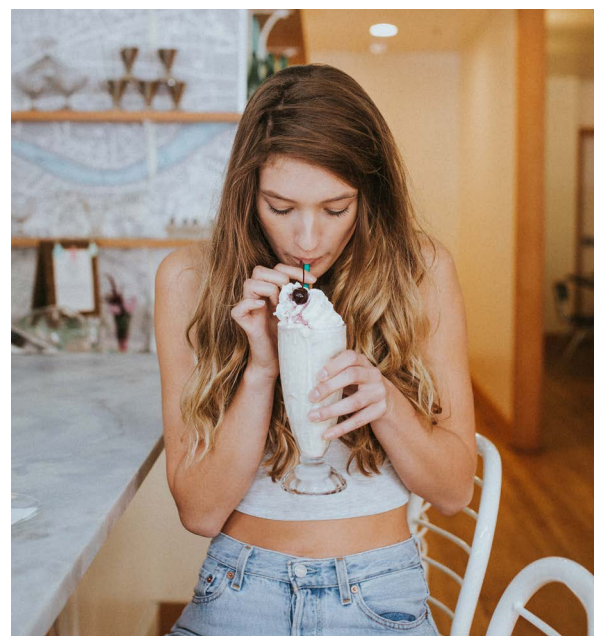
A traditional Italian gelato parlour is by no means the only option for anyone wishing to get into this line of business and makes for an exciting opportunity for anyone who already operates in the food industry: indeed, gelato can be sold in a wide range of premises, from cafes to pastry shops, thanks to the new technological advances provided by Italian companies in terms of ingredients as well as machinery, which is rapidly becoming one of the sector's leading products. Serving traditional Italian gelato at a point of sale which also sells other products is a good way of increasing sales and not just during the summer season, either. But most of all, various types of product for different times of day can help to attract gelato customers on a year-round basis, and make the most of the numerous opportunities to enjoy a gelato throughout the day, at breakfast, lunch or dinner, but also as a mid-morning or tea-time snack. The positive prospect of higher turnover however obviously requires various licenses to be purchased, more space and well-trained staff for different functions, equipment and, often, even tables and chairs. But let's take a good look right now at the main directives which apply if you have – or wish to start up – a business serving gelato together with other products.

Want to sell gelato in your pastry shop?

In a pastry shop, gelato can come in a whole variety of guises, such as a **frozen yoghurt** version or as a **gelato cake** or as a **soft-serve gelato**, or else as a fun **gelato on a stick**, thus offering customers a sufficiently wide assortment of types of gelato. Of course, in a pastry shop the range of flavours will not be vast, averaging just 5-6 at a time, given that the premises are not given over completely to making traditional Italian gelato, though that does depend also on how much space is available at the point of sale.

Sales opportunities will increase, as will your competitive advantage over rival parlours in the area, if you can serve tables with a combination of traditional pastries and gelato, for example a slice of cake or a mignon with a scoop of gelato on the side.

Another excellent alternative when it comes to introducing gelato onto the menu at a pastry shop is **soft-serve gelato**: machines can make up to 2 flavours, production is extremely simple, because there is no need for a pasteurizing machine as the ingredients are mixed cold and poured straight into the machine. The gelato is created instantaneously as soon as the machine is turned on. If you have a whole row of soft-serve machines, you can serve a reasonable range of classic gelato flavours: this is what is known as "express gelato" or soft ice, which in the cone or in the tub can be garnished and decorated at will: with toppings, granules, or candied or fresh fruit. As mentioned



above, gelato can also become a valuable ingredient in the pastry workshop when making **gelato cakes** where it is of course truly a must. Another solution that is ideal for serving at a pastry shop is the hand-crafted **gelato on a stick**. You can make it either with gelato or cream. First you create a semi-solid mix and then pour it into silicone moulds. These can then be brought down to the right temperature in a blast chiller for at least 30 minutes. The bare stick that comes out can be covered with pure chocolate in different flavours: dark, milk, white, coffee, hazelnut, pistachio, plus a smattering of hazelnut, almond or pistachio granules, or else candied fruit. Hand-crafted gelatos on a stick can be stored in a vertical freezer drawer or in a classic gelato display case using special containers.

Fancy selling gelato in your bar?

In recent years, especially in Italy, serving traditional Italian gelato has proven to be a great success in bars, perhaps only during warmer seasons. The option of a gelato café is an interesting combination for broadening the menu for your customers. Again, the **variety of flavours** on offer should be limited to a small number, preferably classic flavours, such as hazelnut, pistachio, cream, chocolate and fiordilatte. The reason for that is sales volumes: it's better to serve fewer flavours and make your gelato more often, so that your product is always fresh and therefore better quality. The amount of space available for gelato and equipment is the starting point for deciding what extra items to serve. For example, inside your premises you may wish to come up with alternative solutions such as **soft-serve gelato** machines or else serve **hand-crafted gelato on a stick** taking into account the variety of flavours and the needs of your customers. As this is not going to be the main product range for your business, the number of machines and other equipment will be limited compared to those at a craft-based gelato parlour, and this will be reflected in a lower number of trays and tubs. There are, however, especially in Italy, also larger gelato cafés, serving a wide range of flavours of traditional gelato at the front, with all of the equipment needed out at the back in the workshop. It all depends on how much space you can and want to give over to displaying your flavours, for which you can even use a display case on wheels, to place outside your venue during summer.

Are you looking to offer gelato in your restaurant?

As for serving top-quality traditional Italian gelato at restaurants and pubs, the situation is still evolving – very few premises make their own real traditional Italian gelato to serve as dessert, or as a special ingredient to use in new experimental recipes. However, things are finally changing, and quality gelato is elbowing its way onto tables at the finest restaurants, where chefs are increasingly inclined to **experiment with food pairings**, served up with extreme attention to detail. That's why producers of ingredients and gelato machines are coming up with new products for the market, solutions designed to take up less space inside a restaurant. Restaurant kitchens need to optimize their allocation of space, calibrate quantities and speed up production times: these are three key factors to ensure that their customers will get top-quality food and service. The restaurant scene is an interesting market, both for gelato-makers connecting with the world of catering – enabling the gelato-maker to expand their target market, by selling to restaurants – as well as for chefs wishing to create **Michelin star desserts** based on **sweet or savoury gelato**.

But how can we serve a good gelato at a restaurant? The range of possibilities is immense: **traditional gelato** and **sorbets**, savoury gelato, pastry creams, **frozen desserts** and **Bavarian creams**, chocolate specialities and even



excellent whipped cream: for each of these recipes, there's a different machine and special ingredients. In that case it is important to remember that there are combo machines which will mix, pasteurize and whisk in one go. They come in all shapes and sizes – some of them countertop models and others free-standing – enabling you to make a wide range of flavours. There are even small vertical batch freezers for making gelato right in front of your customers. Just choose the one that best suits your needs and which is the right size for your premises.

HOW TO OPEN ALL YEAR BY SELLING OTHER PRODUCTS

Offering a range of products to make gelato consumption less seasonal and to help keep the business open all year round, by extending the gelato season, has become an increasingly strong need, not only for financial reasons but also to respond to an increasingly diversified demand for products on the part of customers.

So how can we diversify our production to meet these needs and demands?

What are the best products to offer? There is a wide variety. Let's look at them in detail.

Chocolate – bars, loose chocolates and pralines

To give the hand-crafted gelato parlour extra creativity and flavour, pralines and loose chocolates are an excellent alternative to hand-crafted gelato, as well as a great way to build customer loyalty and acquire new consumers. Pralines are little chocolate treats filled with a variety of ingredients. Typically hand-made, and decorated in a variety of ways, chocolate pralines can be traced back to an old Belgian tradition. Initially, the term praline, of French origin, referred to a sugar-coated almond. The Belgian master chocolatier, Jean Neuhaus, decided to give a new twist to the traditional praline recipe by covering it with melted chocolate. That was where the chocolate praline tradition first began.

Filled with chocolate, hazelnuts, pistachio, orange or coconut, chocolate pralines are tempting imaginative ideas that can also be served up in a hand-crafted gelato parlour. For a feast of flavour and imagination, chocolate pralines can also be filled with gelato.

Indeed, the combination of a refined pastry technique and the traditional production of hand-crafted gelato can create true gourmet treats for consumers' palates and eyes.

Gelato cakes

As well as being decorative, **gelato cakes** can be true gourmet masterpieces, bringing a touch of originality to the table.

Gelato cakes are mouth-watering and irresistible: from the more classic ones, filled with cream-based flavours and sprinkled with rum, brandy or alkermes, to the more exotic and unusual fruit-based ones with their unusual, colourful toppings.



As far as production techniques are concerned, it is mostly a matter of selecting and using the most appropriate tools, such as moulds, spatulas and various accessories, to shape and mould the frozen cake to your liking.

Frozen desserts

The semifreddo, as it is known in Italian, is made with the same ingredients as hand-crafted gelato. Add sugars, thickeners and stabilizers to whipped cream to get a useful base. You can then flavour this base just as you would a gelato: a hazelnut or fruit paste, or all the various flavours you would normally find in the showcase of an excellent modern gelato parlour. Decoration and combinations are crucial for a top-quality product that will captivate the imaginations of all types of customer.

Bavarian creams

This world-famous creamy dessert is a tempting proposition for customers.

This historic dessert, consisting of milk, sugar, eggs, fresh cream and gelatine, was first made in France in the 19th century and owes its huge popularity to the reputations of the chefs and maîtres pâtissier who were invited to courts throughout Europe to serve up their delicacies to the ruling families.

The original version has few frills – just the cream combined, possibly, with a layer of sponge cake dipped in a liqueur or alcoholic syrup. Soon, however, many delicious variations sprang up, combining the dessert with fruit, jams, marmalades, chocolate, coffee and a whole host of other popular flavours.

Mignon and bonbons

Delicious little morsels such as mini cones and truffles are an explosion of flavour that will win over even the most finicky customer's palate.

And when looking to expand the range of products on offer, how could we forget all the recipes for hand-crafted gelato combined with espresso coffee, not to mention milkshakes, frozen drinks, cocktails and long drinks, whether alcoholic or not, all based around gelato?

Diversifying the gelato product range is strategic for your business: it is vital to focus not only on variety but also on formats to mark special occasions, which have no limits in terms of flavour or imagination.



PROFESSIONAL TRAINING: HOW TO BECOME A GELATO-MAKER

The best way to ensure that traditional Italian gelato continues to prosper and delight is to provide training for operators: in an increasingly expanding market like that of gelato parlours, the craftsman's professionalism has become even more vital in seeking to meet consumer demand for quality.

There are plenty of courses in Italy and they have two goals: to provide gelato-makers with professional training and to ensure the quality of traditional Italian gelato by giving gelato-makers the tools and knowhow to make healthy, quality products that their consumers will enjoy.

Given that it is a food product, a gelato parlour operator needs to have a good understanding of the risks involved with the product, of the right display and storage temperatures, notions of HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point), hygiene, sanitation, cross-contamination and at least rudiments of the legislation regarding the sector. But that is not enough! Indeed, some schools also teach marketing and communication to help you satisfy your customers' needs and be successful in your profession, right from the moment when you start to run your own point of sale.

A large number of courses are available throughout Italy, offered both by gelato product suppliers and by professionals working in the sector. There are many types of course on offer: from elementary to more advanced levels, which study the various types of machinery and explore the gelato preparation stages, right up to the final garnishing of the tub.

An **elementary course**, for example, usually lasts 3-4 days and its goal is to give participants a theoretical and practical introduction to the world of traditional Italian gelato production. The range of subject matter includes shop design, gelato-making skills, techniques for balancing gelato ingredients to get the best texture. The course content addresses all the topics you will need if you are looking to open a gelato parlour, from entrepreneurs making an investment, to artisan gelato-makers working on production in the workshop.

Advanced courses, on the other hand, last longer and tend to explore content relating to production techniques, covering the chemical composition and assessment of ingredients used in the gelato sector, and are also dedicated to those looking to improve their business and knowledge of their craft. The chance to interact directly with the teachers (who are true professionals working in the sector), and complete apprenticeships at gelato parlours or companies offering these courses, is a valuable opportunity for on-the-job training in close contact with ingredients and equipment as well as with the public, in order to hone the skills acquired during the training period.

Other learning and refresher training opportunities are available annually during the SIGEP trade fair, attended by the sector's top businesses and professionals from all over the world. Here you can find various types of competitions for Italian and foreign gelato-makers, seeking to promote a culture of professionalism, research and experimentation.

OUR PARTNER GELATO SCHOOLS

Accademia Bigatton

<http://www.accademiabigatton.com/>

A group of experts from the Italian gelato and patisserie sectors provide technical and logistical support to train artisan gelato-makers and get them started.

Cast Alimenti

<https://www.castalimenti.it/en>

Cast Alimenti is a respected institution in Lombardy, offering 250 courses per year. Training available to gelato-makers includes elementary, professional and specialized courses.

Comprital Athenaeum

www.compritalathenaeum.it

A company making semi-finished products for the gelato and patisserie sectors, made up of chemists, technical staff, marketing experts and master gelato-makers, which offers training courses for those looking to specialize and keep up-to-date with the gelato sector.

Casa Optima – Mec3

<https://www.casaoptima.com/en/training/school>

The MEC3 school was created with the specific aim of providing a full and qualified consultancy service to both experienced gelato-makers and those approaching this wonderful profession for the first time.

Fabbi Master Class

<https://en.fabbri1905.com/master-class/fabbi-master-class-in-the-world.kl>

Fabbi Master Class, the sector's first school, was founded in Bologna. It offers training courses of all levels aimed at professional development for gelato makers and confectioners, promising to "grow together season by season".

Formazione Agrimontana

<https://www.agrimontana.com/training/agrimontana-training/>

Basic pastry courses, ice-cream making and advanced courses are held, in-depth studies on the convergence of pastry and ice-cream making: balancing, over-run, emulsion, ice-cream management, sales techniques, marketing, training of sales staff are regular topics.

Prodotti Rubicone-Gelato College

<https://prodottirubicone.com/en/gelato-college>

Courses dedicated to those who want to approach the world of ice cream making, in-depth courses for the many professionals who want to specialise in certain products (soft ice cream, ice cream sticks and much more). A real professional laboratory equipped for your training.

Tonino Leardini Gelato Master School

www.gelatomasterschool.com

The school offers gelato-makers qualified teachers with over forty years' experience in artisan gelato and confectionery production, to teach them the best gelato-making techniques from elementary to advanced levels, to use Leagel products and turn working in a gelato parlour into a true art form.

RAW MATERIALS AND INGREDIENTS

CHOOSING INGREDIENTS

If you want to make a good product, make sure to purchase your fresh raw materials (milk, eggs, sugar, fruit) and that your compound or semi-finished gelateria ingredients are chosen and purchased with the greatest care.

The market now offers many specific products for gelato parlours, designed to help with such practical issues for gelato artisans as keeping ingredients in optimum condition, reducing preparation times, guaranteeing cleanliness, as well as their excellent binding qualities, for an ideal structure. Good-quality compound ingredients have well-balanced components, giving a well-textured product that is tasty, healthy, and hygienic. To make perfectly creamy gelato – i.e. mix, cool and trap air until it reaches the right consistency – its solid and liquid ingredients need to be mixed together as thoroughly as possible, so that the water particles freeze smoothly and manage to trap enough air. Modern gelato workshops use balanced and selected mixed ingredients: neutral compounds, more or less complete bases that stabilize the gelato mixture without ruining its sensory properties and guarantee a creamy, scoopable finished product. Depending on your personal needs, seasonal factors, and your customers' preferences, you can use ingredients and semi-finished products for a variety of purposes.

So let's take a look together at the types of product available for gelato.



THE INGREDIENTS FOR MAKING YOUR OWN GELATO

To make a good traditional Italian gelato, you can choose from a wide range of ingredients, depending on your needs and on the tastes of your customers. Very common ingredients such as milk, sugars, water, cream, eggs, powdered milk and fruit are used.

Other ingredients are less well-known to the consumer because they are very specific to gelato: these are known as compound ingredients for gelato. These ingredients are aimed at professional users to help make quality gelato. Compound ingredients may be classified as follows, according to the task each is intended to perform for the various types of gelato:

Powdered ingredients for base mixes

This category includes all ingredient mixes in powder form used to stabilize and integrate the basic gelato mix. They can then be divided into:

- 1) Neutrals** stabilizing and emulsifying ingredient mix. This family of ingredients includes texturizers like carob seed flour, guar or tara gum, and emulsifiers like lecithins and fatty acid mono- and diglycerides. These products are generally added in a ratio of 5-10g/kg.
- 2) Gelato bases:** powder bases for gelato will vary depending on the ingredients present and the amount that needs to be added. They usually have a core of stabilizers and emulsifiers, and other ingredients such as milk powder, milk proteins, sugars and derivatives, fibre, as well as vegetable proteins whose role is to enhance the attributes of the gelato. These products are generally added in a ratio of between 30-150g/kg.

Semi-finished pastes and powders to create flavours

These are typical traditional Italian food mixes whose purpose is to give each gelato a distinctive flavour. They can be divided into:

- 1) powdered flavour mixes:** to be added to the base before or after pasteurization, in variable amounts depending on how intense an aroma is required for the finished gelato product. For example, this category includes cocoa powder, freeze-dried coffee, liquorice powder, yoghurt powder, cheeses.
- 2) flavour mixes in paste:** to be added to the base before or after pasteurization, in variable amounts depending on how intense an aroma is desired for the finished gelato product. There are three main categories, defined by their composition:
 - **Fatty pastes:** fat-based pastes made by roasting and refining dried fruit, with the possible addition of sugars and other ingredients (including vegetable oils and fats, cocoa, artificial colours, flavourings). For example: hazelnut, pistachio, almond, gianduia hazelnut cream, chocolate.
 - **Sweet pastes:** made with syrups, eggs, coffee, mascarpone, condensed milk, egg yolk, wines or other alcohol, flavourings and artificial colours.
 - **Fruit pastes:** made with fruit and sugar, citric acid, pectin, flavourings, and artificial colours. They are added to the gelato with fresh fruit to integrate and stabilize flavour all year round.

Ready-to-use compound ingredients

Prepared mixtures in powder, paste, or liquid form (with a full range of base, structuring and core ingredients) for making cream- or fruit-based hand-made gelatos in an instant – just add water and/or milk, depending on the recipe. No need for a pasteurizing machine.

Compound ingredients for ripples and decoration

This category includes a wide range of preparations which can be used as is for garnishing gelatos. Whether these are based on sweet syrups or honey, chocolate or cocoa, coffee or other infusions, dried fruits, fruit and vegetable preserves and preparations, fruit juices and pulp, candied or canned fruit, alcoholic beverages, artificial colours and flavourings.

EQUIPMENT, MACHINERY, FURNISHINGS

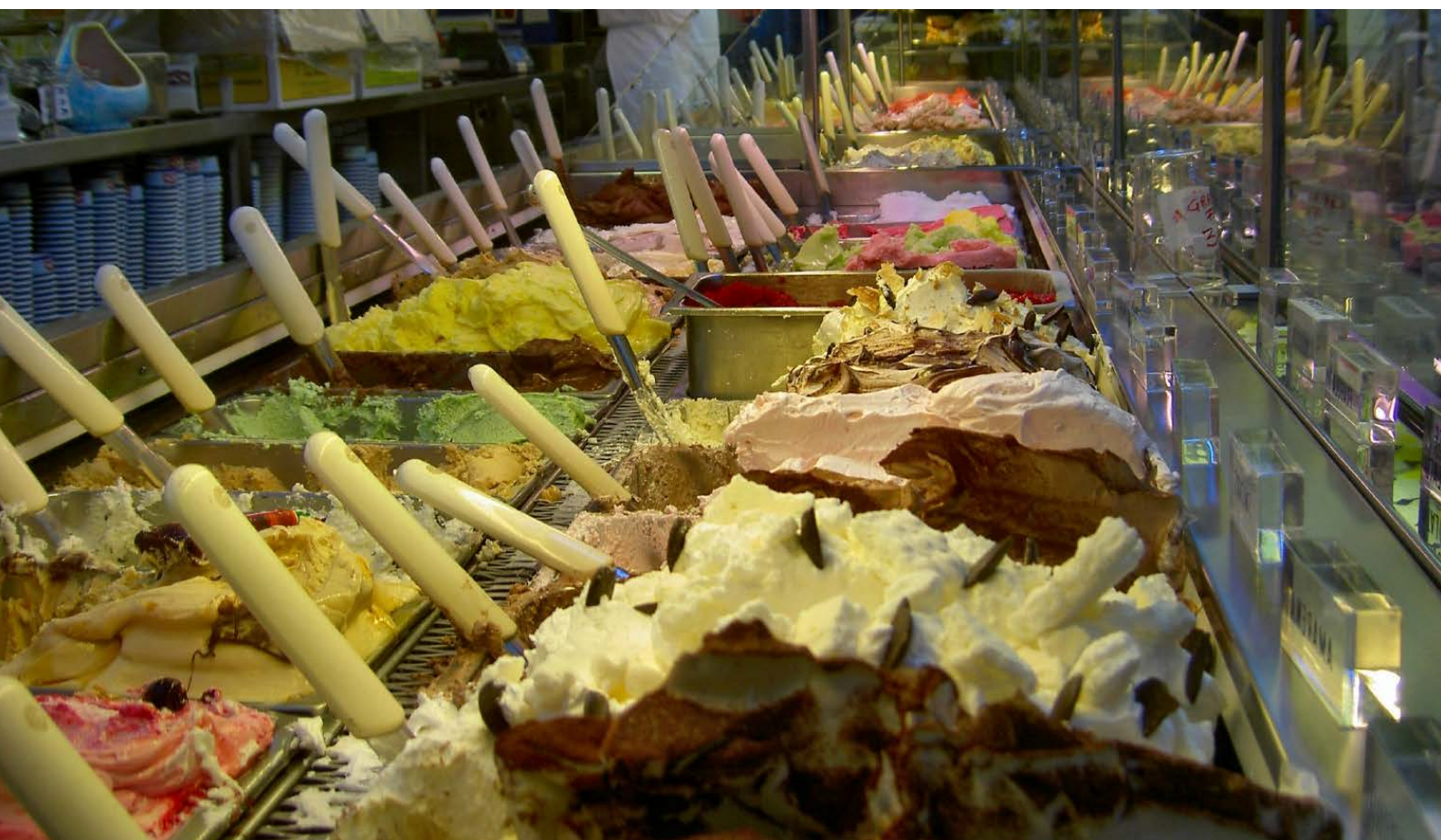
Making traditional Italian gelato requires a large number of specific types of equipment. The list below briefly outlines the main machinery used in making gelato. However, it is important to remember that the price of these machines varies according to how much you need to produce, the make and model, and it is down to the gelato artisan, in conjunction with the manufacturers, to choose the most suitable one.

Italy is the main supplier of gelato-parlour equipment and machinery, for points of sale both in Italy and elsewhere. That is why, with its consolidated gelato-making tradition, Italy is regarded as the leading manufacturer of top-quality, safe machinery.

Italian firms can guarantee excellent results in terms of performance, energy and water savings, as their products are built with choice materials. **ACOMAG**, the National Association of Machinery, Fixtures and Fittings Manufacturers for Gelato, aims to represent and protect the interests of the category and of its member companies in their dealings with institutions and public administrations, as well as with financial institutions, political, social and cultural groups, both in Italy and abroad. A group which brings together not only the best equipment manufacturers but also provides regular technical assistance and support with regard to maintenance.

STORING AND DISPLAYING GELATO

There are two common systems for storing and serving gelato: Refrigerated and Pozzetti-style display cases. The former create an attractive product setting that enables the customer to be able to understand exactly what the gelato shop has to offer. However, they do need regular care and if used outdoors that can affect product quality. Pozzetti-style showcases, which can be either static in a glycol bath or ventilated, keeps gelato in better condition and, since the customer cannot see it, there is no need to worry too much about how it looks. Extracting the gelato is a bit more cumbersome for the operator and much of the visual appeal is lost. A Pozzetti-style display case uses less power, but it takes much longer to get back to work after a shutdown. As a general rule, Pozzetti-style cases may be suitable where there are regular customers, but in places with high footfall, immediate visual communication is essential.



PASTEURIZING MACHINE

The pasteurizing machine heats up ingredients and fresh semi-finished products at a temperature that successfully reduces bacterial load, while retaining the nutritional properties of foodstuffs (unlike sterilization). Heating is simultaneously a solubilizing and mixing process for the various ingredients of traditional artisanal Italian gelato. Heating is followed by chilling to the storage temperature and, where required, maturation of the mixture at 4 °C. This chilling must be done fast enough so as to prevent the bacterial load from rising back up after being reduced during the heating step. The most common pasteurizers either use a glycol bath or can be a dry type with devices that keep the mixture moving.

Pasteurizers are programmable, with various cycles that heat up to between 85 °C (high pasteurization) and 65 °C (low pasteurization). In low pasteurization, the lower temperature needs to be compensated for by staying at 65 °C for up to 30 minutes.

What are the advantages of each cycle? Low-temperature pasteurization is better for safeguarding flavour, avoiding the risk of distorting ingredients with a lingering “cooked” taste, for example, fruit that tasted like jam instead of retaining a fresh flavour. Do note however, that it is preferable to avoid pasteurization for traditional Italian fruit gelato, unless this is required for hygiene reasons, for bananas or some exotic fruits. On the other hand, the high-temperature pasteurization cycle guarantees that ingredients dissolve better and blend more easily.

After the pasteurization step, it may be useful to let the mixture rest at 4 °C for 4 to 12 hours, in any case no longer than 72 hours. This step will result in a better yield of aromatic substances, a more stable final emulsion, a greater capacity for incorporating air, a creamier finish to the gelato, better storage in the display case and less dripping. Maturation can be carried out either in the pasteurizer itself or else in special vats which only have sufficient chilling capacity for low-temperature storage and just enough movement to reach a uniform temperature in the vat.

BATCH FREEZER

Batch freezing is the crucial stage when the mix turns from liquid to solid. The batch freezer blends and freezes the mix by pumping air into it, thus making the gelato homogenous and creamy.

The Italian term “mantecare” (or “fold”) derives from the Spanish “manteca”, or butter, and is used in the kitchen and in the gelato workshop for the process of mixing ingredients to make a smooth, creamy texture.

Batch freezing requires three different actions to take place: the mixture first needs to be churned, then cooled from 4-6 °C to around -15 °C and then filled with air, which is captured by the fat and protein molecules.

A sudden drop in temperature is required in order to prevent the build-up of water crystals, so as to obtain a smoother and less icy texture. Vigorous folding of the mix, meanwhile, helps to incorporate air, which gives it more volume (in the jargon this is known as overrun) and makes it softer.

There are 4 types of batch freezer on the market:

- Traditional vertical
- Vertical with automatic extraction
- Horizontal
- Horizontal with a separate drum for heating the mixture

Vertical batch freezers were the first to hit the gelato market, dating back as far as 1927. Pasteurizing machines are the secret behind the modern gelato shop, because in the past the gelato maker used only a long wooden spatula and a lot of patience to detach and spread the mixture as it froze, otherwise it became completely solid.

In vertical batch freezers, a continuous or a spiral blade, depending on the model, pulls the gelato off the sides of the bowl and mixes it. There are also vertical-axis batch freezers where, unlike traditional ones, the cylinder is static with a stirrer that rotates inside the cylinder and scrapes the inside walls. The structure of the resulting gelato is significantly different from that of traditional batch freezers, but it does have the advantage of an extraction hatch that enables the gelato to be scooped out without the need to intervene manually.

The bowl is in a vertical position above ground and the gelato maker can observe the entire process, and intervene with modifications and additions. The most widespread batch freezers in recent times, however, have a horizontal axis where the batch freezer barrel is rotated by 90° and enclosed in the machinery, so it is not visible while working. In this case, batch freezing is performed by blades that act as centrifugal force mixers, incorporating more air than vertical batch freezers. For this reason, some gelato makers prefer to use traditional batch freezers for sorbets and fruit gelato as they are more compact, and horizontal batch freezers for cream gelato, which can incorporate more air thanks to the larger percentage of fats and proteins in the blends.

Another common type of batch freezer features a cylinder where the mixture is heated, mounted on top of the horizontal batch-freezing cylinder. It is therefore also possible to use this machine as a pasteurizer as the mixture is chilled in the batch-freezing cylinder. The advantages of this solution include lower investment costs compared to a batch freezer and pasteurizer, a smaller footprint and the ability to make individual flavours to a higher degree of precision. On the flip side, this system requires weighing every single batch and, in order to optimize time and consumption, and you will need to be very prompt when it comes to extracting from and reloading the machine. Maturation is also impossible under this system.

BLAST FREEZER

Batch freezing is followed by the delicate process of blast chilling, which stabilizes the product by rapidly freezing some of the water in it. The blast chiller can help the gelato maker's work in preserving the structure of the gelato longer without having to resort to stabilizers and additives.

The blast chiller is like a very powerful refrigerator that works at low temperatures and with air ventilated by powerful fans that eliminate the condensation formed by the food. It can take the core of the product from 90 °C to 3 °C (rapid positive blast chilling) in less than 90 minutes, while rapid negative-blast chilling (also called rapid freezing) reaches up to -18° C at the core of the product in 4 hours. This is possible only with a blast chiller, which works at temperatures of about -40° C with forced ventilation, subtracting heat from the products to achieve rapid freezing, while avoiding the formation of ice macro crystals. The rapid blast chiller has many advantages and is used in different sectors such as bread, patisserie and gelato.

In the gelato industry, the use of the blast chiller has clear advantages. It is no secret that the presence of micro-bubbles of air and micro-crystals of ice are two of the factors that make gelato creamy. The formation of macro-crystals and separation of water, sugar and fats over time, on the other hand, are the flaws typical of gelato past its best.

Analysis of a cream gelato mix shows that its average water content is 60–62% water, which rises to 66–68% in a fruit gelato. The water present in the mix or added by the gelato maker during production will then turn into fresh gelato. During batch freezing, the water in the mix freezes and turns into crystals as it modifies to a solid state. The gelato comes out at a temperature of between -5 °C and -8 °C.

Blast chillers are used in gelato workshops mainly to produce large amounts of gelato patisserie. They can also be used to freeze choice seasonal fruit at perfect ripeness and at lower cost, which can then be used all year round for gelato and sorbets.

REFRIGERATED CABINETS WITH TEMPERATURES ABOVE AND BELOW ZERO

Refrigerators play a key role in the storage of gelato and the ingredients used in its production.

Gelato refrigerators can be cabinets or counters.

Chiller cabinets are always found in a gelato workshop, and there are two main types:

- refrigerated cabinets with temperatures above zero
- refrigerated cabinets with temperatures below zero

The former have an operating temperature of 1° C – 7° C and are used to store fresh ingredients for gelato production, such as milk, cream, fruit, and the compound ingredients that must be kept in a cool place. The latter store trays of cream gelato at a temperature of minus 15 °C – minus 25 °C, prior to being placed in appropriate showcases or for storage outside of opening hours.

Italian companies in the ACOMAG association hold the world manufacturing record for gelato shop refrigerators.

This record is closely tied to compliance with current regulations regarding energy saving and the use of quality materials. Quality materials make all the difference when choosing a refrigerator model whose purpose means it will almost always be powered up and subjected to prolonged work stress. Lastly, there are chiller cabinets designed for the sales area, where they store and display frozen desserts and gelato cakes. They have a single glass door and the interior is divided by grid shelving. They are made of steel and feature a system to regulate both temperature and humidity. Apart from energy consumption, purchasers also consider design since the unit is always in the public eye.



LOOKING AFTER THE POINT OF SALE: PLEASING THE EYES

Attention to detail is paramount, especially just after your launch and before you've yet managed to build a word-of-mouth reputation or tradition.

Quality gelato means excellent presentation, so don't neglect the aesthetics – good gelato-makers know they have to catch a customer's eye before they can get to his taste buds.

CREATING AN ATMOSPHERE

When (potential) customers come into the gelato parlour, they need to see straight away that nothing has been left to chance – the furnishings, colours and lighting have to match and create harmony. When we come into a new place, all five senses are stimulated: good music, a pleasant atmosphere and smiling staff will encourage customers to come back often and purchase more. The colours of your furnishings, the layout of your products, and the cleanliness of your showcases are all vital. If you neglect your shop, that will reflect badly on the image of your product.

THE IMPORTANCE OF MARKETING

With so many gelato shops to choose from, customers tend to make their choices in a fragmented and inconsistent way; so it's hard for a gelato-maker to create loyalty, before we even get into product quality. And so it is vital to communicate what you are offering and its advantages.

OPENING A GELATO PARLOUR: THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATION

Once the business plan has been drawn up, it is also essential to focus on setting up a good communication campaign, which is needed to ensure optimum exposure and success with customers.

Brand communication and a correct brand positioning strategy are becoming increasingly important which is why it is necessary to understand some basic dynamics:

- find out what their needs and desires are
- create a product and service to satisfy those needs and desires
- promote and distribute the product or service

Promoting your own premises takes commitment and you also need to know how to use all available social media in the most appropriate way, design an attractive logo and slogan, come up with a communication strategy for both online (social media) and offline channels (newspaper advertising, leafleting, custom graphics of bags, tubs, napkins, etc.). Working as a team with graphics and communications experts could be the best solution for finalizing an effective communications plan.



THE BUSINESS PLAN OF A TRADITIONAL ITALIAN GELATO PARLOUR

Once you're sure you have a proper grounding in the knowhow and skills you'll be needing and you're sure you want to go into the gelato business, then go ahead and draw up a business plan – a document where you plan each step you need to take to open your point of sale, and decide on the main characteristics of your business.

The business plan will make it clearer what investments are needed – make sure to include the rental or purchase of your premises and machinery, showcases, ingredients and equipment in general, the cost of labour for tasks carried out by third parties, as well as utility costs such as electricity. Drawing up a comprehensive business plan that includes the main expense categories is also helpful when it comes to asking your bank for a loan to fund your new start-up. Gelato involves very little cost – raw materials make up around 12% of the selling price (or if we include milk and cream, etc. among the raw materials, this might reach 20%).

Let's not forget, though, that whereas the cost of ingredients in gelato provides bigger profit margins, it sells for a fairly low unit price, so good sales volume and the type of offer play a vital role.

As for rental or purchase costs, please bear in mind that if you are going to have a dedicated space for the workshop and another for sales, you will need at least 40 sq.m. of floor space. If we add tables, that needs to be 100 sq.m.

The most substantial expenditure, however, is made up of machinery, equipment and furnishings – display cabinets and trays for storing and presenting your gelato, pasteurizing machine, batch freezer, refrigerator cabinets with temperatures above and below zero. You will also need a cream whipper, immersion mixers, and a planetary mixer, so that you can make and mix whipped products as well as small amounts of gelato mixture. You will also be needing cones, tubs, take-away tubs, bags, napkins and spoons.

The overall investment needed to open a gelato parlour from scratch starts from 100,000 euros upwards, including furnishings, refurbishment and compliance of the premises.

But this figure is affected to a great extent by the location of the premises, by the number and cost of the machinery, from refrigerated counters to showcases.

Other costs to take into consideration, for example, include electricity, accountants, staff and communications.

A gelato parlour business plan helps to establish in advance what the business idea, costs and possible revenues are, thereby reducing the risk of unpleasant surprises, once you have started up and invested the capital.

INITIAL INVESTMENT: A SAMPLE BUDGET

In order to understand all of this better, shown below is an estimate of the initial investment that could be required in order to start up this type of business.

The figures shown are estimated market values for a small gelato parlour, and the estimate of depreciation and amortization is based on a typical business that operates roughly 280 days a year.

Investments	Amount (EUR)	Useful life (in years)	Annual expense (EUR)
Training and development	2,000	5	400
Feasibility plan	2,500	5	500
Accountant	1,000	5	200
Notary public	1,500	5	300
Registering with small-business associations	300	2	150
Other bureaucratic costs	1,500	5	300
Setting up utilities	300	2	150
Branding and company image	1,500	5	300
Promoting the start-up	2,500	5	500
Property, plant and equipment			
Construction and refurbishment	25,000	10	2,500
Signage	2,000	6	333
Lighting	2,000	8	250
Furnishings and equipment	85,000/110,000	10/13	8,500
Tubs, cones, cups	2,000	1	2,000
Janitorial equipment	1,500	6	250
Other equipment	5,000	5	1,000
Ingredients	10,000	1	10,000
TOTAL INVESTMENTS	145,600/170,600		
TOTAL ANNUAL AMORTIZATION			17,133

SIGEP: THE STRATEGIC ROLE OF AN INTERNATIONAL TRADE FAIR

SIGEP, the international trade fair for hand-crafted gelato, confectionery and bread, and coffee, now in its 43th edition, began in 1979. It is an outstanding exhibition exclusively for professionals, previewing trends and innovations for the four supply chains involved.

This trade fair is the best opportunity at international level for ingredients and raw materials, technology and equipment, furnishings and services. The show spotlights fine-quality products from around the world, develops global networking, and helps companies and professionals grow their businesses. **SIGEP is the undisputed leader in launching new trends, innovative layouts for premises, events and competitions at global level.** A key annual fixture where new products and technological innovations are presented, the fair is a hub that brings together all the elements of the various industries: business owners, distribution chains, manufacturing companies, trade associations and media; lastly, it should be emphasized that this international fair is a favourite way for companies in the sector to communicate year-round with their market. SIGEP's distinguishing feature is the rich schedule of events, an integral part of the fair, organized as follows: SIGEP International Business, with dedicated events; SIGEP Next, which promotes innovations; SIGEP Academy, with events dedicated to professional training, SIGEP Associations, which offers meetings for industrial and craft associations; SIGEP Corporate Social Responsibility, with dedicated events for businesses; SIGEP Awards, for national and international competitions.

Taking part in an event like SIGEP, with national and international reach, is crucial for anyone looking to start working in the gelato parlour business, meet professionals, explore new trends, find out about new equipment; it also offers training and development opportunities for all professionals from the gelato, confectionery and bread-making sectors.

**Il Gelato
Artigianale
.info**

www.ilgelatoartigianale.info is an informative website entirely dedicated to hand-crafted gelato, created to provide complete, transparent information about opening and running a gelato parlour and the various types of gelato, all in one place. Unione Italiana Food is the largest food industry trade association in Europe, bringing together small, medium and large food manufacturing companies in Italy. It was established in January 2019, through the merger of AIDEPI (the Association of the Italian Confectionery and Pasta Industries) and AIIPA (the Italian Association of the Food Products Industry). It represents 450 businesses from over 20 product sectors which employ 65,000 people with a turnover of over 35 billion euro, 10 billion of which is in exports. The leading Italian producers of ingredients for gelato belong to UIF – Gruppo Prodotti per Gelato, with a total overall turnover of 800 million euro, or 80% of the total turnover of the hand-crafted gelato ingredients sector. The following manufacturers all belong to Gruppo Prodotti per Gelato: Alvena, Bigatton, Città del Gelato, Comprital, Fabbri 1905, GEI - Aromitalia, Geldue, Giuso, Granulati Italia, La Preferita, Leagel, Linea Gel Italiana, Mane Italia, Mec3, Meucci Igino, Montebianco, Nestlé Italiana, Nuova Tradizione, Ostificio Prealpino, Torronalba, Unigel, Unigrà-Martini Linea Gelato.

Sigep



ORGANIZZATO DA

**ITALIAN
EXHIBITION
GROUP**
Providing the future

Sigep (the International Homemade Gelato, Pastry, and Bakery Fair) has been the undisputed leader since 1979, the most vast and complete trade fair in the world dedicated to traditional Italian gelato and hand-crafted desserts. The fair is aimed at professionals from all five continents, and has always anticipated new trends on the market and promoted the excellence of the “made in Italy” brand.

For more information on Sigep, please visit: www.sigep.it