



What goes into Checkers' strawberry cheesecake sundae

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Checkers' premium strawberry cheesecake sundae has sold so well since it was rolled out this summer the quick-service chain is developing three new limited-time sundaes in apple pie, blueberry and tropical flavors.

The strawberry shortcake sundae, which sells for \$3.69, is the second-biggest selling ice cream at Tampa, Fla.-based Checkers Drive-In Restaurants Inc., [which began offering soft-serve cones, shakes and sundaes only a few month ago](#).

Only the \$1 chocolate-vanilla swirl cone sells better, said Ryan Joy, Checkers senior director of research and development.

Checkers is not the only quick-service chain to enter the sweet-tooth fray this year. [Krystal, Sonic and Wendy's have introduced cakes, shakes and parfaits in efforts to drive traffic](#). And Burger King promoted its soft-serve cones with signs this summer.

So what goes into a quick-service sundae? Nation's Restaurant News visited Joy at a St. Petersburg, Fla., Checkers restaurant to find out.

Watch the creation of Checkers' strawberry cheesecake sundae; story continues below

Why the strawberry and cheesecake combo in a sundae?

Everybody does ice cream with the same toppings: fudge, caramel, strawberry. In our company, we want to take flavors to another level. That's why we're going to do an apple pie limited-time offer sundae. We want layers of flavors, layers of textures and layers of temperatures.

How important are sundaes to Checkers' business?

Sundaes are the best driver for LTO traffic.

What did your focus groups tell you about the sundaes?

We thought first that the price point for our sundaes might be too high. But the people in the focus groups who saw these sundae desserts at a Chili's, Outback or Friday's expected our sundaes to be more expensive. At Chili's a sundae might be \$5.99 or \$6.99.

What goes into the strawberry cheesecake sundae?

We use a lot of brands: real Philadelphia cheesecake, real crushed Oreos, real M&M's.

How do Checkers customers eat their sundaes?

This is funny. They get their sundaes and go right into their cars and eat it inside their cars. Then they finish, get out of their cars and get rid of the evidence.

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