

# Everything You Know About Astronaut Ice Cream is a Lie



Getty

Ah, astronaut ice cream<sup>[1]</sup>. The novelty—always hopelessly cracked once you open it—that's beloved by kids and despised by parents whose wallets are gouged at science museum gift shops. While the taste leaves much to be desired, the freeze-dried treat is fun to eat; the tiny bits melt on your tongue and also crunches in a weirdly satisfying way when you bite into a big chunk. But was the chalky stuff ever actually sent into space<sup>[2]</sup>?

A deep dive into the matter was led by *Mental Floss*<sup>[3]</sup>, and then later by *Vox*<sup>[4]</sup>, both of which discovered that astronaut ice cream is essentially a lie. A long-believed tall tale perpetuated by the media says that the space sweet was enjoyed by astronauts at zero gravity. Even the astronaut ice cream makers claim on their site<sup>[5]</sup> that it was "originally developed for the early Apollo Space missions" and is "frozen to -40 degrees, then vacuum dried and placed in a special foil pouch."

But Apollo 7 astronaut Walter Cunningham, who was part of the first manned mission

since Apollo 1, has totally debunked some of these claims, explaining that ice cream<sup>[6]</sup> was never on board. "We didn't have any of that," he told Vox, adding that years after he left NASA he saw the stuff in stores: "I remember thinking: Wouldn't it have been nice if we had that?"



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Of course, this doesn't mean that astronaut ice cream is a total farce. *Mental Floss* reports that a number of companies were commissioned by NASA to create various freeze-dried snacks that astronauts could munch on while in orbit. And Whirpool Corporation came up with ice cream made of coconut fat, sugar, and milk solids that were freeze-dried and ground, then compressed into cubes.

But, according to Cunningham's account, the newspaper articles from 1968 were wrong. Astronaut ice cream never made the docket for Apollo 7 or any other early missions. And that's because by 1972, freezers were allowed on board and astronauts were able to eat the real deal, which they still do today.

Apparently the vacuum-packed dessert is simply just a marketing ploy, fooling generations of kids that it's true space food.

**Follow Delish on Instagram<sup>[7]</sup>.**

### Links

1. <http://www.delish.com/food/g2795/50-states-crazy-ice-cream-flavors/>
2. <http://www.delish.com/food-news/a45453/things-you-should-know-before-you-order-pizza-hut/>
3. <http://mentalfloss.com/article/30829/did-astronauts-really-eat-astronaut-ice-cream>
4. <http://www.vox.com/2016/2/15/10998344/astronaut-ice-cream>
5. <http://www.astronauticecreamshop.com/product/freeze-dried-neapolitan-astronaut-ice-cream-2/>
6. <http://www.delish.com/cooking/a42475/no-churn-ice-creams-6-ways/>
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