



WEST BATON ROUGE MUSEUM
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Blast from the Past 2020: Made in Louisiana **Five Days of Fun Activities to Do at Home!**

Snowballs, Strawberries, and Sugar: Sweet Treats Made in Louisiana

The snowball was invented in New Orleans in the 1930's but before that, people in their own homes in many regions of the country enjoyed shavings from blocks of ice topped with fruit, juices or even egg custard and marshmallow cream. Before the days of refrigerators and freezers as we know them today, blocks of ice were sold and shipped down south by boat or by wagon for use in homes and businesses. Ice was shaved off the block by hand using a device such as the pictured ice shaver from the West Baton Rouge Museum's Education Collection.



Artifact: Ice Shaver from the West Baton Rouge Museum Education Collection

The city of Baltimore, Maryland claims that the tradition of enjoying this icy treat started there long before New Orleans. Baltimore historians report that during the Industrial Revolution, wagons traveling from New York to southern parts of the United States handed out ice shavings to kids who brought them home to add flavoring. Movie theaters in their city started offering shaved ice at concession stands during intermission to keep movie goers cool in the summer months.

The snow cone, different from the snowball and shaved ice, originated in Dallas when Samuel Bert invented the ice crusher machine. He started off by selling his treats at the State Fair of Texas in 1919. Within a year, he patented his machine, and by the 1950's, over a million snow cones were being purchased per year at his stand at the state fair! Snow cones are made of crunchy ice topped with syrup and served in a paper cone.

The official New Orleans snowball came to be in the 1930's when two snowball pioneers, George Ortolano and Ernest Hansen, each built their own versions of the city's first electric ice-shaving

machines. These machines turned blocks of ice into powdery, fine snow. To this day, George's descendants still produce and sell a version of the Ortolano machine at the company SnoWizard. Ernest Hansen built his machines mainly for his own use. His original snowball stand, Sno-Bliz opened in Uptown New Orleans in 1939 selling treats for 2 cents each. His wife, Mary, created top secret syrup recipes that when poured over the cup absorb straight into every soft snow crystal. The stand is still in business today and continues to be family owned and operated by Ernest's granddaughter, Ashley Hansen.

A Visit to Snow-Balls Plus in Brusly: Watch and Learn

It's snowball season! Check out this video link to take a virtual field trip to meet Ms. Tara at Snowballs Plus. See how she makes these traditional treats all summer long at her snowball stand on Main Street in Brusly.

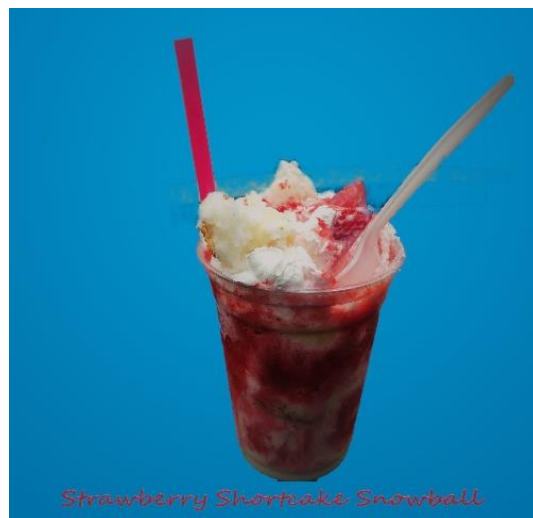
Video Link: <https://vimeo.com/426101731/16aa15a3aa>

Make Your Own Snowball

Strawberry Snowballs: Watch and Learn

To make a famous Louisiana snowball, all you need is a simple syrup easily made by mixing equal parts of water and sugar and heating the mixture on the stove until the sugar dissolves and some added flavoring such as fresh strawberries. Be sure to have the help of a grown up for safety when it comes to using the stove and chopping the fruit.

Video Link: <https://vimeo.com/425920013/191e12c6d6>



Supplies:

- Sugar – 1 cup
- Water – 1 cup
- Pot
- Long handled spoon
- Bowl or bottle with lid for storing syrup
- Strawberries – 1 pound
- Paring knife
- Crushed ice

- Cup to hold the snowball
- Straw to slurp the snowball
- Spoon to eat the snowball

Directions

1. Pour 1 cup of water and 1 cup of sugar into a pot and stir over medium heat until the sugar dissolves.
2. Slice strawberries and add to the pot of simple syrup. Continue to cook the syrup/fruit mixture for an additional 5 – 10 minutes until you reach your desired thickness.
3. Remove from heat and pour into a bowl or bottle and leave uncovered until cool. Then, you may store in the refrigerator covered up to one week.
4. Add crushed ice to cups for serving, and pour cooled strawberry syrup over ice. Don't forget a spoon and straw for indulging in your very own snowball!
5. OPTIONAL: Top off or stuff with additional garnish to customize your frozen treat. To turn this recipe into Strawberry Shortcake flavor, just add angel food cake crumbs and whipped cream, or sprinkle on your favorite candies to make a summertime colorful creation!



Snowballs Plus customer, Caydence Easley, holding a candy filled snowball.

Louisiana Cash Crops

What does farming have to do with snowballs? If it weren't for farmers, we would be missing two of the key ingredients for the strawberry snowball recipe. Two big cash crops grown in Louisiana are sugarcane and strawberries. A cash crop is an agricultural crop grown on a large scale for the purpose of selling to the market and not for the farmer's own use.

Sugar Cane

Sugar Cane has been grown and processed into sugar on a large scale commercial basis here since 1795. That makes for 225 years of making sugar in Louisiana!

Check out this video from the American Sugar Cane League website called ***From The Cane Field To Your Sugar Bowl!*** Take a virtual field trip with Farmer Joe and Marie to explore Louisiana sugar cane fields to learn how the cane is planted and harvested. Then, follow them to the sugar mill to see how juice is squeezed from cane stalks and transformed into raw sugar crystals before going to a refinery to turn into the white sugar crystals we have in our pantries or on our tables.

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=srlaS2y7D-0>

American Sugar Cane League

Strawberries

Louisiana's strawberry industry started in the 1800s when Italian and Hungarian immigrants came to America to find work. Immigrants coming to Louisiana started strawberry farms. By the 1920s, the industry had become a big business. Louisiana farmers' sweet red berries were being sold and shipped across the United States of America. Today, most Louisiana strawberries are sold locally to Louisiana grocery stores and farmers markets. Strawberry farms in Southeast Louisiana are known to produce the sweetest strawberries in the entire nation!

Learn More (Helpful Resources)

<https://www.history.com/news/the-colorful-history-of-shaved-ice>

<https://www.amscl.org/education/video-gallery/>

<https://www.louisianastrawberries.com/jam-with-jazzy/>

<https://www.louisianastrawberries.com>