



America's Ice Cream Preferences

Polling by **Morning Consult** on behalf of the **International Dairy Foods Association**

— APRIL 2024

Key Takeaways

1

Americans of all ages and political persuasions love ice cream. Vanilla reigns supreme as the public's favorite flavor, with chocolate and strawberry rounding out the top 3. Mint chocolate chip, butter pecan, and cookies & cream each have strong contingents who prefer them over all other options. Flavor is consumers' top consideration when choosing between ice creams, with price and quantity also factoring in heavily.

2

The public has clear preferences when it comes to how they consume their ice cream. Hot fudge, whipped cream, and caramel sauce stand out as the most popular toppings, while the top fruit and nut mix-ins are strawberries and pecans/peanuts, respectively. Most adults lick the ice cream first when eating an ice cream cone, though are more likely than others to bite it instead.

3

When asked to compare the United States Congress to a flavor of ice cream, a plurality of Americans say: Rocky Road – *anything but smooth*. A sizable share say instead that Congress is best represented by a banana split – *split down the middle*. And in third place: butter pecan – *rich and nutty*.

SUMMARY

Top 3 Ice Cream Flavors

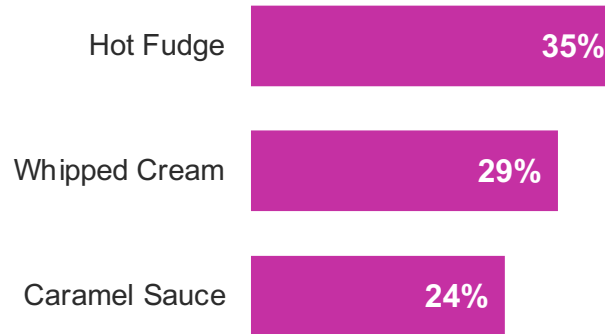


Vanilla (38%)

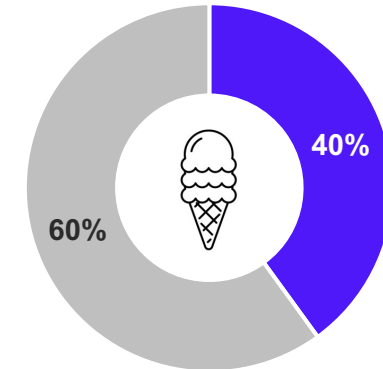
Chocolate (32%)

Strawberry (25%)

Top 3 Ice Cream Toppings



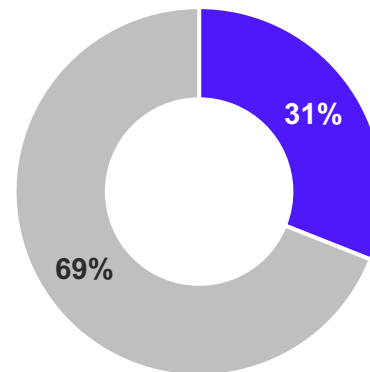
Favorite Novelty: Cone



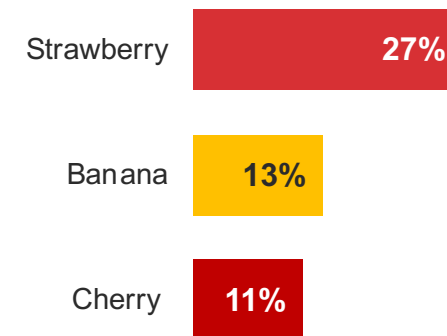
17%

of Americans prefer **pecans** on their ice cream than other nut options

Favorite Confection: Brownie



Top 3 Favorite Fruit Topping





Agenda

1

Ice Cream Preferences

2

Consumer Considerations

3

Ice Cream & Congress

4

Appendix

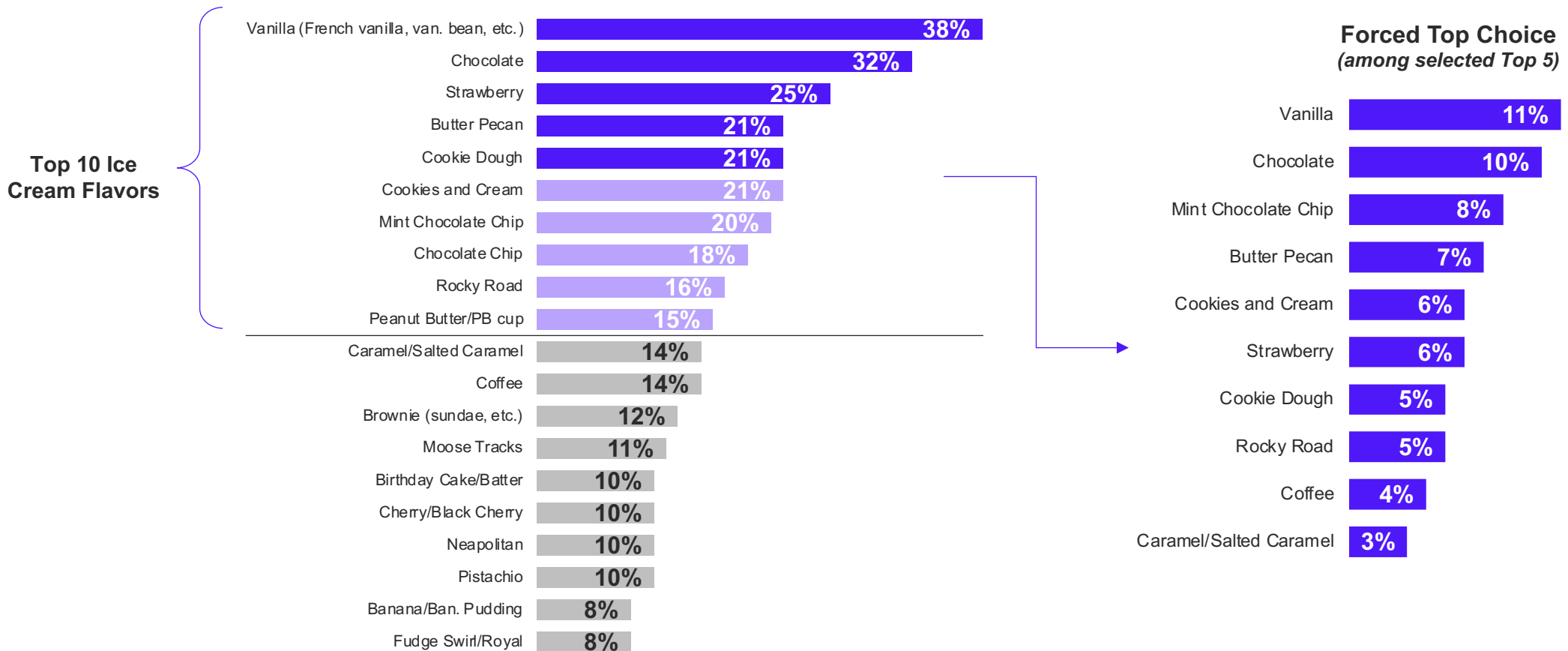
70%

of Americans love ice cream.
27% merely *like* it.

ICE CREAM PREFERENCES

Vanilla, Chocolate, and Strawberry are the ice cream flavors most often included in Americans’ “Top 5” lists. However, Mint Chocolate Chip rounds out the top 3 when respondents are pressed for their #1 favorite.

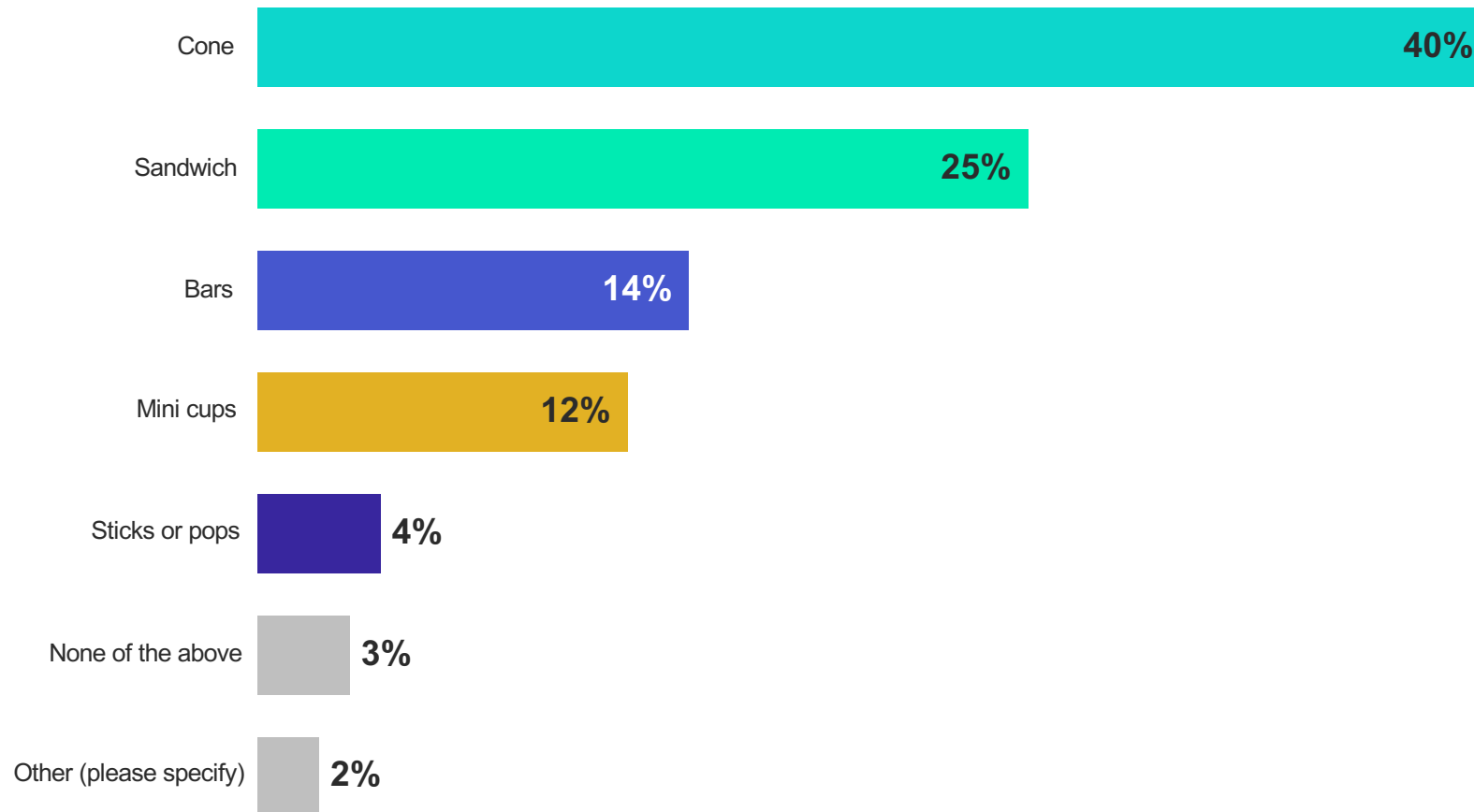
Below is a list of ice cream flavors in alphabetical order. Which of the following ice cream flavors would you consider your favorite(s)?
Please select up to 5 flavors.



ICE CREAM PREFERENCES

Cones and sandwiches are Americans' favorite ice cream novelty items.

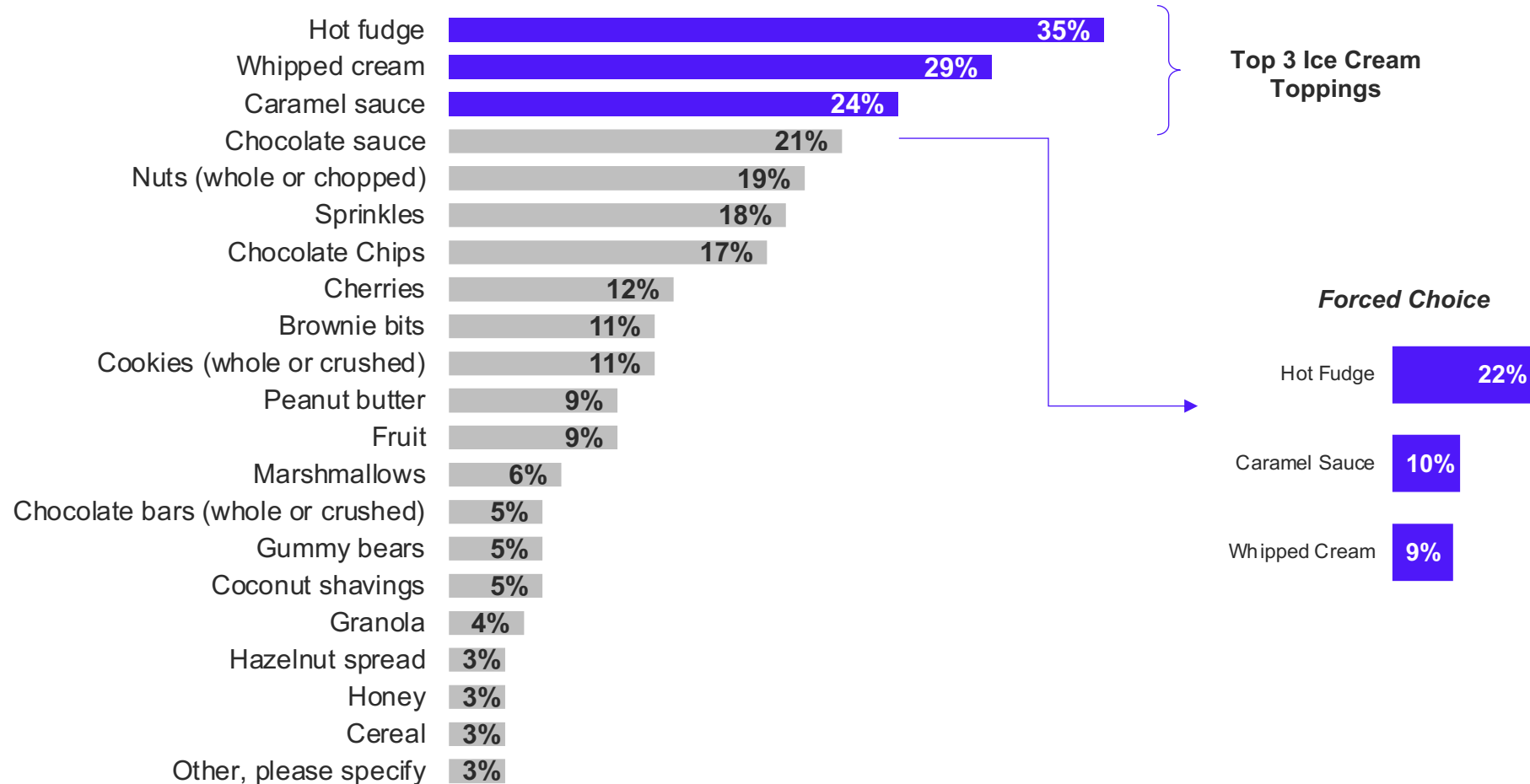
Which of the following, if any, is your favorite type of ice cream **novelty**? *Select one.*



ICE CREAM PREFERENCES

Hot fudge, whipped cream, and caramel sauce are the top-three most popular ice cream toppings selected among 20 options provided.

And which of the following, if any, are your favorite ice cream **toppings**? *Select up to 3 choices.*



ICE CREAM PREFERENCES

The popularity of hot fudge is driven primarily by older adults.

And which of the following, if any, are your favorite ice cream **toppings**? *Select up to 3 choices.*

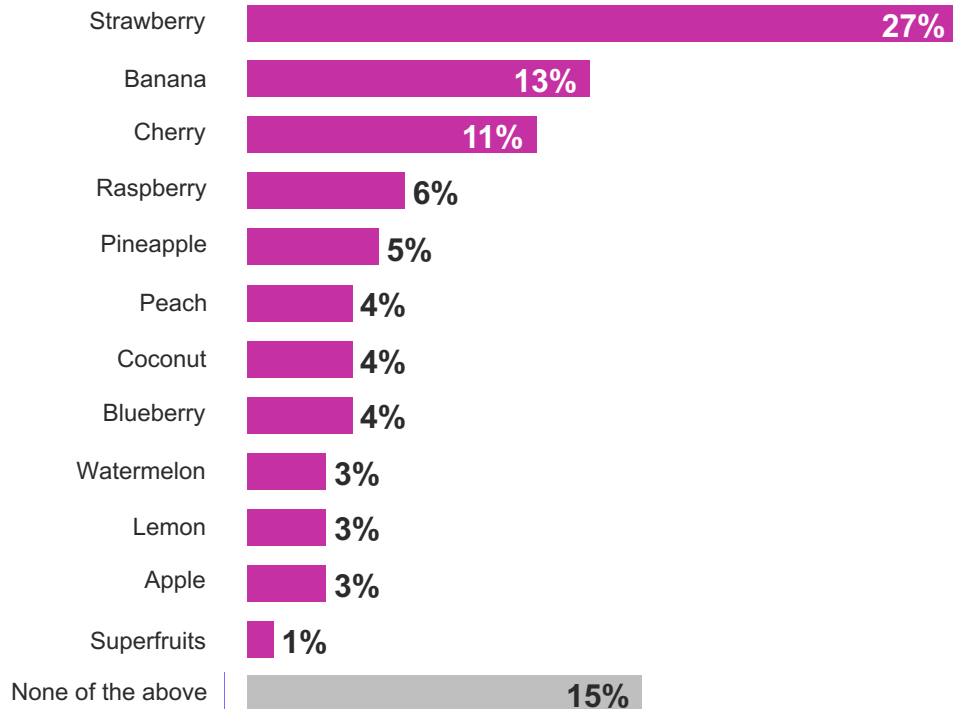
% selected	Gender		Age				Party Identification			Income			
	Adults	Male	Female	18-34	35-44	45-64	65+	Dem (no lean)	Ind (no lean)	Rep (no lean)	Under 50k	50k-100k	100k+
Hot fudge	35%	30%	40%	24%	30%	40%	47%	31%	38%	38%	36%	35%	33%
Whipped Cream	29%	24%	35%	27%	24%	31%	34%	30%	25%	31%	29%	30%	29%
Caramel Sauce	24%	23%	25%	17%	25%	27%	28%	22%	21%	29%	25%	24%	21%
Chocolate sauce	21%	19%	22%	18%	18%	20%	26%	17%	23%	23%	21%	19%	22%
Nuts (whole or chopped)	19%	16%	21%	12%	22%	19%	24%	18%	19%	20%	18%	18%	24%

ICE CREAM PREFERENCES

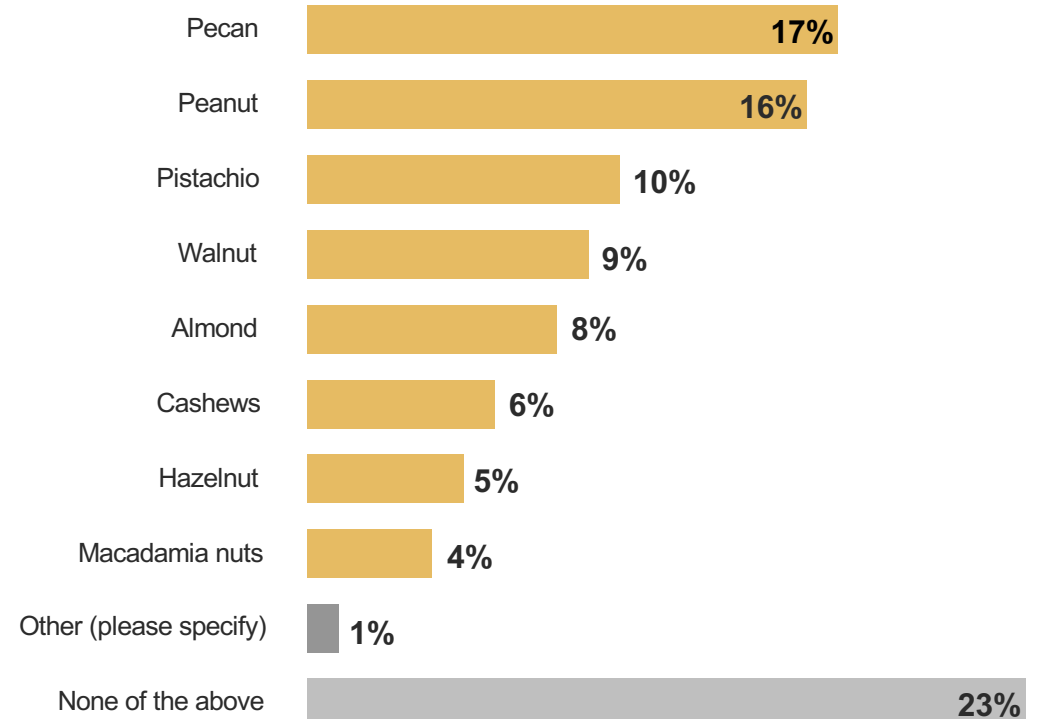
Strawberries are the public's favorite fruit to have in their ice cream, while pecans and peanuts are the top-two most preferred nuts.

Which **fruit** or **nut** (or flavoring), if any, is your favorite to eat with ice cream or in frozen desserts? *That is, included as part of the ice cream rather than a topping. Select one.*

Fruit (or fruit flavoring)



Nut (or nut flavoring)



ICE CREAM PREFERENCES

Nearly one-third of U.S. adults prefer brownies to other baked good pairings for ice cream, more than any other confection tested.

Which confection or baked good, if any, is your favorite to pair with a scoop of ice cream? *Select one.*

31%

Brownies

22%

Cake

17%

Cookies

13%

Pie/Crusts

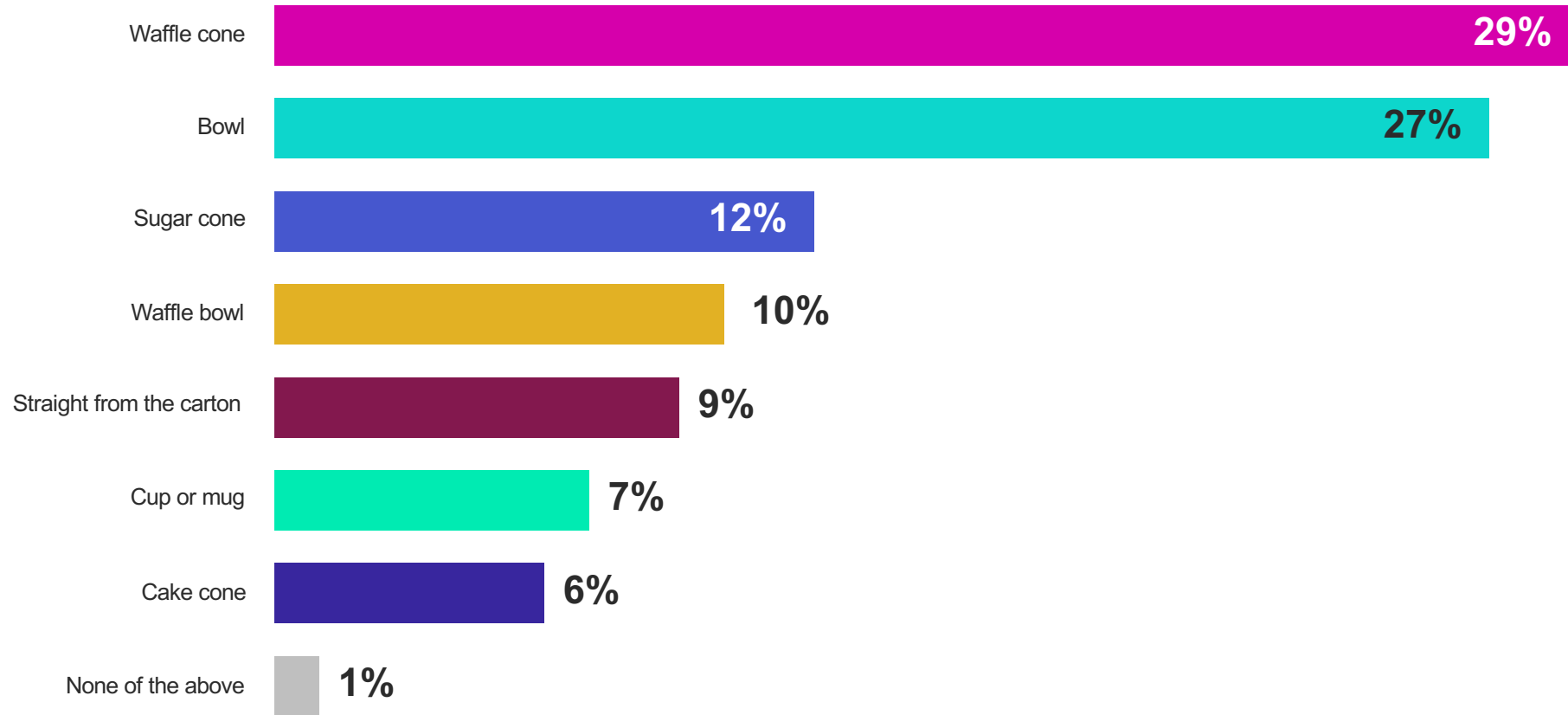
7%

Candy bars or
fudge

ICE CREAM PREFERENCES

Americans tend to prefer bowls or waffle cones – only one-in-ten say *straight out of the carton* is their favorite method of consumption.

What is your favorite type of **container or cone** to eat ice cream from? *Select one.*





Agenda

1

Ice Cream Preferences

2

Consumer Considerations

3

Ice Cream & Congress

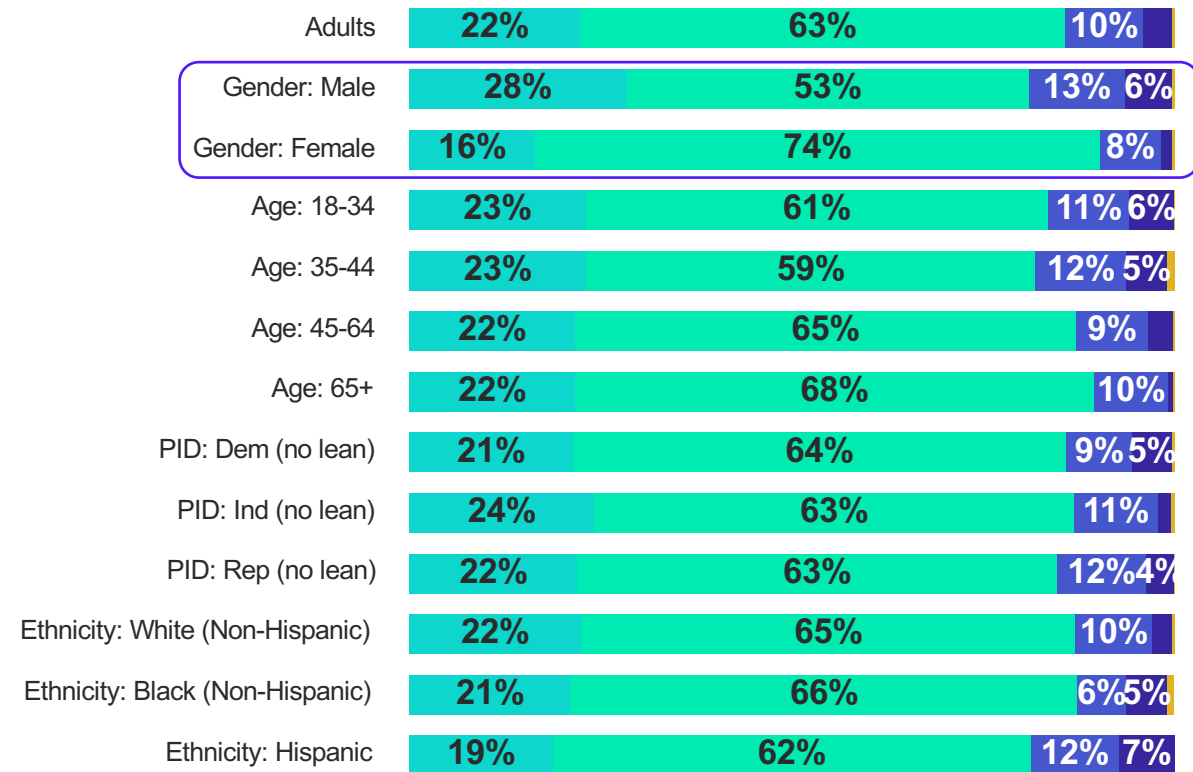
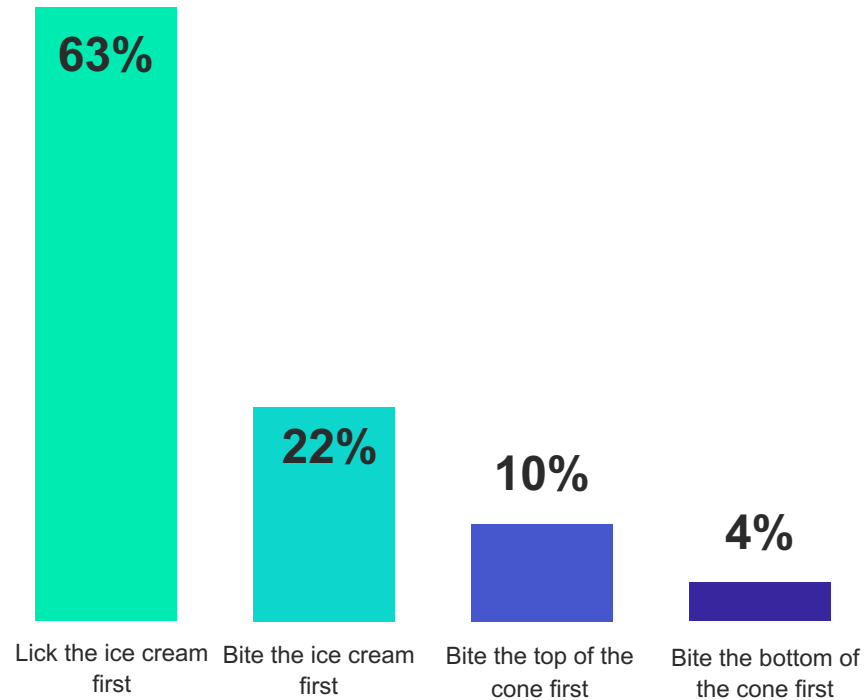
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Appendix

CONSUMER CONSIDERATIONS

Most Americans approach eating an ice cream cone by licking the ice cream itself rather than biting it or starting with the cone. Men are considerably more likely than women to bite an ice cream cone.

Generally speaking, how are YOU most likely to approach eating an ice cream cone?



63%

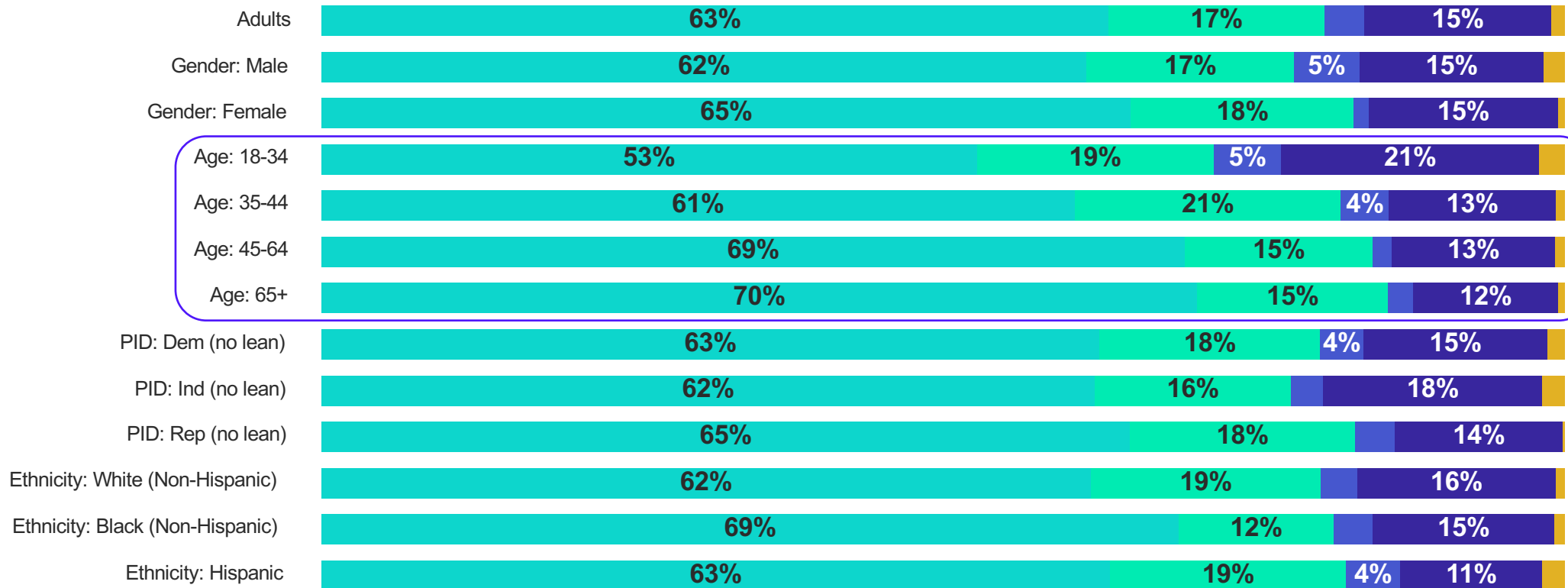
of Americans say their favorite place to eat ice cream is at home.

CONSUMER CONSIDERATIONS

Adults over 45 *especially* prefer eating ice cream at home. Young adults (18-34) are more likely than other groups to say *outdoors* is their favorite setting for it.

What is your favorite setting to enjoy ice cream? Select one.

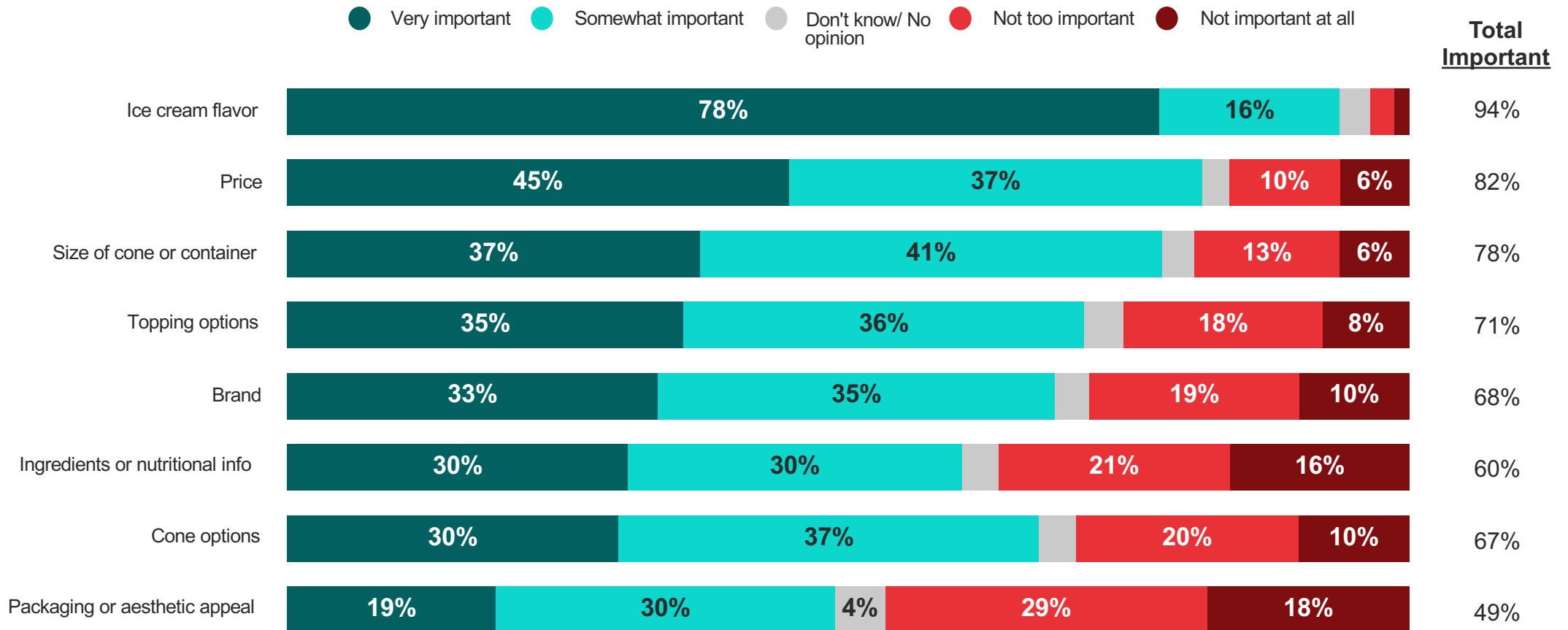
● At home
 ● At an ice cream shop
 ● At a restaurant
 ● While enjoying the outdoors
 ● Other (specify)



CONSUMER CONSIDERATIONS

Flavor is the most important consideration when consumers are weighing ice cream options, though four-fifths of adults think size and price are important as well. Nutritional info and product packaging carry less weight.

How important, if at all, are each of the following factors when considering the kind of ice cream you want to have?



Total important = % Very Important + % Somewhat important

CONSUMER CONSIDERATIONS

Across demographic subgroups, flavor is the top determinant of ice cream choice. Younger (<35) adults care less about brand names for ice cream than others surveyed.

How important, if at all, are each of the following factors when considering the kind of ice cream you want to have?

% very important	Adults	Gender		Age				Party Identification			Ethnicity		
		Male	Female	18-34	35-44	45-64	65+	Dem (no lean)	Ind (no lean)	Rep (no lean)	White	Hispanic	Black
Ice cream flavor	78%	73%	83%	75%	74%	77%	85%	80%	75%	77%	79%	77%	71%
Price	45%	46%	44%	46%	51%	44%	40%	49%	40%	44%	43%	47%	54%
Size of cone or container	37%	39%	35%	40%	44%	32%	33%	38%	31%	39%	36%	43%	43%
Topping options	35%	35%	36%	41%	44%	30%	29%	37%	30%	38%	35%	44%	40%
Brand	33%	36%	30%	27%	41%	34%	34%	36%	27%	34%	32%	34%	42%
Cone options	30%	31%	28%	34%	41%	24%	23%	33%	26%	28%	28%	35%	40%
Ingredients or nutritional info	30%	31%	30%	33%	32%	29%	28%	34%	27%	29%	29%	32%	37%
Packaging or aesthetic appeal	19%	21%	16%	25%	27%	16%	9%	22%	14%	18%	17%	26%	27%



Agenda

1

Ice Cream Preferences

2

Consumer Considerations

3

Ice Cream & Congress

4

Appendix



Top 3 Ice Cream Flavors Americans Think Best Describe the U.S. Congress



30%

say Congress is like
Rocky Road: *anything
but smooth*

20%

say Congress is like a
Banana Split: *split
down the middle*

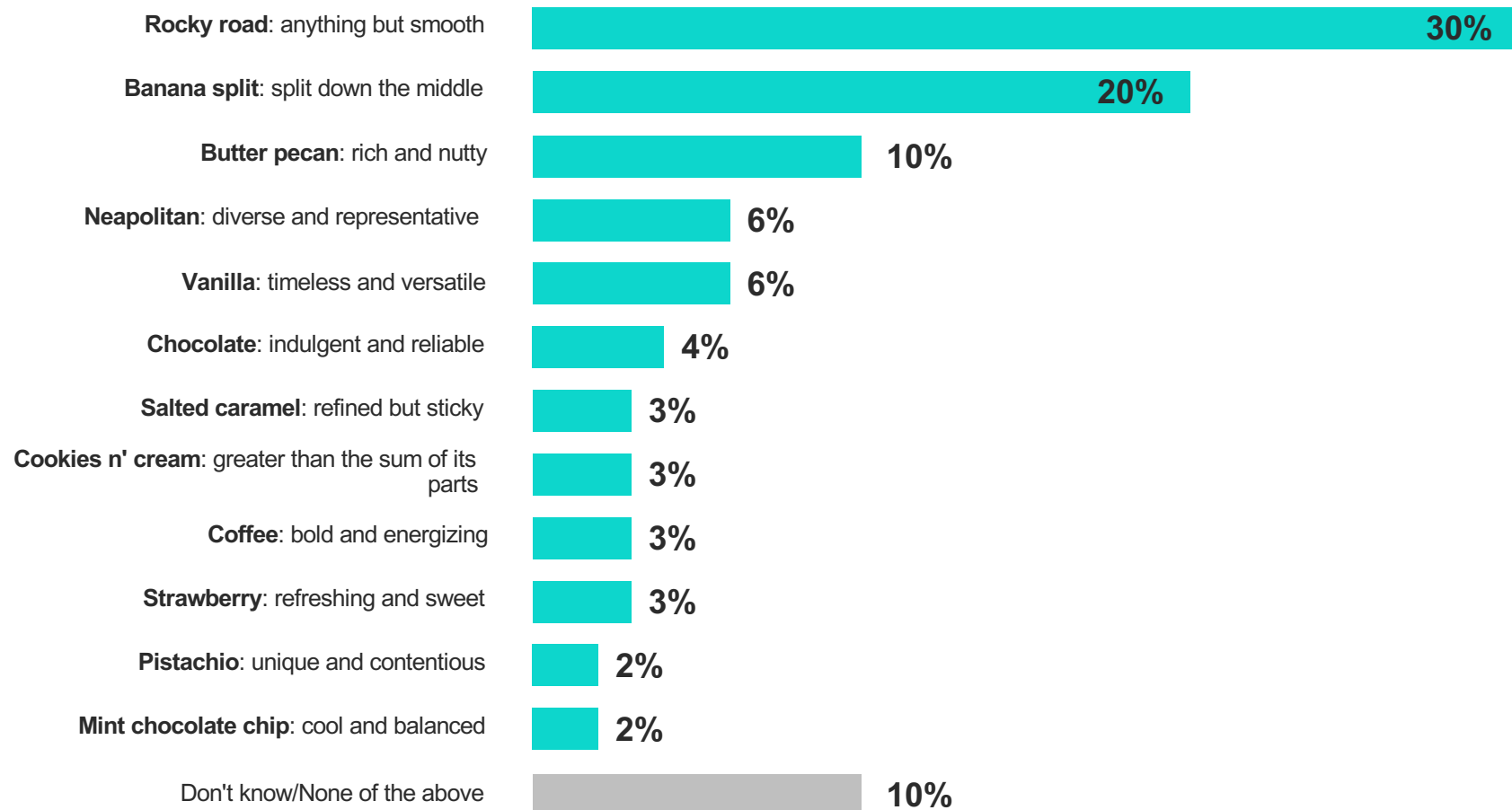
10%

Say Congress is like
Butter Pecan: *rich and
nutty*

ICE CREAM & CONGRESS

Ice cream comparisons signal the public's view of Congress.

Considering the choices below, which ice cream flavor do you think best describes the United States Congress?



ICE CREAM & CONGRESS

Larger shares of women, adults over 45, and white adults describe Congress as Rocky Road ice cream - *anything but smooth*.

Considering the choices below, which ice cream flavor do you think best describes the United States Congress?

	Adults	Gender		Age				Party Identification			Ethnicity		
		Male	Female	18-34	35-44	45-64	65+	Dem (no lean)	Ind (no lean)	Rep (no lean)	White	Hispanic	Black
Rocky road: anything but smooth	30%	26%	34%	22%	25%	33%	40%	28%	30%	31%	32%	24%	19%
Banana split: split down the middle	20%	18%	22%	14%	16%	22%	26%	18%	22%	20%	20%	19%	17%
Butter pecan: rich and nutty	10%	11%	10%	11%	8%	11%	10%	10%	11%	10%	11%	11%	10%
Vanilla: timeless and versatile	6%	7%	4%	9%	9%	4%	1%	7%	4%	5%	5%	9%	11%
Neapolitan: diverse and representative	6%	4%	7%	6%	6%	6%	4%	7%	4%	5%	5%	11%	6%
Chocolate: indulgent and reliable	4%	5%	3%	6%	6%	2%	1%	4%	3%	4%	3%	3%	5%
Strawberry: refreshing and sweet	3%	4%	1%	5%	4%	2%	0%	4%	1%	2%	2%	6%	4%
Coffee: bold and energizing	3%	5%	1%	6%	2%	2%	1%	3%	2%	3%	3%	5%	3%
Cookies n' cream: greater than the sum of its parts	3%	4%	3%	6%	3%	2%	1%	4%	2%	3%	2%	1%	8%
Salted caramel: refined but sticky	3%	4%	3%	3%	5%	3%	2%	3%	2%	4%	4%	4%	3%
Mint Choc. Chip: cool and balanced	2%	2%	1%	2%	4%	2%	--	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%	1%
Pistachio: unique and contentious	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%	2%	1%	3%	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%



Agenda

1

Ice Cream Preferences

2

Consumer Considerations

3

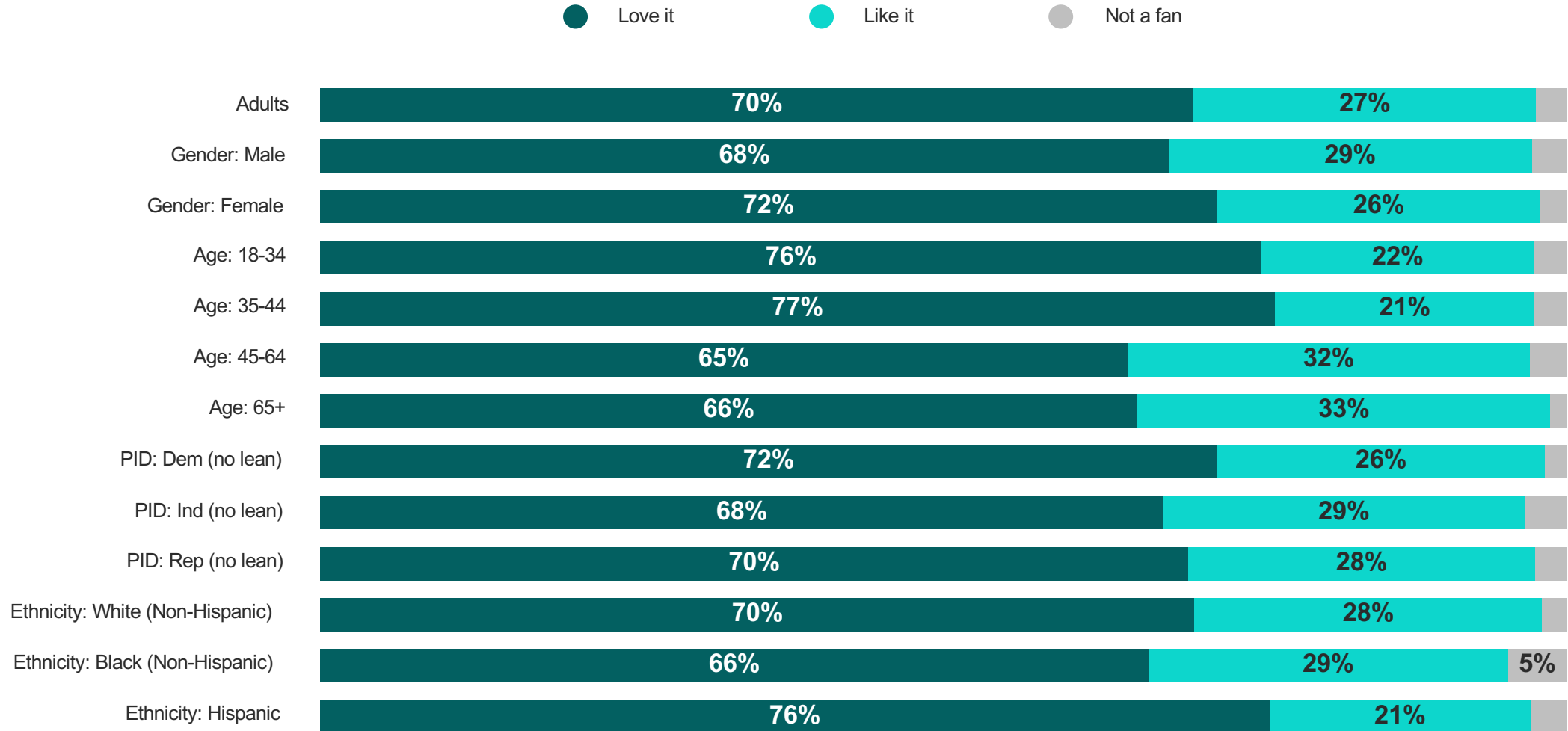
Ice Cream & Congress

4

Appendix

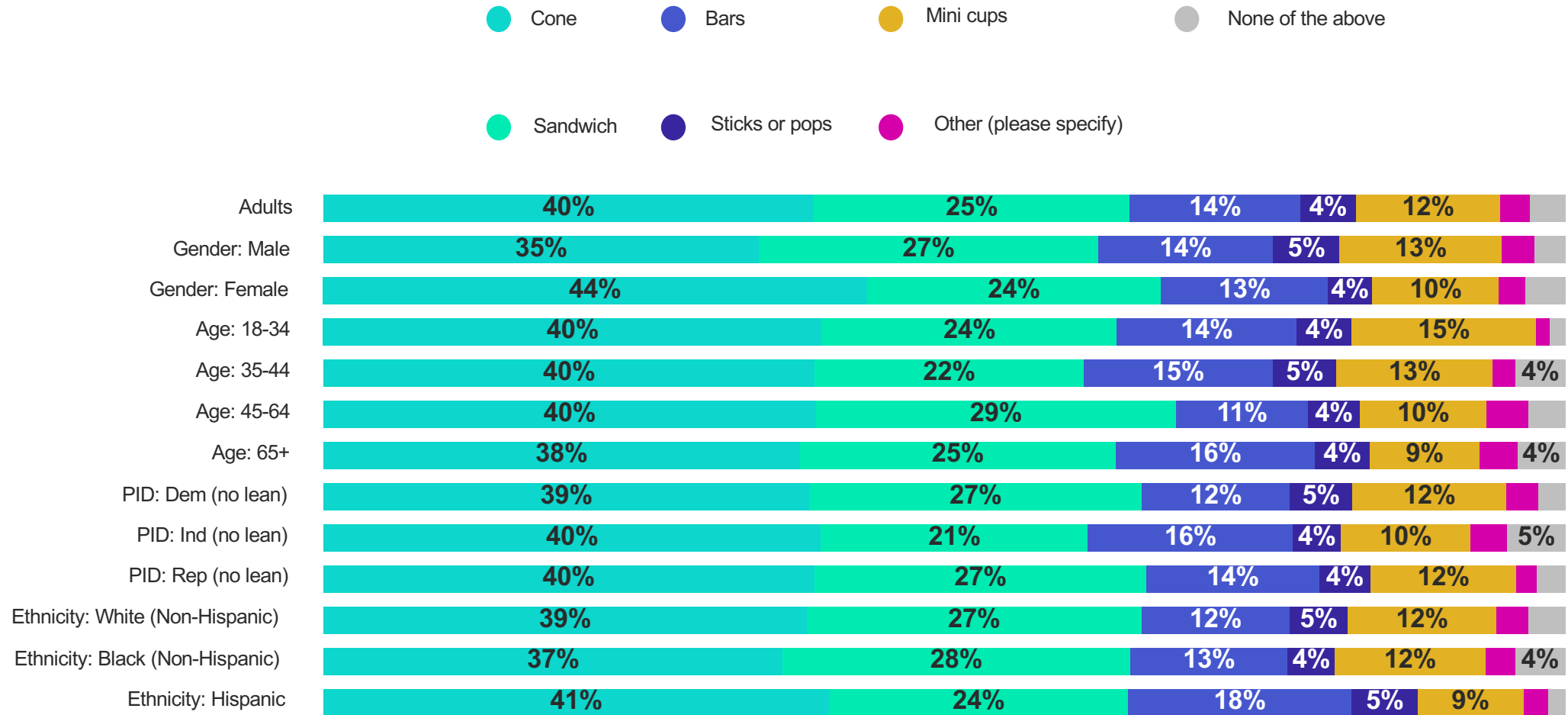
APPENDIX

How would you describe your feelings toward ice cream in general?



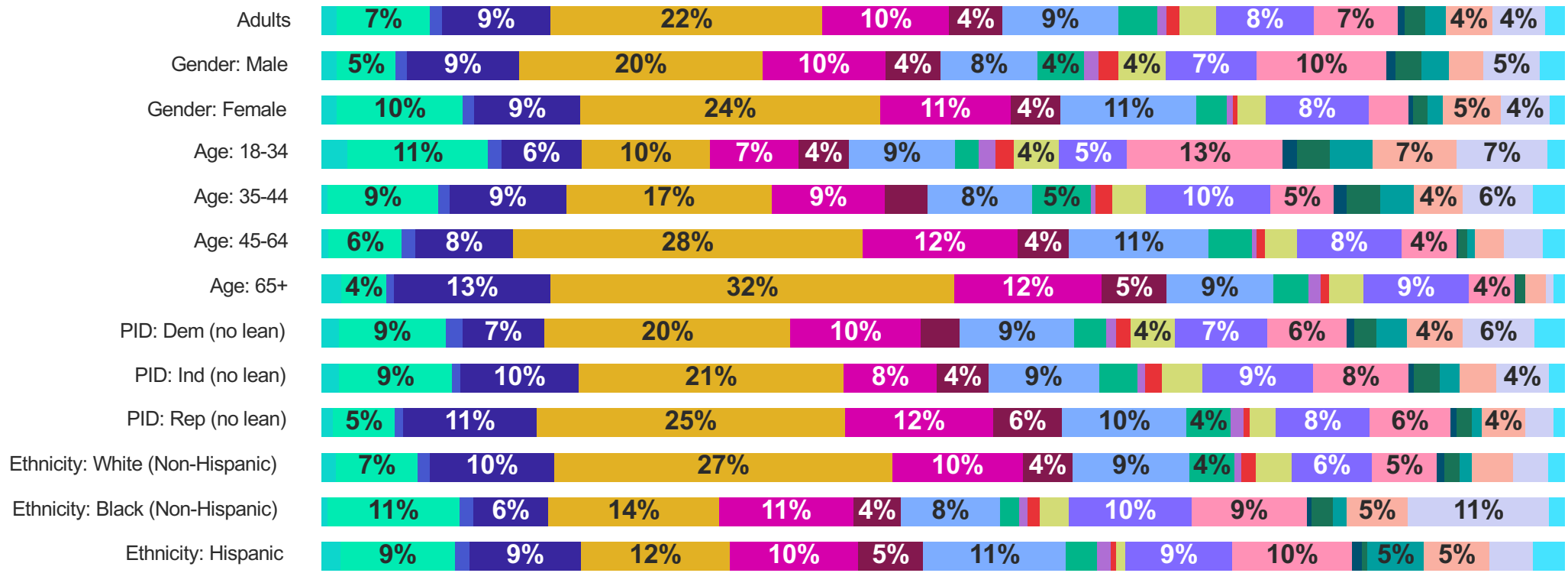
APPENDIX

Which of the following, if any, is your favorite type of ice cream novelty? Select one.



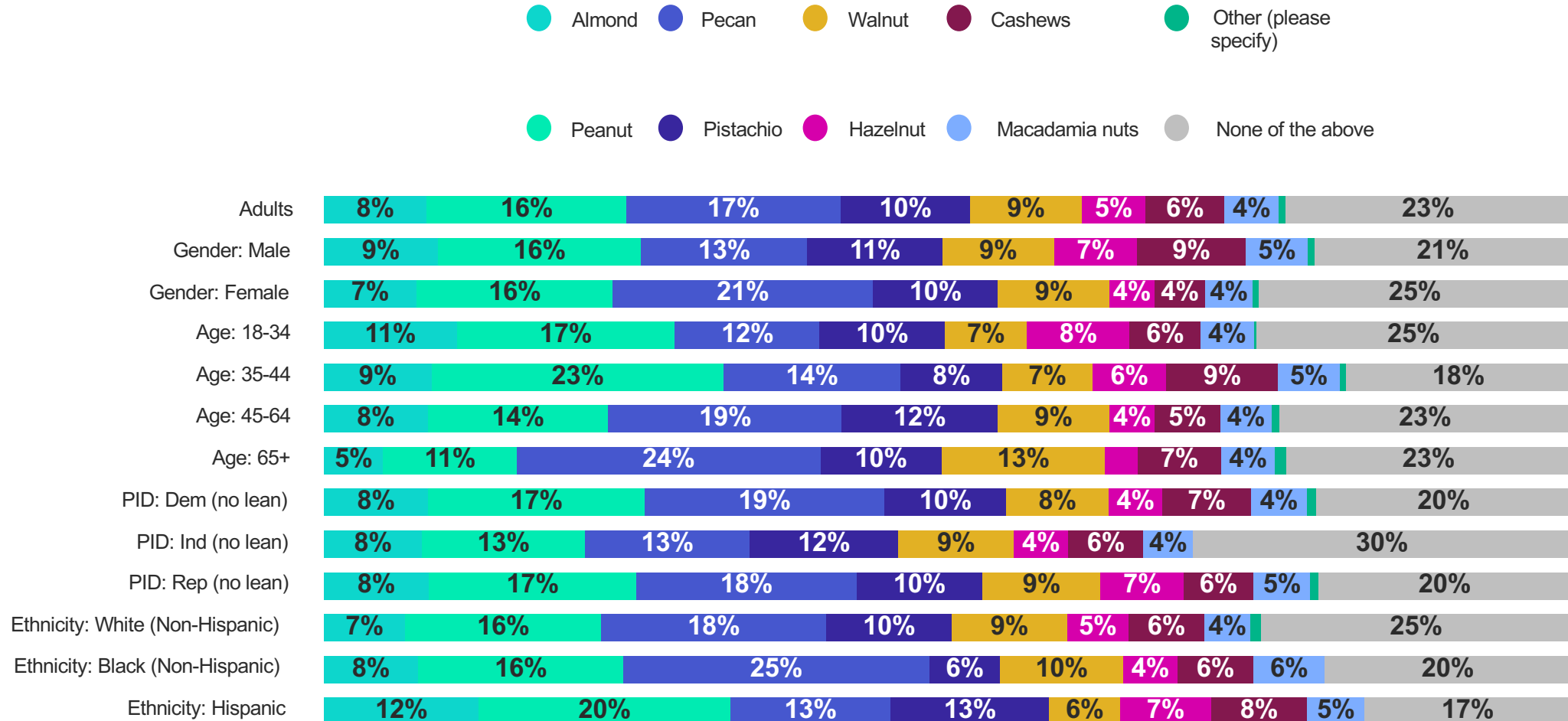
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Which of the following is your favorite ice cream topping?



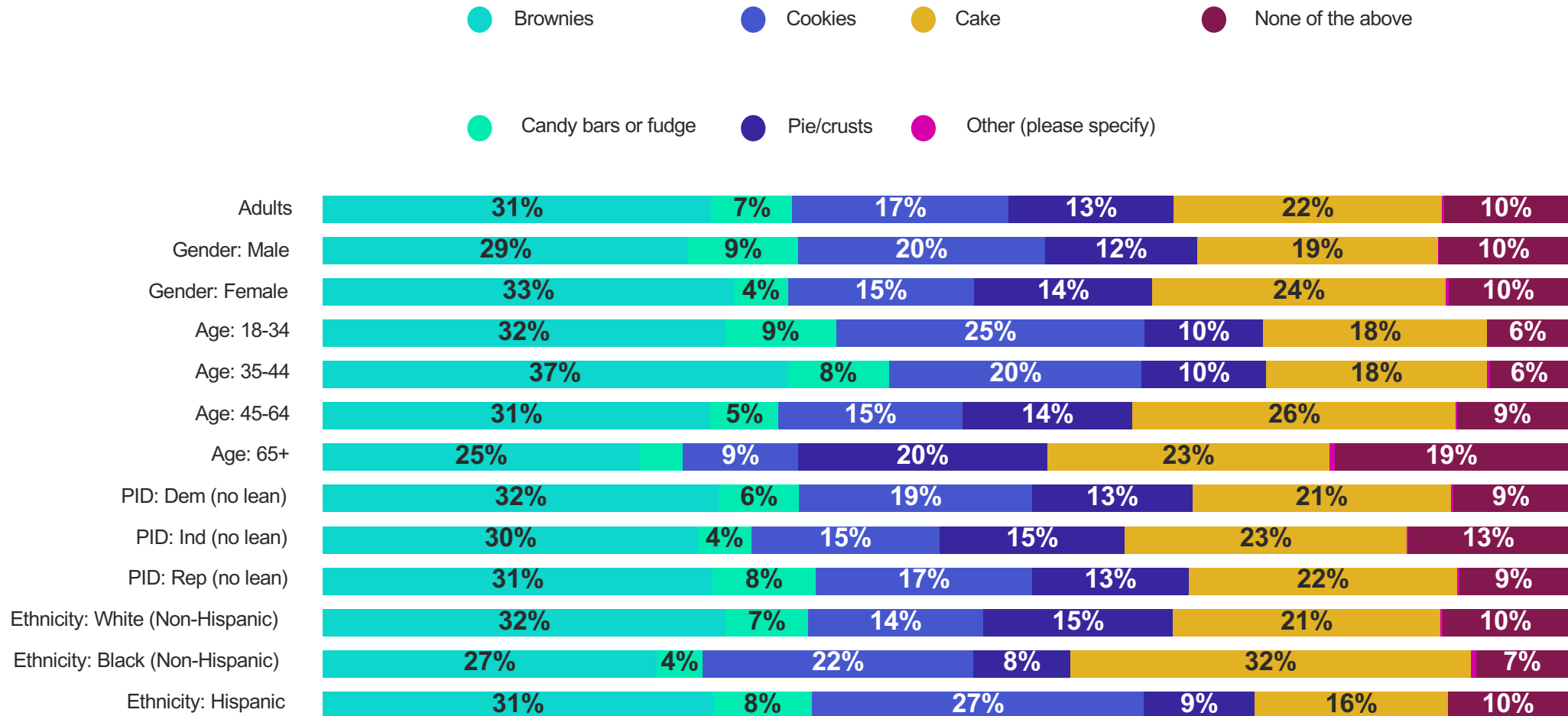
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Which nut (or nut flavoring), if any, is your favorite to have in ice cream? That is, included as party of the ice cream rather than a topping.



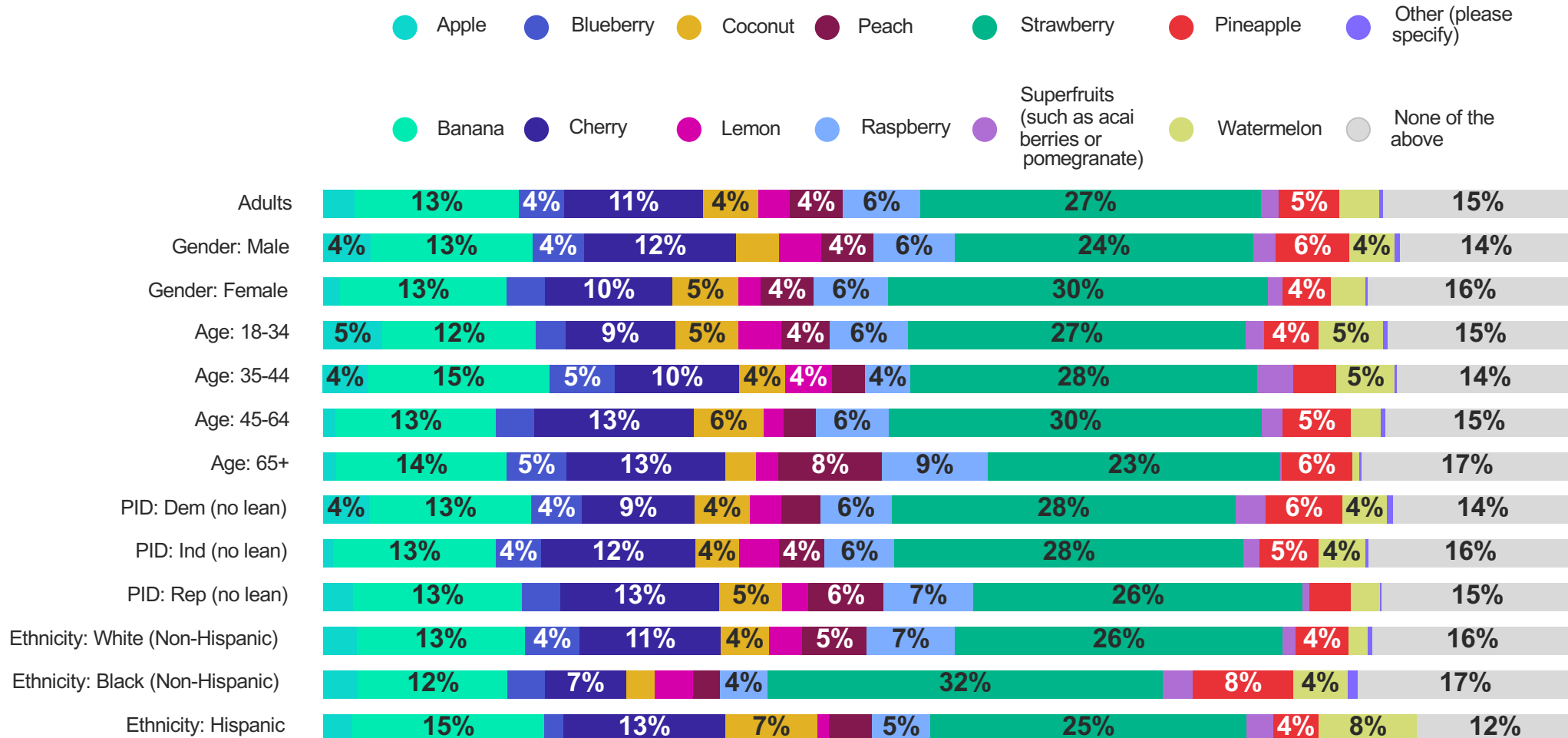
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Which confection or baked good, if any, is your favorite to pair with a scoop of ice cream? Select one.



APPENDIX

Which fruit (or fruit flavoring), if any, is your favorite to eat with ice cream or in frozen desserts? That is, included as part of the ice cream rather than a topping. Select one.



APPENDIX

What is your favorite type of container or cone to eat ice cream from? *Select one.*

