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Honey

By *Melissa W. Sais*

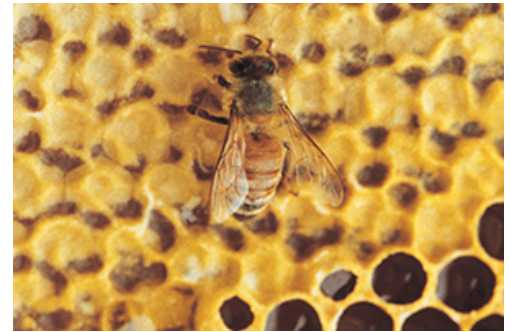
Honeybees and the sweet rewards of beekeeping came to New Mexico with Spanish settlers and missionaries in the 1500s. In 2012, the state's commercial beekeeping operations kept 5,000 hives and produced 260,000 pounds of honey.

Best I ever had: A tasting at the Santa Fe Honey Salon and Farm Shop is a virtual tour of nature in New Mexico via pure, raw, and unfiltered honeys. With a gentle sweetness that melts in your mouth, the mild Cat's Claw Mesquite honey gathered in Las Cruces is delectable. The shop also handcrafts beeswax candles and honey soaps so aromatic that folks are tempted to take a bite out of them. Take home the Blue Corn and Anise Biscochitos bar of soap. 554 Juanita Street, Santa Fe. 1-505-780-8797.

Try this: A mellow honey dollop and a kick of candied green chile top the house-made vanilla bean ice cream at the Hyatt Regency Tamaya Resort and Spa's Corn Maiden restaurant. Gathered from the resort's on-site bee colonies, the honey also appears in a honey-lavender hand scrub at the spa. 1300 Tuyuna Trail, Santa Ana Pueblo. 1-505-867-1234.

Have hives: Sign up for the Certified Beekeepers Apprentice Program's classroom and hands-on lessons offered at Albuquerque's Open Space Visitors Center to learn the essentials of maintaining a backyard hive. A one-year fee is \$250. nmbeekeepers.org.

The buzz: A-Bee Honey in Edgewood bottles its honey according to zip code. Honey from hives placed in yards throughout central New Mexico is collected and packaged by specific locations, making it as local as you can get. 1-505-286-4843.



Tamaya's Honey Vanilla Ice Cream Recipe

Ingredients

- 1 quart heavy cream
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup Tamaya honey (or Moses honey, which is available at Hyatt Regency Tamaya Resort and Spa's Trading Post shop)
- 1/2 cup egg yolks
- 1 vanilla bean, split lengthwise and scraped
- 1 tbsp pure vanilla extract

Heat the cream, sugar, honey, and vanilla bean in a heavy saucepan over medium heat until hot, being careful not to let the mixture boil.

Whisk the egg yolks in a medium heatproof bowl. Slowly ladle 1 cup of the hot cream mixture into the yolks while whisking. Pour the yolk mixture slowly back into the saucepan of cream, whisking constantly, and continuing until the custard thickens slightly and coats the back of a wooden spoon. Be careful not to boil or curdle the mixture.

Remove from heat and pour through a fine-mesh strainer to remove the vanilla bean and any bits of cooked egg yolk. Stir in the vanilla extract. Cover the custard with plastic wrap and refrigerate six hours or overnight.