

# New Jersey's 15 best gelato shops, ranked

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It's hot, it's sticky, it's time for a soothing sweet scoop of gelato.

Gelato — from the Latin word for frozen — is ice cream's creamier, denser, smoother cousin, a longtime staple in Italy and a relatively recent sensation in the U.S.

Like ice cream, gelato is made with milk, cream, and sugar. But most ice cream contains between 15 and 25 percent butterfat, while gelato generally includes between 4 and 9 percent butterfat. It's churned at a much slower rate and stored at slightly higher temperatures than ice cream, accounting for that creamy smoothness.

According to [Italiangelato.info](https://italiangelato.info), there are 100,000-plus gelato shops around the world, with Italy making up 30 percent of the European market. Rome alone has about 1,500 gelato shops. World's largest gelato consuming country? China, [which surpassed the United States in 2016](#).

We at NJ.com have never done a best gelato ranking, so now's a good time, especially during this scorching hot summer. So we, Lauren Musni and Pete Genovese, took one for the team and visited gelato shops around the state to come up with this list of the state's best gelato shops. We tried all kinds of flavors, from peach, mango and Amarena cherry to Turkish coffee, creme brulee and Sicilian ricotta.

Anyway, here are New Jersey's 15 best gelato shops. For more frozen dessert wonderment, check out our list of New Jersey's [65 best ice ream shops, ranked](#).



Pistachio, strawberry, amarena cherry, chocolate Nutella gelato, Mannino's, Hammonton (Peter Genovese | NJ Advance Media for NJ.com)

## 15. Mannino's Cannoli Express, Hammonton

Hammonton is one of the state's most underrated dining destinations, with [Mannino's](#) one of its centerpieces. Gabrielle Mannino Tomasello runs three cannoli carts and the Cannoli Express storefront. Besides cannoli, you can pick up gelato and Italian pastries. I ordered four kinds of gelato at each of my stops. Here I chose pistachio, strawberry, Amarena cherry and chocolate Nutella. The strawberry is nice and fruity, but the Amarena cherry stole the show. (PG)





Sicilian pistachio, coconut, cherries and cream, chocolate gelato, Gelato Dolceria, Collingswood (Peter Genovese I NJ Advance Media for NJ.com)

## 14. Gelato Dolceria, Collingswood/Haddonfield

[Gelato Dolceria](#) probably received the most love during our social media shoutout for nominations. The gelato is from Italy. “Only fresh fruit is used, no flavorings, pastes, bases, syrups or artificial ingredients,” according to a sign on the window. I wish the Sicilian pistachio and cherries and cream were more aggressive in flavor. The chocolate is nice and creamy; my favorite here is the coconut, coconut-y to the max. (PG)

## 13. Gio’s Gelato & Espresso Bar, Franklin Lakes

Raffaele D’Angelo, owner of [Gio’s Gelato & Espresso Bar](#), studied gelato making in Italy and Sicily before opening his shop in 2019. There are 15 flavors of gelato, from



vanilla, cookies and cream and salted caramel to giandula (chocolate hazelnut) and strawberry cheesecake. The chocolate and mint choco gelato are fine and dandy; my two faves here are the forest berries, akin to black raspberry, and the pistachio, bold and assertive. (PG)



Lola's European Cafe, Asbury Park (Lauren Giselle Musni I NJ Advance Media for NJ.com)

## 12. Lola's European Cafe, Asbury Park

[Lola's](#), a cutesy downtown Asbury Park hideaway, offers sandwiches, cheese and salads boards, coffee and of course, a selection of gelato. They make a fresh batch of all their gelato flavors every Monday. Try their lavender flavor with its subtle, yet perfect floral essence mixed with a creamy base. If you love Ferrero Rocher or Baci candy, go for the bacio flavor for a chocolatey, nutty experience thanks to its fudge swirl and hazelnut crumbles. (LM)



## 11. Benvenuti, Montclair

CBD gelato! You can get it at [Benvenuti](#), specifically a CBD salted caramel gelato (and, as fate would have it, Monday is National CBD Day!). The gelato is churned fresh daily right in front of you; I was almost hypnotized by the slow seductive spin of the strawberry gelato. The matcha tea is true to flavor, although the pistachio seemed too mild. My favorite flavor: the espresso stracciatella, crisp and toasty. (PG)



Strawberries and cream, toasted coffee, banana, Madagascar vanilla bean, Reggina Gelato & Espresso Bar, Mullica Hill (Peter Genovese I NJ Advance Media for NJ.com)

## 10. Reggina Gelato & Espresso Bar, Mullica Hill

"It is our hope to bring a taste of our hometown of Reggio Calabria to all who visit," reads a message on [Reggina Gelato's](#) Facebook page. There are about a dozen

flavors, including Italian chocolate chip, lemon cake and Piedmont Italian hazelnut crunch. Proceed directly to the strawberry and cream, smooth and delicious, or the roasted coffee with chocolate chips, with its strong coffee/chocolate overtones. The Madagascar vanilla is the real deal. (PG)

## 9. Il Laboratorio del Gelato, Montclair

[Il Laboratorio del Gelato](#) started in New York City in 2002; today it is NYC's leading wholesaler and retailer for hand-crafted gelato, with a list of 300-plus flavors. The honey lavender and ginger gelato seemed too subtle, but the milk chocolate was one of the better chocolates sampled. My favorite: the Turkish coffee, good and strong, just like the coffee. (PG)



Creme brulee gelato, Del Ponte's Creamery & Cafe, Bradley Beach  
(Lauren Giselle Musni | NJ Advance Media for NJ.com)

## 8. Del Ponte's Creamery & Cafe, Bradley Beach



Right next door to its sister bakery is [Del Ponte's Creamery & Café](#) in the heart of Bradley Beach. This creamery had such a wide selection of gelatos it was difficult to choose, especially with its rotating gelato case. I was stuck between the cannoli and creme brulee. So naturally, I got both. I wish the cannoli had a more distinct ricotta flavor, but I absolutely loved the creme brulee with its bits of bruleed sugar throughout. (LM)



Mango gelato, Gelotti, Paterson (Peter Genovese I NJ Advance Media for NJ.com)

## 7. Gelotti, Paterson

[Gelotti](#) started as Boonstra Dairy; at one time, the dairy leased space in back to a funeral home. Gelato flavors include bacio (Italian hazelnut); amarena (bourbon vanilla flavored with sour cherries), malaga (rum flavored gelato with rum-soaked raisins), lampone (red raspberry), peach, strawberry and coconut. The mango could have been more assertive, and the vaniglia is your basic vanilla, but the pistachio is bold and bracing. My favorite: the bacio, a chocolate hazelnut gelato with almond

and chocolate chips. There are 30-plus kinds of ice cream, too. (PG)



Tangerine, mango gelato, OC Gelato, Ocean City

## 6. OC Gelato, Ocean City

The boardwalk may not seem a logical place to find first-rate gelato, but [OC Gelato](#), squeezed between Candyland and Shelly's by the Sea, makes you wonder why there aren't more boardwalk gelato stands. They offer about 25 flavors, including chocolate, caramel, blueberry, cannoli and coconut. The tangerine gelato, terrifically tangy, bursts with fresh-fruit taste. It's so good it ended up No. 1 on our most recent [best boardwalk food ranking](#). (PG)

## 5. APEM Creamery/Sorbetteria, Bloomfield

Jennifer Ko and Alex Saneski, owners of [APEM Creamery](#), are graduates of the French Culinary Institute; Alex learned how to make gelato at Il Laboratorio del



Gelato in New York City. “I don’t feel like I’m part of the ice cream world and rather I look to those really good single-minded pizza makers or sushi chefs,” he says. He celebrated National New Jersey Day last month with flavors inspired by towns across the state (mango lassi for Edison and its South Asian community; black sesame, a nod to the Korean American population in Fort Lee, etc.) My favorite flavor here: the ascot macchiato, a double espresso-like blast of gelato goodness. (PG)



Space cake gelato, Chocolate Bar, Little Silver (Lauren Giselle Musni I NJ Advance Media for NJ.com)

#### **4. The Chocolate Bar, Little Silver and Westfield**

Its sweets galore at [The Chocolate Bar](#). Aside from their mouthwatering display of homemade chocolates, they offer their homemade gelato at both the Little Silver and Westfield locations. If you’re stuck between flavors, go for the space cake — a cake batter base mixed with pieces of red velvet cake; it was truly out of this world. (LM)



Blueberry basil gelato, Guerriero Gelato & Cakes, Caldwell

### 3. Guerriero Gelato & Cakes, Caldwell

I have died and gone to gelato heaven. The blueberry basil at [Guerriero](#) is berry berry (sorry) good. Make that great. And no, I'm not saying that because the ingredients include Genovese basil, along with Jersey blueberries and fresh squeezed lemon juice. It's Guerriero's signature flavor, and no wonder. The pistachio could have been stronger in flavor, but I loved the espresso chip, studded with seriously big chips. They also offer about 30 flavors of hard ice cream. There are other locations in Montclair and Pine Brook. Mark and Julie's Ice Cream in West Orange is part of the Guerriero family. (PG)





Amici Caffè, Asbury Park (Lauren Giselle Musni | NJ Advance Media for NJ.com)

## 2. Amici Gelato & Caffè, Asbury Park

[Amici](#) is a one-stop café for coffee, gelato, cannolis with its own cannoli bar, and other Italian treats. Their creamy gelato delivers spectacular flavor in its mascarpone and nutella, as well as vegan options such as the vegan peanut butter and jelly. My personal favorite was the raspberry, pistachio and ricotta gelato. They rotate the flavors daily — I guess I have to visit every day! (LM)



Gelato, L'Arte della Pasticceria, Ramsey (Peter Genovese I NJ Advance Media for NJ.com)

## 1. L'Arte della Pasticceria, Ramsey

Sicilian ricotta gelato at [L'Arte della Pasticceria](#). That is all.

Oh, you want me to say more? All four flavors sampled here were terrific; the Sicilian ricotta stood out for its light, luscious and lovely flavor. The dark chocolate is rich and sensuous, the peach fruity and fine, and the Neapolitan espresso more than lived up to its name. They also offer granita, the semi-frozen Sicilian dessert made with fresh fruit and water. L'Arte della Pasticceria has drawn raves for its overall product since opening in 2013. I can't speak for the pastries, but this is where you'll find New Jersey's best gelato. (PG)

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*Peter Genovese may be reached at [pgenovese@njadvancemedia.com](mailto:pgenovese@njadvancemedia.com).*



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