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## A winner for GeLALAlato LAND



*Freezer freezer on my fridge. Which is the best gelato west of Brooklyn Bridge?*

This question is likely to crop up more and more as summer inches closer and temperatures rise. The Italian-originated Gelato World Tour has been designed to answer it.

The Gelato World Tour is only two years old, but it has already involved 1,500 competitors from five continents and describes itself as “the most comprehensive gelato competition in the world.” Its purpose is to identify the best gelato flavors in the world through competitions in a number of “gelato capitals”.

(A side benefit of the contest is to promote the events’ two organizers: Carpigiani Gelato University {Carpigiani is the world’s leader in equipment for fresh ice cream/gelato}, and Sigep—Rimini Fiera, the world’s major trade show for traditional gelato and pastry.)

New York was the site of the first US competition this year, followed by the LA Challenge on May 2. Winners move on to the Grand Finale in

Italy to compete against the top gelato flavors from around the world. The first Italian competition was held in Rome on April 19, and will include Milan, Turin, and Florence before the finals, which will be held in Rimini, Italy, from September 8–10, 2017.

You are unlikely to find at your neighborhood scoop shop some of the elite and exclusive gelato flavors that competed in New York and Los Angeles. They included Malted Milk with Maple Almond Brittle, Goat Cheese with Fig Balsamic, Three Cheese and Mora, Sheep Ricotta, Marmellata di Cipolle, Oak with Maple Glazed Walnuts, Golden Mylk & Orange Saffron Caramel, Mediterranean Dream, and Bee's Knees.

Salivating at this point, you may be wondering what the difference IS between gelato and ice cream. Or maybe you don't care. They are both good on a hot day, but there is a discernable difference between them, regardless of whether you opt for an industrial product or spend more for the artisanal variety. What distinguishes the two is air, not the *hot air* of competing claims of goodness but the cold air beaten into a frozen mixture that becomes one or the other.

Ice cream is a combination of milk, cream, sugar, and flavorings, beaten briskly to incorporate a significant amount of air into the mix. Gelato may start out similarly, with milk or cream, juices or fruits, sugar and flavorings, but it is beaten slowly so that very little air finds its way into the final product.

The consistency is different and so is the taste, because Italian gelato is typically served at 7 to 12 degrees Fahrenheit. This is about 10 to 15 degrees warmer than ice cream and means your tongue perceives more flavor than it would with an icier product. It FEELS richer and sweeter even if the sugar count is exactly the same (which it often isn't, since Italians are less driven by sweet desserts than Americans).

The calorie count is also different: gelato in general has 30% less fat than traditional ice cream. Italians have always loved it this way and the rest of the world followed suit when gelato began to be exported abroad in the 1990s.

Within the next five years, the global ice cream market is expected to be worth \$89 billion, a growing percentage of which is Italian-style gelato. Buonissimo!