

An ice cream shop called Coromoto has 860 flavours from delights to bizarre!



Where would you expect to find the ice cream parlour with the most flavours of ice cream, as certified by the Guinness Book of World Records? New York? Paris? Rome? Let me tell you, the ice cream serving the most number of flavours is in Mérida, Venezuela.

After looking in the windows of a couple of ice-cream parlours but finding nothing more exciting inside than strawberry and vanilla, we eventually find Heladería Coromoto, opposite a church nestled in the Andean hills at the base of the 16,000-foot-high Pico Bolívar. The neon signs outside, with the words "Guinness Book of Records" written in pink, is an instant give-away but, once through the doors, it becomes even clearer that this is the place.

At first glance from far away, the counters displaying a wide number of brightly coloured ice creams look perfectly ordinary but then you get closer and read the names, sorpresa! From exotic delights like guava, papaya, mango and passion fruit to bizarre flavours like chilli, tomato, gherkin, onion, mushrooms in wine, garlic, trout, hot dog and cream of crab! They have a total of 860 flavours!

Set up by a Portuguese immigrant, Manuel da Silva Oliveira in 1980 and realized that he could expand the horizons of ice cream, infusing it with all kinds of eclectic and exotic flavours. His first attempt was avocado, and he wasted over 50kg of ice cream trying to perfect it. Now, it's a local favourite, and can be paired with a number of flavours such as sweetcorn or black bean, as well as mango or coconut to bring out its sweetness.

Coromoto typically offers about 60 flavours a day and a revolving menu of 860 total choices. Remember that U.S. ice cream chain that used to tout its '31 Flavours'? That was then, Coromoto is now! There are even ice creams which contain real cheese and spaghetti and there are the boozy ice creams like Cointreau, cognac, and vodka-and-pineapple.

There are a lot of oddly named ones like British Airways, Andean Kisses and I'm Sorry, Darling. One of them, Viagra Hope, is bright blue like the pills which is actually flavoured with honey and pollen. But don't worry if you are not a darer because they have the more standard yet yummy ones like chocolate and rum-and-raisin. So are you a darer or believe in classics? Will you choose from the delights or the bizarre rarities?