

I scream, you scream, we all scream for napkins!

You might be able to go to the beach, not eat ice cream on the boardwalk, and still call it a successful trip. Maybe. But who wants to take the chance?



Besides, the ice cream stands are about 15 feet apart and they're full of smiling teenagers who are ready to place a cone full of cold, sweet ice cream in your hands. There are even chocolate and rainbow-colored sprinkles on the counter, just waiting for you. Who can resist?

Our boys are not huge fans of dessert, but they do like their ice cream. And we were at the beach for one of the hottest weeks of the summer. The Kohr Brothers stand was screaming our name.

So we stepped up the counter and ordered a cone for Leo and a cup for his younger brother, Daniel. And John and I each got the smallest ice cream cone we could order—which was still quite large.



I'm either overly optimistic or I have a poor memory because I am never fully prepared for the eating-ice-cream-on-the-boardwalk experience.

Here is what I learned—and will most likely forget again next time:

1. Don't order ice cream for yourself. Unless your children are older than ours, eat faster, or are just really great ice cream eaters, you are going to be called into action licking off their cones—or eating the whole thing when the child realizes he doesn't like that kind.



2. No matter what flavor your children request, if they are under the age of reason (6? 7?), order a flavor you like. Daniel kept asking me for help with his orange sherbet, which was spilling over the edge of the cup. I can eat almost anything, but I can go another few decades without eating orange sherbet again.

3. It's OK to order a cup instead of a cone. Even though Daniel would have preferred a cone, we didn't give him the option. The cup did keep the ice cream more contained, and he was perfectly content once he saw how much ice cream was in the cup.



4. It's just going to be messy. Is there a Chocolate Ice Cream Warrior Dash? That's what Leo's hand and arm looked like by the time he was finished eating, which, of course, was not when the ice cream cone was done.

5. Always carry a six-pack of paper towels in your purse. If you're like me, however, and you are never prepared, grab lots of napkins from the ice cream stand. Take what you think you'll need. Then take more. And pray that you still have a few wipes left in your purse since going to a restroom on the boardwalk will get you dirtier than any ice cream cone.



6. Relax and watch the mess unfold. The boys were so cute eating as fast as they could with the ice cream running down their fingers and arms and onto the boardwalk. And there had to be some calcium in that ice cream they ate—or at least more than there was in the huge glob of pink cotton candy Daniel carried home so proudly one evening, and then barely touched.



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