



AS IT IS

## Doggie Desserts: Ben & Jerry's Enters the Pet Food Business

January 18, 2021

The ice cream company Ben & Jerry's is entering the pet food business for the first time with frozen treats for dogs. The treats, called Doggie Desserts, will be available for sale at U.S. food and pet stores later this month.

The treats will be sold in small containers and come in two tastes, or **flavors**: pumpkin with cookies and peanut butter with pretzels. The treats are made from the same products Ben & Jerry's uses in milk-free desserts.

Ben & Jerry's is the latest food company to start making products for **pets**. The number of American **households** with pets rose 6.5 percent between 2015 and 2020. That information comes from the trade group American Pet Products Association.

General Mills, maker of Cheerios and Haagen-Dazs ice cream, bought the Blue Buffalo pet food company in 2018. In 2015, Jelly maker J.M. Smucker Co. bought Big Heart Pet Brands, which makes Meow Mix cat food and Milk Bone dog products. Smucker later bought Ainsworth Pet Nutrition, which makes Nutrish brand pet food. And in 2020, Nestle bought British natural pet food brand Lily's Kitchen. Nestle has owned the Purina pet brand since 2001.

Spending on dog treats has increased 44 percent to \$5.5 billion between 2015 and 2020, the data company Euromonitor reports.

Ben & Jerry's says people 40 years of age and younger spend more money on their pets and look for pet products made with materials that even humans can eat.

Lindsay Bumps is a marketing specialist with Ben & Jerry's. She said the company had seen the growth in pet spending and started developing its dog treats early last year. Bumps added that the company checked with experts in animal nutrition and other advisors to make sure the treats are safe and easy to eat.

Bumps noted that as with any treat, owners should introduce the treats to their dogs in small amounts.

The move to pet products does not mean Ben & Jerry's is seeing any sales decrease on the human side. Unilever, which owns Ben & Jerry's, said in October that its ice cream sales for home use grew more than 10 percent in the most recent quarter. Bumps noted that buyers wanted tasty treats during the pandemic and bought several containers at a time so they could make fewer food store trips.

She said, "This is an **opportunity** for people to treat their dogs as they're treating themselves when they grab a **pint** off the **shelf**."

I'm Jonathan Evans.

*Dee-Ann Durbin wrote this story for the Associated Press. Jonathan Evans adapted this story for Learning English. Ashley Thompson was the editor.*

---

## Words in This Story

**flavors** - *n.* particular types of taste

**household** - *n.* the people in a family or other group that are living together in one house

**opportunity** - *n.* an amount of time or a situation in which something can be done

**pets** - *n.* tame animals kept as companions rather than for work

**pint** - *n.* a unit for measuring liquids that is equal to 0.473 liters

**shelf** – *n.* a flat board which is attached to a wall, frame, etc., and on which objects can be placed

---