



The day before the European Day of the artisanal ice cream, pilgrims and tourists are offered free jubilee-inspired Hallelujah ice cream as they arrive at the Vatican, Sunday, March 23, 2025. (AP/Gregorio Borgia)

Giada Zampano

[View Author Profile](#)

Associated Press

[View Author Profile](#)

[Join the Conversation](#)

Rome — March 24, 2025

[Share on Bluesky](#)[Share on Facebook](#)[Share on Twitter](#)[Email to a friend](#)[Print](#)

"Hallelujah!" That's what countless Catholics exclaimed as [Pope Francis](#) left the hospital Sunday after more than a month fighting pneumonia. It's also the name of a new gelato flavor.

Hallelujah gelato made its debut in Rome in open-air kiosks in Piazza Risorgimento Sunday just a 5-minute walk from the Vatican, marking a preview of International Handmade Gelato Day.

The tasting attracted hundreds of pilgrims, tourists and gelato lovers eager to sample the divine new flavor that includes gianduia, an Italian combination of roasted hazelnuts and pure chocolate. It will be available in gelato parlors across Europe starting Monday.

Hallelujah quickly became a way to commemorate [Francis' discharge from Rome's Gemelli hospital](#), a much-anticipated moment of relief for millions of Catholics in Rome and around the world.

Francis has long been a fan of gelato.

"It's such a beautiful coincidence that Pope Francis went back home today," said Ludovico Santasilia, one of the initiative's organizers.

Advertisement

"Francis has been following this project and I'm sure he would love the new flavor, as we know he's a big gelato fan."

The flavor was master gelato maker Vincenzo Squatrito's winning entry in a European gelato contest, and its name was conceived to celebrate the Catholic Church's Holy Jubilee Year.

[Pope Francis kicked off the Jubilee in December](#), and it is expected to draw some 32 million pilgrims to Rome.

The 88-year-old Argentine has never made a secret of his passion for gelato. A few years ago, his favorite gelato maker from his native Buenos Aires revealed that Francis' favorite flavor was dulce de leche, a local caramel dessert.

Over the years, the pontiff has also built a friendship with [Sebastian Padrón, an Argentine who runs an artisanal parlor just around the corner from the papal apartments](#) in Casa Santa Marta, where he delivers regular orders of the pope's favorite gelato.

"I'm sure the Pope also loves the idea that donations raised with this tasting will fund a project for homeless people around the world," Santasilvia said.