

How are gobstoppers made?

From the sweeties.net wiki

Most boiled sweets are made quickly. Sugar syrup is cooked until it is very hot, flavoured, then poured, rolled or moulded and left to set hard. A gobstopper is different. It is grown.

Step 1: start with a tiny core

Every gobstopper begins as something small: a pressed ball of sugar, a single anise seed, or a small gumball. Aniseed balls, the gobstopper's smaller cousin, traditionally have a single whole rapeseed at the centre, which the sugar layers build up around.

Step 2: into the pan

The cores go into large, rotating, heated pans. As the pan turns, the cores tumble over one another and liquid sugar is added. The sugar coats every core in a thin layer, and then the next coat goes on. This is called hot panning. The same idea, giving a centre a hard sugar shell in a turning pan, is behind sugared almonds and other dragées.

Step 3: repeat, for weeks

One coat adds very little, so the process is repeated many times over. That is why gobstoppers take several weeks to make. Natural and artificial colours and flavours go in during panning, which is how you end up with a sweet that changes colour as you work through it.

Why the layers matter

A moulded boiled sweet is one solid piece. A gobstopper is built from many layers of almost pure sugar, and it dissolves very slowly in the mouth. That slow melt is what gobstopper fans are paying for: a sweet that lasts and lasts.

The extreme version

Scale the method up and you get the record breaker: a 12.6 kg jawbreaker made in Ontario, Canada, which took 476 hours of work between January and May 2003. Read the full story in [the biggest gobstopper ever made](#).

Panning beyond gobstoppers

Panning is one of the oldest ways of making sweets, and it is still used for all sorts of coated sweets today. You can read how it works in general in [what sugar panning is](#), and meet the finished article in [our guide to gobstoppers](#) and [aniseed balls](#).

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