

Humbugs

From the sweeties.net wiki

Humbugs are traditional striped boiled sweets, usually flavoured with peppermint. They are sold in the UK, Ireland, South Africa, Canada, Australia, Zimbabwe and New Zealand, and they have been made in Britain since at least the 1820s.

What is a humbug?

A humbug is a hard boiled sweet striped in two colours, often black and white. Traditionally they are small tetrahedrons, the four sided pyramid shape, sold loose in a bag. You also find them as cylinders with rounded ends, each wrapped in a twist of cellophane. In Australia, black and white humbugs may be aniseed instead of mint.

How old are humbugs?

There are records of humbugs from as early as the 1820s. The 1863 novel *Sylvia's Lovers* mentions them as a food from Northern England. The name also turns up in a darker Victorian story. In Bradford in 1858, a stallholder known as Humbug Billy sold peppermint lozenges made with arsenic by mistake, and around 20 people died. The sweets were lozenges, not humbugs: see [the Bradford sweets poisoning of 1858](#).

Where does the name come from?

Nobody knows. The origin of the word humbug, for the sweet, is unknown. It is one of those names that has simply always been there.

How are humbugs made?

A mixture of sugar, glycerine, colour and flavouring is heated to about 145 °C and poured out. It is then stretched and folded many times over. The stripes come from a smaller piece of coloured mixture, which is folded into the main batch. Finally the mixture is rolled into a long, thin rope and cut into pieces. You can follow the method in [how humbugs are made](#).

A hard mint

Humbugs belong to the family of hard mints, along with bullseyes and candy canes. The round, target striped version is known as a [bullseye](#), and in the UK the black and white ones are also called Black Bullets.

Where to find them

Humbugs are still sold loose in traditional sweet shops, including [the oldest sweet shop in England](#) in Pateley Bridge. In our own pick and mix, the closest mint is [SW040](#), with the full ingredients and allergen panel on the card.

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