

Kendal mint cake

From the sweeties.net wiki

Kendal Mint Cake is a peppermint flavoured sugar bar from Kendal, in Cumbria, on the edge of the Lake District. It is loved by climbers, walkers and anyone who needs a quick hit of energy on a cold hillside.

A happy accident

The story goes that Kendal Mint Cake was invented by mistake. In 1869, Joseph Wiper, who had married into the Thompson family of confectioners in Kendal, was making glacier mints, the clear boiled kind. He supposedly left the boiled mixture overnight, and in the morning found it had turned cloudy and set solid. Instead of throwing it away, he started selling it. Other Kendal confectioners soon followed.

Mint cake itself was not brand new: it is based on an older traditional sweet known as mint cake or peppermint tablet. But the Kendal version made the town's name.

How it is made

Kendal Mint Cake is made from just four ingredients: sugar, glucose, water and peppermint oil. The exact recipes are secret, but the method is known. The ingredients are boiled together in a copper pan and stirred continuously. The stirring is the key step: without it, the mixture would set clear, like a glacier mint. With it, tiny sugar crystals form and the cake sets white and opaque. It is then poured into moulds, left to set and broken into bars.

Today you can buy white mint cake, brown mint cake made with brown sugar, and mint cake coated in chocolate.

The makers

Three companies still make Kendal Mint Cake:

- **Quiggin's**, the oldest surviving mint cake maker. The Quiggin family made sweets on the Isle of Man from 1840, and Daniel Quiggin moved to Kendal in 1880.
- **Romney's**, founded in 1918, which bought Wiper's in 1987.
- **Wilson's**, founded in 1913 by James Wilson, now run by W. McClure Ltd of Windermere.

Polar and mountain fuel

Robert Wiper, Joseph's great nephew, marketed mint cake as an energy food for expeditions. Wiper's Kendal Mint Cake went with Sir Ernest Shackleton's Imperial Trans Antarctic Expedition of 1914 to 1917. In 1953 Edmund Hillary and his team carried Romney's Kendal Mint Cake on the first successful ascent of

Everest, and one expedition member said their only complaint was that they did not have enough of it. Chris Bonington took Quiggin's on his 1975 Everest expedition. The full story is in [the sweet that went up Everest](#).

Why it works

Mint cake is almost pure sugar, so it gives fast energy, it does not melt or go off easily, and a bar slips into any pocket. The peppermint makes it feel refreshing even in the cold. If you like strong mints, try our [SW040](#), and read about another northern mint in [Uncle Joe's Mint Balls](#).

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