

Edinburgh rock

From the sweeties.net wiki

Edinburgh rock, sometimes called Edinburgh Castle rock, is a traditional Scottish sweet sold in short, coloured sticks. Despite the name, it is quite different from the hard seaside rock sold at English resorts.

What is Edinburgh rock?

Edinburgh rock is made from sugar, water, cream of tartar, colourings and flavourings. It is formed into sticks, and it has a soft, crumbly texture that breaks down easily in the mouth. Flavours such as ginger and lemon are traditional.

Compare that with seaside rock, which is boiled to the hard crack stage and pulled, and sets hard and glassy. Bite a stick of seaside rock and it snaps; bite Edinburgh rock and it crumbles. The reason lies in how the sugar sets: see [why Edinburgh rock crumbles](#).

Sweetie Sandy

Edinburgh rock was first made in the 19th century by Alexander Ferguson, who became known as Sweetie Sandy. He was born in Doune, Perthshire, in 1798, learned the confectionery trade in Glasgow, and then moved to Edinburgh to start his own business. His rock was such a success that he was able to retire to Doune a very rich man.

In the early 20th century the rock was made and sold at 1 Melbourne Place, on the corner of George IV Bridge and the Lawnmarket, a building that has since been demolished.

The forgotten tray

There is a story, almost certainly too good to be true, that Ferguson discovered Edinburgh rock by accident. One day, the tale goes, he found a tray of sweets that had been forgotten for months. He tried a piece of the dried out result, found it delicious, and Edinburgh rock was born. Other British sweets have origin stories like this one, including [Kendal Mint Cake](#).

Cream of tartar

The ingredient that sets Edinburgh rock's recipe apart from seaside rock is cream of tartar, a by product of wine making. It is acidic, and sweet makers use it because of the way it affects how sugar crystallises.

Other Scottish rocks

Scotland has another traditional rock too: star rock, or starrie, made in Kirriemuir in small bundles of pencil thin sticks, and less brittle than seaside rock. See [starrie rock](#), and for Scotland's other great sugar sweet, [Scottish tablet](#).

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