

Pear drops

From the sweeties.net wiki

Pear drops are British boiled sweets with a sharp, sweet, unmistakably fruity taste. Traditional pear drops are shaped like a small pear, about the size of a thumbnail, and are half pink and half yellow. More often today you find them sold as separate pink drops and yellow drops, mixed in roughly equal numbers.

Where the flavour comes from

The pear drop flavour is a triumph of chemistry. It usually comes from two artificial flavourings, both esters:

- **Ethyl acetate**, which gives the pear flavour.
- **Isoamyl acetate**, which gives a banana flavour.

Together they make the bright, slightly boozy fruit taste that people recognise instantly. Both esters are used in many pear and banana flavoured sweets. Isoamyl acetate is sometimes called banana oil or pear oil, and it occurs naturally in many fruits, including apples, bananas, grapes and peaches. Some makers use a natural pear juice concentrate instead.

That nail varnish smell

Plenty of people say pear drops smell like nail varnish, and they are right to notice. Ethyl acetate, one of the pear drop flavourings, is also used as a solvent in glues and nail varnish removers, so the two share the same sweet, sharp smell. The full explanation is in [why pear drops smell like nail varnish](#).

A favourite that has lasted

Pear drops have been a sweet shop staple for generations, sold loose from the jar and weighed out by the quarter. They are still sold loose at [the oldest sweet shop in England](#) in Pateley Bridge. In 2009, a survey of 4,000 adults ranked pear drops the fourteenth most popular sweet in the UK.

The biggest pear drop

The largest pear drop in the world is kept at Stockley's Sweets, in Oswaldtwistle Mills, Lancashire.

Like all boiled sweets

Pear drops are made the way most boiled sweets are: sugar and glucose syrup are cooked until very hot, flavoured and coloured, then shaped and left to set hard. See [how pear drops are made](#). Because they are almost pure sugar, they can go sticky in damp weather: see [how long do sweets last?](#)

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