

Midget gems

From the sweeties.net wiki

Midget Gems are small, firm, chewy sweets, similar to wine gums but much harder. They come in a mix of colours and fruit flavours, and for decades they were one of the most popular sweets in the north of England.

What are they made of?

Midget Gems are made from sugar, glucose syrup, corn starch and other starches, animal gelatine, and a range of colours and flavourings. The gelatine gives them their firm bite, but it also means traditional Midget Gems are not suitable for vegetarians. See [which sweets have pork gelatine](#).

A northern favourite

Midget Gems were one of the best selling brands of the Lion Confectionery Company, and a big part of their appeal was that they were sold loose from a jar or barrel, which kept them cheap. In 1995 Lion joined forces with Maynard's, then part of Cadbury Trebor Bassett, to sell them across the country. They were so popular that Liverpool Football Club once sold its own branded tubs.

The liquorice question

When the sweets were rebranded under the Maynard's name, the black Midget Gems in bags were changed from liquorice to blackcurrant, though the loose ones sold from jars stayed liquorice. Some newer bags have since brought the liquorice back.

The name change

In January 2022, Marks and Spencer announced that it would change the name of its sweets to Mini Gems. The move followed a campaign by Dr Erin Pritchard, an academic at Liverpool Hope University who has dwarfism and regards the word midget as offensive to people with her condition. Reaction on social media was mixed: some welcomed the change, others saw it as unnecessary. Tesco and Maynards Bassetts followed later that year.

It was not the first time a sweet's name was changed because of changing attitudes, and it will not be the last. See [sweets that changed their names](#).

Many makers

Midget Gems, or Mini Gems, are made by many companies and supermarkets. In 2007 one maker, Glisten Confectionery, announced it was removing all artificial colours and flavourings from its version. If you like a firm fruity gum, try our [SW004](#), and read about the wider family in [wine gums](#).

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