

Fudge

From the sweeties.net wiki

Fudge is the sweet of the seaside gift shop, cut into slabs and sold by the box. It is made from sugar, butter and milk, and its history runs from American colleges to Cornish dairies.

An American craze

Modern fudge began in the United States in the 19th century. Its creation is usually described as an accident, a cook trying to make something else. One food writer described it as most likely the result of taking the ingredients for caramel and handling them as if making fondant. In the 1860s and 1870s Americans were making chocolate caramels from milk, brown sugar, chocolate and butter, which were close to modern fudge, though stirred constantly so they came out crumbly.

By the 1880s and 1890s, fudge recipes were appearing widely in American magazines, as sugar and chocolate became cheaper. It was sold as a wholesome treat, cut into squares and diamonds, flavoured with chocolate, butterscotch, coconut, maple or vanilla.

Fudge at college

Fudge became a craze at American women's colleges, especially Vassar in New York State. One student, Emelyn Battersby Hartridge, bought a box of fudge in Baltimore in 1886 at 40 cents a pound, and claimed to have given fudge its real introduction to Vassar in 1888 by selling a batch of 30 pounds she had made herself. The fudge pan became part of college life, and in 1895 Vassar students even wrote a song about it.

Britain's older tradition

Britain had something like fudge long before. Communities in the Midlands and in Cornwall had been making their own versions of Scottish tablet for centuries, sweets which came to be called fudge. Cornish fudge traces its roots to the 18th century, when Cornish confectioners began using clotted cream instead of milk in their tablet. By the 1920s fudge was being eaten across the UK, under its American name and as tablet. See [Devon fudge](#) and [Scottish tablet](#).

How it is made

In the classic method, milk and sugar are heated together to the soft ball stage, somewhere between about 112 and 118°C, butter is added, and the mixture is cooled to about 48°C before being beaten until it is thick, creamy and less glossy. Temperature matters: too hot and the fudge is dry, too cool and it will not set. As it cools, the sugar begins to crystallise, which gives fudge its smooth consistency. Some makers add marshmallow, fondant or syrups to help. See [how is fudge made?](#)

Fudge and its relations

Fudge is softer than caramel and firmer than fondant. Made with brown sugar, it becomes what Americans call penuche. Tablet uses similar ingredients but sets into a harder, grainier bar. In the UK, popular fudge flavours include rum and raisin, clotted cream and salted caramel, while in the United States chocolate is the default. Across the Atlantic, hot fudge means something else again: a thick chocolate sauce poured over ice cream.

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