

Lemon drops

From the sweeties.net wiki

The lemon drop is one of the simplest boiled sweets there is: a little yellow sweet, dusted with sugar, that tastes of lemon.

What a lemon drop is

A lemon drop is a sugar coated, lemon flavoured sweet, usually coloured yellow and often shaped like a tiny lemon. Some are sweet and gentle, others sharp and sour. The name is sometimes also used for lemon flavoured throat sweets, and it has been borrowed by a vodka cocktail made with lemon juice and sugar.

How lemon drops are made

Lemon drops are made by boiling sugar, water and cream of tartar until the mixture reaches the hard crack stage, when it will set hard and glassy. As it cools, the lemon flavouring is added. The sweet mixture is then rolled into long ropes, cut into small pieces and rolled in sugar, which gives them their sugary coat.

An English idea

Lemon drops began in England. Confectioners there learned that adding an acid, such as lemon juice, to boiling sugar stopped the sugar from crystallising, so the sweets stayed clear and hard instead of turning grainy. Cream of tartar, potassium bitartrate, works in a similar way: its acidic properties stop sugar syrups from crystallising, which is why it is used in smooth sweets.

Sour lemon drops

For the sharpest lemon drops, the sweets are rolled not in plain sugar but in sour sanding, sometimes called sour sugar. This is sugar mixed with food acids such as citric acid, tartaric acid and malic acid. It is the same coating used on many sour sweets. For a similar old fashioned sweet, see [acid drops](#).

Lemon drop or sherbet lemon?

A lemon drop is solid all the way through. Its cousin, the sherbet lemon, has a surprise inside: a crisp lemon boiled sweet with a fizzy sherbet centre. We sell sherbet lemons in our pick and mix, and there is more about them in [sherbet lemons](#).

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