

Mint imperials

From the sweeties.net wiki

The mint imperial is a plain, simple sweet: a white, round mint, with a hard shell that gives way to a softer middle.

What a mint imperial is

A mint imperial is a white, round sweet with a hard shell but a fairly soft middle. It is popular in Great Britain, in other Commonwealth countries and in Europe. Mint imperials were traditionally round balls, though more recently many have become larger, flatter discs.

So many names

The same sweet goes by several names:

- mint imperial
- scotch mint
- pan drop, a name used across Scotland
- granny sooker, or grannie's sooker, a Scots name recorded from Glasgow to Fife and Dumfries

Mints properly called scotch mints are named after a particular mint plant, *Mentha gracilis*.

A coated sweet

The Scottish National Dictionary describes a pan drop as a round, slightly flattened sweet with a hard, white, peppermint flavoured sugar coating. Its earliest quotation, from the Encyclopaedia Britannica of 1877, explains that coated sweets need a centre of some kind, a seed, an almond or a small lozenge, as in the case of pan drops. Coated sweets like these are built up layer by layer, the method known as panning. See [what is sugar panning?](#)

Imperials today

Mint imperials are made by many sweet makers. Bassett's still sells Imperials and Imperials Spearmint under its name. For those who like their mints much stronger, Trebor's Extra Strong Mints date back to the 1930s, and adverts from the early 1960s claimed Trebor mints were a minty bit stronger.

After dinner

Mints of all kinds are eaten after a meal, to freshen the breath. Mints that contain real peppermint oil have also been popular for helping digestion, as peppermint can relax the muscles of the gut, though for the same reason it may make heartburn worse for some people.

For a ring shaped mint, see [Polo mints](#), and for striped mint boiled sweets, see [humbugs](#).

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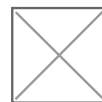
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