

Thorntons Special Toffee

From the sweeties.net wiki

Thorntons sells boxes of chocolates today, but the firm started out as a toffee and fudge maker, and its Special Toffee has barely changed in a century.

A Sheffield sweet shop

Thorntons began in Sheffield in 1911, when Joseph Thornton, a travelling confectioner, opened a sweet shop in the city. His sons Norman and Stanley joined the business. Joseph died in 1919, and the brothers carried it on.

Fifty attempts

Thorntons Special Toffee first appeared in 1925. According to the company, the recipe was created by Stanley Thornton, and it took him 50 attempts to get the taste and texture right. Thorntons says the same recipe is still used today.

The toffee is made in batches, using traditional methods, and each batch is left to cool for 24 hours. According to Thorntons, that is when the flavour intensifies to give the toffee its distinctive buttery taste and chewy texture.

From toffee to chocolate

Until and during the Second World War, Thorntons was an established toffee and fudge maker. As post war rationing came to an end, the business turned its main attention to chocolates in the Belgian and Swiss style. In 1983 work started on a new factory, Thornton Park, at Alfreton in Derbyshire, which was opened by the Queen in 1985.

Shops, and then no shops

Thorntons became a familiar sight on British high streets, but its sales were always very seasonal: in 2009, 35 per cent of its sales came in the seven weeks before Christmas, and 10 per cent just before Easter. In 2011 it announced it would close between 120 and 180 of its shops. In June 2015 the Italian company Ferrero bought Thorntons for £112 million: see [Michele Ferrero, Nutella and Ferrero Rocher](#).

After the Covid lockdowns of 2020 kept its shops closed for much of the year, Thorntons announced in March 2021 that all 61 remaining stores would close, and that it would sell online and through supermarkets instead. Special Toffee, the recipe from 1925, is still on sale.

Toffee's family

Thorntons Special Toffee is one of a long line of British toffees, from Everton toffee to Mackintosh's of Halifax. See [old fashioned toffee](#) and [toffee](#).

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