

Why is rock called rock?

From the sweeties.net wiki

Rock is a British seaside sweet, and a very hard one. It seems obvious that it is named after stone, and that may well be how it started. But no dictionary or history records exactly who first called it rock, or when, so it is worth separating what is known from what is guessed.

What rock is

In Britain, rock means a hard, stick shaped sweet made of boiled sugar, usually flavoured with peppermint or spearmint and often with words running all the way through it. Wiktionary defines it as a type of confectionery made from sugar in the shape of a stick, traditionally with some text running through its length. It is sold mainly at seaside resorts, and it is often named after the place it comes from, as in Blackpool rock or Brighton rock: see [seaside rock](#)

What the records show

The word rock was used for a hard sugar sweet long before the seaside stick. Rock candy, a hard sweet made of pure sugar in large crystals, is first recorded in 1723. The name is simply rock and candy put together.

Seaside rock itself is believed to have started at fairgrounds. According to Candy UK, a rock maker, rock was first sold at fairgrounds in the 19th century, which is why it was originally known as fair rock. Lettered rock came later, and is usually credited to Ben Bullock, a former miner from Burnley, who in 1887 made the first batch of Blackpool rock to send to the resort: see [where does seaside rock come from?](#)

What is only a guess

What nobody wrote down is why the name was chosen. The natural guess is its hardness. Seaside rock is boiled to about 147 degrees Celsius, the hard crack stage, and sets into a hard, glassy stick: see [why is seaside rock so hard?](#) But that is an explanation that fits, not a recorded fact.

Rock and rock candy are different

Despite the shared name, seaside rock is a different sweet from rock candy. Rock candy is made of large crystals of sugar. Seaside rock is boiled sugar, pulled and rolled, and it more closely resembles a harder candy cane: see [what is rock made of?](#)

A name that stuck

Whatever its origin, the name has become part of British culture. George Formby recorded With My Little Stick of Blackpool Rock in 1937, and Graham Greene called his 1938 novel Brighton Rock, using the way

the town's name runs right through the stick as an image for a character who cannot change: see [Brighton rock](#) and [Blackpool rock](#)

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