

What is sherbet made of?

From the sweeties.net wiki

Sherbet is a fizzy, sweet powder, eaten by dipping a lolly or a liquorice stick into it, with a small spoon, or straight off a licked finger. For something that fizzes so dramatically, it has a very short list of ingredients.

The ingredients

In Britain and other Commonwealth countries, sherbet is a powder made of:

- **Sugar**, for sweetness, in an amount that depends on how sour the sherbet is meant to be
- **Flavouring**, usually fruit, often lemon or another citrus fruit, or cream soda
- **An edible acid**, which may be tartaric acid, citric acid or malic acid
- **A base**, which may be sodium bicarbonate, better known as bicarbonate of soda, sodium carbonate, magnesium carbonate, or a mix of these

The acid gives sherbet its sharp zing, and together the acid and the base give it its fizz.

Why it fizzes

In the packet, the powders are dry and nothing happens. As soon as they meet moisture, such as fruit juice or saliva, the acid and the base react and give off carbon dioxide gas. It is the same reaction that makes a cake rise when bicarbonate of soda meets an acid. On your tongue, it is felt as fizz: see [why do fizzy sweets fizz on your tongue?](#)

From drink to sweet

Sherbet started life as a drink. The word comes from the Turkish *şerbet*, from a Persian word and ultimately the Arabic *sharbah*, a drink, and it is related to the English words syrup and shrub. In the 19th century, sherbet powder was sold to be stirred into water to make a fizzy drink, much like lemonade powder, before canned fizzy drinks became common.

In 1816 John Richards, of the Strand in London, claimed to be the inventor of his Portable Sherbet Powder, a refreshing drink that needed only water. His instructions were to drink it quickly while it was still sparkling, or to put the powder in your mouth and wash it down with water. The two active ingredients, 2 g of bicarbonate of soda and 1.5 g of tartaric acid, were packed separately in little coloured paper bags so they could not react too soon.

Today, sherbet means the powder sold as a sweet. In parts of northern England it is called *kali*: see [why is sherbet called kali?](#)

Sherbet sweets

Sherbet can be sold on its own or used as part of other sweets.

- **Sherbet Fountain.** A tube of sherbet with a liquorice stick, sold by Barratt since 1925: see [Sherbet Fountains](#)
- **Dip Dab.** Sherbet with a lolly to dip in it: see [Dip Dabs](#)
- **Sherbet lemons.** Boiled sweets with an intense lemon flavour and a powdered sherbet centre: see [sherbet lemons](#)
- **Flying saucers.** Small discs of coloured wafer paper, usually filled with white, unflavoured sherbet. They were first made in the 1950s in Belgium by a maker of communion wafers.

We sell sherbet lemons and flying saucers in our pick and mix.

Not the American sherbet

In the United States, sherbet usually means a frozen dessert made with fruit and a little dairy, and powdered sherbet is closer to sweets such as Pixy Stix. The two meanings have split apart over time: see [what is the difference between sherbet and sorbet?](#)

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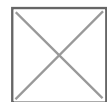
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