

What is the difference between sweets and candy?

From the sweeties.net wiki

There is no real difference between sweets and candy. They are two words for the same thing, used in different parts of the English speaking world. The trade calls the whole category sugar confectionery, a term that covers boiled sweets, jellies, chocolates, chewing gum and more.

Who says what

- **Candy** is the everyday word in the United States and Canada.
- **Sweets** is the everyday word in the UK, Ireland and a number of other countries.
- **Lollies** is the everyday word in Australia and New Zealand.

In the UK, a lolly usually means a lollipop or an ice lolly rather than sweets in general. Within Britain there are regional words too, such as sweeties in Scotland and kets in the North East: see [what people call sweets around Britain](#) and [why are sweets called ket?](#)

Where candy comes from

The word candy came into English from the Old French *çucres candi*, meaning sugar candy. The French may have earlier roots in the Arabic *qandi*, the Persian *qand* and the Sanskrit *khanda*, all words for sugar. *Khanda* was the name for the pieces of sugar made by boiling sugarcane juice in ancient India, where sugarcane is native. If so, candy is at heart a word for sugar that travelled from India to Europe.

Where sweets comes from

Sweets is short for sweetmeats. A sweetmeat, from the Old English *swete mete*, is a sweet delicacy or confection, and the meat in it simply means food, not flesh. Dictionaries today define a sweet as a confection made from sugar, or high in sugar, used especially in the UK: see [why do the British call them sweets?](#)

Candy in British English

Britain has not dropped the word candy altogether. It survives in a handful of fixed names:

- **Candy floss**, the spun sugar Americans call cotton candy. It is sold as candy floss in the UK, Ireland, India, New Zealand and South Africa, and as fairy floss in Australia.
- **Candy cane**, the striped Christmas stick: see [how do they get the stripes in candy canes?](#)
- **Rock candy**, a hard sweet of large sugar crystals, a name first recorded in 1723.

Across the Atlantic

For how pick and mix works on the other side of the Atlantic, where it is bought as candy, see [do Americans have pick and mix?](#)

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