

# What is the difference between fudge and tablet?

From the sweeties.net wiki

Fudge and Scottish tablet share a lot. Both are made by boiling sugar with dairy until it reaches the soft ball stage, then letting the sugar crystallise as it cools. But the results are very different. Fudge is soft and smooth. Tablet is firmer, with a brittle, grainy texture.

## The texture

Tablet is a medium hard sweet: not as soft as fudge, but not as hard as boiled sweets. Its grainy, brittle bite is what makes it tablet. Fudge, by contrast, is much softer, creamy and smooth when it is made well.

## The ingredients

The ingredients overlap a great deal.

- **Tablet** is usually made from sugar, condensed milk and butter, often flavoured with vanilla and sometimes with pieces of nut. The traditional recipe used just sugar and cream, but cream tends to burn when boiled, so modern recipes swapped in condensed milk and butter. Commercial tablet often uses fondant instead of the milk products, which makes it slightly less granular than homemade tablet.
- **Fudge** is traditionally made by heating milk and sugar to the soft ball stage and adding butter, with flavourings such as vanilla or chocolate.

## The real difference: sugar crystals

What separates them is what happens to the sugar as it cools. Both are sugar syrups that crystallise, and the way the sugar crystallises decides the texture.

In the classic fudge method, the mixture is taken off the heat and left to cool to about 48 or 49 degrees Celsius before it is beaten until it is thick and creamy. As it cools, the sugar crystallises into a smooth mass. Early American fudge recipes from the 1870s were stirred all the way through cooking instead, and they produced a crumbly texture as the syrup crystallised. One food writer suggests fudge became smooth partly through neglect, as cooks left it to cook without stirring.

Tablet has a grainier character. It is boiled to the soft ball stage and allowed to crystallise into the firm, brittle slab that gives it its snap.

## Which came first?

Tablet is the older of the two. According to *The Scots Kitchen* by F. Marian McNeill, tablet is noted in *The Household Book of Lady Grisell Baillie* in the early 18th century.

Modern fudge is American. Chocolate caramels close to it were popular in the United States in the 1860s and 1870s, and by the 1880s and 1890s it was widely advertised. It became popular at women's colleges: a Vassar student wrote of buying a box of fudge in Baltimore in 1886 and claimed to have introduced it to Vassar College in 1888 with her own 30 lb batch.

For more on each, see [Scottish tablet](#) and [fudge](#), and for the West Country's version, [Devon fudge](#). We sell vanilla fudge cubes in our pick and mix.

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