

What are chews?

From the sweeties.net wiki

Chews are soft, chewy sweets. They are usually fruity and individually wrapped, with a bite that is firmer than a jelly but softer than a hard toffee.

What a chew is

Chews are close relatives of taffy. Opal Fruits, now Starburst, are described as a fruit flavoured soft taffy, and taffy is made by stretching or pulling a sticky mass of soft candy base, made of boiled sugar, fat such as butter or vegetable oil, flavourings and colourings, until it is full of tiny air bubbles. That gives a light, fluffy and chewy sweet, which is then rolled, cut into small pieces and wrapped to keep it soft.

British chews follow the same idea. Barratt's packets describe Fruit Salad as a raspberry and pineapple flavour chew, and Black Jack as an aniseed flavour chew. In 2021, Black Jacks were made from glucose syrup, sugar, palm oil, a colour called vegetable carbon, hydrolysed pea protein, citric acid, aniseed oil and an acidity regulator.

Pulled for chewiness

The key step is the pulling. Stretching the mixture, folding it over and stretching it again works air into it, which makes it lighter and chewier. In 19th century America, pulling taffy was even a social event: at a taffy pull, guests buttered their hands and pulled the hot mixture in pairs.

British chews

- **Black Jack.** An aniseed chew introduced by Trebor in the 1920s, now made under the Barratt name: see [Black Jacks](#)
- **Fruit Salad.** A raspberry and pineapple flavour chew, also made under the Barratt name: see [Fruit Salad chews](#)
- **Chewits.** Cube shaped chews first made in 1963 in Southport as Chewzits, renamed Chewits after a merger in 1965. Their first flavours were strawberry, blackcurrant, orange and banana.
- **Opal Fruits.** A box shaped fruit chew launched by Mars in the UK in 1959, made in Slough, and now sold as Starburst: see [Opal Fruits](#)

Chews and toffee

Chews and toffee are close cousins, and so are their names. The Oxford English Dictionary dates the word toffee, in forms such as tuffy and toughy, to 1825, and treats it as a southern British dialect form of taffy,

which was first recorded in 1817: see [toffee](#)

Why chews stick

Soft, chewy sweets are sticky by nature: see [why do sweets stick to your teeth?](#)

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