

What is the difference between gummies and jellies?

From the sweeties.net wiki

Gummy bear, jelly baby, wine gum, fruit pastille: they are all chewy, fruity and often shaped. They belong to the same family of sweets, and the names mostly depend on where you live. The real differences come down to what holds each sweet together.

One family, many names

Gummies, fruit gums, gummi candies, gummy candies and jelly sweets are all names for a broad category of gelatine or gum based chewable sweets. The word gummi comes from Germany, where the gummy bear is the Gummibär, or rubber bear. In the United Kingdom, the terms jelly sweets and gums are more common.

Why gum?

The name goes back to gum arabic, a natural gum from acacia trees. Gum arabic was the original base ingredient used to make gummy bears, hence the name gum or gummy. Most gum arabic is harvested from wild trees in the Sahel, with Sudan supplying about 70 per cent of the world's supply. As a food additive it is E414.

What holds them together

Gummy sweets are made mostly of sugar syrups, starch and a gelling agent, with small amounts of colour, flavour and acids such as citric and malic acid for sharpness. The gelling agent makes the biggest difference to the texture.

- **Gelatine** is the classic gelling agent, and higher quality gummies have it as the lead ingredient. The traditional gummy bear is made from sugar, glucose syrup, starch, flavouring, colouring, citric acid and gelatine: see [what is gelatine made from?](#)
- **Gum arabic and starch** make firmer sweets. Traditional pastilles, including medicinal ones, are usually based on a mixture of starch and gum arabic, and the gum arabic hardens them and makes them sturdier. Wine gums are described as chewy, firm, pastille type sweets.
- **Pectin, starch and agar** are the plant based alternatives to gelatine, used to make gummies suitable for vegetarians and vegans: see [what is pectin?](#)

Jellies, gums and pastilles

In Britain, the names can hint at the texture: Jelly Babies are soft jellies, while wine gums and fruit gums are firmer and chewier. Pastilles, such as Rowntree's Fruit Pastilles, are made by pouring a thick liquid into

moulds and letting it set, and are meant to be chewed lightly and allowed to dissolve slowly.

Recipes do change. In September 2020 Nestlé announced it would make Rowntree's Fruit Pastilles suitable for vegans, and Rowntree's changed its Fruit Gums to a vegan friendly recipe in 2020, removing the gelatine and the carminic acid colour, and the current recipe lists gum arabic among its ingredients.

Who made the first?

The first shaped sweet made with gelatine is said to be the Unclaimed Baby, sold by Fryers of Lancashire in 1864, the ancestor of the Jelly Baby. The gummy bear followed in Germany, made by Hans Riegel of Bonn, who founded Haribo in 1920: see [why are gummy bears shaped like bears?](#)

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