

Why are gummy bears shaped like bears?

From the sweeties.net wiki

Gummy bears are shaped like bears because of a sight that was once common in Europe: trained bears performing at street festivals and markets. A sweet maker in Bonn turned that memory into a sweet, and its success led to gummy sweets in all kinds of other shapes.

The dancing bears

Well into the 19th century, trained bears were a feature of street festivities and markets in Europe. In 1922, inspired by them, Hans Riegel, who had founded Haribo in Bonn two years earlier, invented a bear shaped fruit gum and called it the Dancing Bear, or Tanzbär in German.

It was meant to be a small, affordable treat for children and adults alike. Even during the hyperinflation that wrecked the German economy in the early 1920s, Dancing Bears stayed affordable, at one pfennig a pair at kiosks.

Not quite today's bear

The first Dancing Bear was not the same as a modern gummy bear. It was much larger, and it was softer, because it was made with gum arabic rather than the gelatine used today. Gum arabic was the original base of gummy bears, which is where the words gum and gummy come from: see [what is the difference between gummies and jellies?](#)

The success of the Dancing Bear led to the Gold Bear, or Goldbär, launched in 1967 and still Haribo's flagship product. A modern gummy bear is roughly 2 cm long. In German the sweets are called Gummibärchen, little rubber bears.

Bears, then everything else

Once bears had proved a hit, gummy sweets appeared in all kinds of shapes: rings, worms, frogs, snakes, hamburgers, cherries, sharks, penguins, hippos, lobsters, octopuses, spiders and fruit, among many others. Some makers produce bears weighing several kilograms.

Haribo's name

Haribo itself is named after its founder and home town: it is a syllable abbreviation of Hans Riegel Bonn: see [what does Haribo stand for?](#) For the full story of the man behind the bear, see [Hans Riegel and the gummy bear](#)

What they are made of

Traditional gummy bears are made with gelatine, which comes from animals, so they are not suitable for vegetarians and vegans, and bears made with pork gelatine are not suitable for people who keep halal or kosher. Haribo makes halal gummy bears at its factory in Turkey, and some makers use plant based gelling agents instead: see [is Haribo made from pig?](#)

We sell golden bears, halal golden bears and vegan gummy bears in our pick and mix.

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