

What sweets are vegan in the UK?

From the sweeties.net wiki

Finding vegan sweets in Britain is much easier than it used to be. Several well known British sweets have dropped gelatine and other animal ingredients in recent years. But recipes keep changing, so the only sure guide is the label on the pack in your hand.

What to check for

Many chewy sweets are traditionally made with gelatine, which comes from animal collagen, so gelatine is the first thing to look for: see [what is gelatine made from?](#) But it is not the only animal ingredient that turns up in sweets:

- **Beeswax**, E901, and **shellac**, E904, both used to glaze sweets
- **Carmine**, also called cochineal or E120, a red colour made from insects
- **Milk** ingredients, such as milk powder, butter or lactose

Beeswax, shellac and cochineal are all common additives made by or from insects that vegans avoid: see [what is carmine?](#) and [what is beeswax on sweets?](#)

The big switches

Some big brands have changed their recipes to become vegan.

- **Rowntree's Fruit Pastilles.** In September 2020 Nestlé announced a vegan friendly recipe without gelatine. Its technicians trialled over 30 recipes to keep the flavour and chew, and the new recipe arrived in sharing bags from October 2020. The pastilles had been made since 1881.
- **Rowntree's Fruit Gums.** Nestlé changed the Fruit Gum recipe to a vegan friendly one in 2020, removing gelatine and carminic acid.
- **Percy Pig.** Marks and Spencer's pig shaped sweets originally contained pork gelatine. A vegetarian Veggie Percy arrived in 2011, all Percy Pigs became gelatine free in May 2019, using pectin, and in 2022 beeswax was removed, making them vegan.

Other sweets may be vegan simply because of what they are made of. Nestlé listed Jelly Tots among its vegan products in 2020. Flying saucers, wafer discs filled with sherbet, have featured on lists of vegan sweets for Halloween. As always, check the pack.

What a vegan label means

There is no legal definition of vegan food in UK law, but food must be labelled accurately. The government's guidance is that a vegan label means no ingredients of animal origin were intentionally used. It is not a guarantee for people with allergies, because traces of animal ingredients can get in through cross contamination: see [are Jelly Babies vegan?](#)

How vegan sweets are made

Vegan chewy sweets replace gelatine with plant based gelling agents such as pectin, from fruit, starch or agar, from seaweed. Percy Pigs, for example, now use pectin. Glazes can be plant based too, such as carnauba wax from a Brazilian palm: see [what is pectin?](#) and [what sweets are gelatine free?](#)

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