

What is Swedish pick and mix?

From the sweeties.net wiki

Swedish pick and mix is called lösgodis, which simply means loose sweets. It works much like British pick and mix: the sweets sit in separate bins, often a whole wall of them in a supermarket, and you scoop what you like into a bag that is weighed at the till. What makes it different is how much of it the Swedes eat, and when.

Where it came from

Loose sweets in Sweden date back to the 1930s, when Swedish farming became self sufficient in refined sugar. That made sugar cheap, and sweets affordable for almost everyone.

Self serve candy walls came later. They were developed in the early 1980s in Helsinki by three Finnish students who had studied in Stockholm, and the idea has since spread around Europe and Asia. In 1984 Sweden's National Food Agency approved selling loose sweets in ordinary larger shops, on condition that each variety was kept in its own container and picked with a scoop or a small bucket.

Saturday sweets

A lot of Swedish pick and mix is bought for lördagsgodis, Saturday sweets. The habit began with a health recommendation in 1959, which said it was better for children's teeth to eat sweets once a week than to spread a smaller amount over the week. The advice came from the Vipeholm experiments, a study now considered unethical, in which patients at a Swedish hospital for people with intellectual disabilities were fed large amounts of sweets to see whether sugar caused tooth decay.

Over the years, the recommendation became a routine for children and adults alike. It is common for Swedes to buy their Saturday sweets by weight from the candy walls in grocery shops.

How much Swedes eat

The widespread availability of loose sweets is seen as the main reason Sweden has the highest sweet consumption in the world, a title it has held since at least 2009. As of 2014, Swedes ate about 18 kilograms of sweets per person per year. The biggest selling day for sweets in Swedish grocery shops is Maundy Thursday, before Easter.

What goes in the bag

Swedish pick and mix includes many sweets that are less familiar in Britain.

- **Salty liquorice**, flavoured with salmiak salt, ammonium chloride, which is popular across the Nordic countries: see [why is black liquorice black?](#)
- **Marshmallow cars**, such as Ahlgrens bilar, first sold in 1953 and billed as the world's most sold car.
- **Fruit and wine gum shapes**, including the fish known in Sweden as pastellfiskar and sold abroad as Swedish Fish, first made by Malaco in 1957 for the American market.
- **Sour gums and foams**, in all kinds of shapes.

For why Swedish sweets have become a craze around the world, see [why is Swedish candy so popular?](#)

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