

What is the oldest chocolate bar in the UK?

From the sweeties.net wiki

Ask for the oldest chocolate bar in the UK and there are three good answers. Britain can claim what is often called the first modern chocolate bar, the oldest chocolate bar brand still on sale, and a bar of chocolate that has survived since 1900.

The first bar: Fry's, 1847

There is no precise moment when the first chocolate bar came into existence. Solid chocolate was already eaten in the 18th century, and the techniques behind modern chocolate were developed by makers in several European countries.

In the 1840s British makers began selling eating chocolate to compete with French imports. John Cadbury sold French Eating Chocolate in 1842, and in 1847 J. S. Fry and Sons of Bristol sold Chocolat Délicieux à Manger, delicious eating chocolate. That bar, probably made with extra cocoa butter, is often considered the first modern chocolate bar, although it was not a success. In 1853 Fry's followed it with Cream Sticks, the first filled chocolate sweet: see [Joseph Fry and the first chocolate bar](#)

The oldest you can still buy: Fry's Chocolate Cream, 1866

Fry's Chocolate Cream was launched in 1866 and is described as the world's oldest chocolate bar brand. It descends from the 1853 Cream Stick, and the original was a plain fondant centre coated in plain chocolate. In 1875 it was remoulded into the shape it still has today, and at one time production passed half a million bars a day. In the Second World War, RAF Bomber Command crews were regularly issued with Fry's Chocolate Creams before missions.

Fry's merged with Cadbury in 1919, and the bar is now made by Cadbury, which is owned by Mondelez International. Two changes stand out in its recent history. After Kraft took over Cadbury in 2010, it closed the old Fry's factory at Somerdale, near Bristol, even though it had said during the takeover that it would keep the factory open, and production moved to Poland: see [the Somerdale factory promise](#) Then, in 2022, the original milk free recipe was dropped and skimmed milk powder was added. For the full story of the bar, see [Fry's Chocolate Cream](#)

The oldest chocolate that still exists

Some of the oldest preserved chocolate bars in the world are two pieces of white and dark chocolate made between 1764 and 1795 for Stanislaus Augustus Poniatowski, king of Poland, as gifts for his courtiers. They bear his monogram and are on display at his summer residence in Warsaw.

Britain has a survivor of its own. For New Year 1900, during the Second Boer War, Queen Victoria sent chocolate to her troops in South Africa. More than 100,000 tins were made, each holding half a pound of

plain chocolate, and the lids carried the words "I wish you a happy New Year", printed in a flowing script above the signature Victoria R.

The chocolate came from Britain's three principal makers, Cadbury, Fry and Rowntree, all Quaker owned firms that opposed the war. They were reluctant to support it, and at first they refused payment and supplied the chocolate in unbranded tins. The Queen wanted her troops to know they had British chocolate, so the makers relented and marked some of the bars, although the tins stayed unbranded: see [the Cadbury family and the Quakers](#)

In 2021 National Trust conservators found one of these tins in a Boer War helmet case in the attic at Oxburgh Hall in Norfolk. It had belonged to Sir Henry Edward Paston Bedingfeld, the 8th Baronet, and the chocolate inside was complete, still in its wrapper, after 121 years. The Trust called it a remarkable find, while adding that it no longer looked appetising.

Other old bars

Several bars still on sale in Britain are more than a century old. Cadbury Dairy Milk was first made in Birmingham in June 1905 by George Cadbury Jr, and by 1914 it had become the company's best selling product.

For the oldest sweets of all, which go back much further than chocolate bars, see [what is the oldest sweet in Britain?](#)

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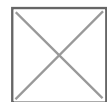
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