

What are retro sweets?

From the sweeties.net wiki

Retro sweets are the sweets that take people back to an earlier time, often their own childhood. Retro, in general, means imitating or drawing on styles from the past, and it has been argued that popular culture runs in a nostalgia cycle. There is no official list of retro sweets, and what counts depends on when you grew up.

Older than you think

Several sweets sold as retro today are older than you might think:

- **Black Jacks**, aniseed chews, were introduced by Trebor in the 1920s: see [Black Jacks](#)
- **The Sherbet Fountain**, a tube of sherbet with a liquorice stick, has been sold since 1925: see [Sherbet Fountains](#)
- **Parma Violets** were introduced by Swizzels in 1946.
- **Flying saucers**, wafer capsules filled with sherbet, were first made in the early 1950s by Belgica, a Belgian maker of communion wafers that needed a new use for its wafer machines. Their popularity in Britain in the 1960s and 1970s has been put down to the Space Race and growing interest in science fiction.
- **Love Hearts** arrived from Swizzels in 1954, and **Drumstick** lollies in 1957. Together with Parma Violets, they are Swizzels' best selling brands.

Later arrivals

Sweets from later decades have their own followings. Wham bars, thin chews with pieces of sherbet inside, were first made by McCowan's in Scotland in the early 1980s, sold 30 million a year at their peak, and are still made today: see [Wham bars](#) For sweets by decade, see [the 1970s](#), [the 1980s](#) and [the 1990s](#)

Not quite as they were

Some retro sweets have changed since they were first made. The Sherbet Fountain's original packaging has been replaced by a solid plastic tube to improve freshness and shelf life. Barratt's Fruit Salad chews have been made without gelatine since 2019. And some old packaging has gone for good reason: Black Jack wrappers originally showed golliwogs. Some have disappeared altogether: see [what sweets have been discontinued in the UK?](#)

The return of the sweet shop

Woolworths, whose ranges included confectionery, closed all 807 of its British shops between 27 December 2008 and 6 January 2009. By then a new chain of traditional sweet shops was already trading. Mr Simms

Olde Sweet Shoppe opened its first shop in Leek, Staffordshire, in September 2004, selling mainly boiled sweets in shops styled on Victorian architecture, and it now has more than 70 branches in the UK and Hong Kong.

Our own pick and mix includes some sweets with long histories, such as Jelly Babies, first sold as Unclaimed Babies in 1864.

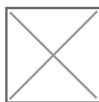
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