

Starch jelly sweets explained

From the sweeties.net wiki

Jelly sweets are often set with gelatine, but starch plays a big part in the sweet factory too. It can be the gel that sets a sweet, and it is also the powder that shapes gummies.

Starch as the gel

Turkish delight is a starch sweet: a family of confections based on a gel of starch and sugar, often flavoured with rosewater and sometimes packed with dates, pistachios, hazelnuts or walnuts. A popular story credits it to the confectioner Hac? Bekir, who opened his shop in 1777, although the sweet historian Tim Richardson has questioned that attribution.

Starch is also used in modern gummies. Gummy candies are made mostly of corn syrup, sugar, gelatine, starch and water, with small amounts of colouring, flavouring and food acids. Starch can also replace gelatine altogether: it is one of the gelling agents, alongside agar and pectin, used to make gummies suitable for vegetarians and vegans: see [a guide to vegan sweets](#)

Some sweets use modified starch, starch that has been treated so that it thickens, sets or holds up better. It is nothing to do with genetic modification: see [what is modified starch in sweets?](#)

Starch as the mould

Starch also shapes sweets, including gummies. A starch mogul is a machine that makes shaped sweets by filling trays with cornstarch, stamping shapes into the powder and pouring the hot syrup or gel into the holes. When the sweets have set, they are lifted out and the starch is reused.

Starch moguls were invented around 1899 and were in common use within twenty years. They cut costs, and they made factories safer, because starch rooms had dangerously high levels of starch dust in the air, which caused breathing illnesses and could even explode.

Why starch jellies change as they age

When starch is heated in water, its crystalline structure is lost and it forms a thick, viscous solution. As that gel cools and sits, the long starch molecules slowly line up and recrystallise, a process called retrogradation. The process speeds up dramatically between about minus 8°C and 8°C, the range of a fridge, which is one reason starch jellies firm up if chilled: see [why do jelly sweets go hard?](#)

Starch and diets

Starch comes from plants, such as maize, potatoes and wheat. A sweet set with starch can be vegan if it has no other animal ingredients, such as gelatine, beeswax or shellac. Starch from wheat is covered by the

gluten allergen rules, although wheat based glucose syrups are exempt: see [wheat in sweets](#)

Our pick and mix includes vegan gummy bears and vegan fizzy cola bottles. Each sweet card shows its ingredients and allergens before you buy.

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