

What is in a jelly sweet?

From the sweeties.net wiki

Jelly sweets come in all kinds of shapes and flavours, but they share a few basic ingredients. Gummy candies are made mostly of corn syrup, sugar, gelatine, starch and water, with small amounts of colouring, flavouring and food acids. Ingredients are listed in order of weight, so the first few on the label are the biggest part of the sweet.

A real example

A published ingredients list for a 400 g carton of Bassett's Jelly Babies gives: sugar, glucose syrup, water, gelatine, concentrated fruit juices, citric acid, flavourings, and colours from plant sources. A published list for Maynards Bassetts Wine Gums gives glucose syrup, sugar, starch, gelatine, malic and acetic acids, colours from plant sources, flavourings, vegetable oils and carnauba wax.

The parts, one by one

- **Sugar and glucose syrup.** The bulk of the sweet. Glucose syrup, made from starch, sweetens, softens the texture and adds volume.
- **The gelling agent.** This is what turns syrup into a jelly. Gelatine, from animals, is the traditional choice; pectin, starch and agar are the plant based alternatives: see [gelatine in sweets explained](#), [pectin sweets explained](#) and [starch jelly sweets explained](#)
- **Water.** Part of the recipe, listed third on the Jelly Babies label above.
- **Acids.** Citric, malic or acetic acid give a sharp, fruity taste: see [what is citric acid in sweets?](#) and [what is malic acid in sweets?](#)
- **Flavourings and fruit juices.** For taste. Some sweets use concentrated fruit juices as well as flavourings.
- **Colours.** In both examples above, the colours come from plant sources: see [natural colours in sweets](#)
- **A glaze or a dusting.** Vegetable oil and carnauba wax give a shine and stop sweets sticking together: see [what is glazing agent in sweets?](#)

Why the powder?

Jelly sweets such as gummies are shaped in trays of starch, filled by machines called starch moguls, and the hot mixture sets in them before being lifted out. Some starch can stay on the sweet: see [why are jelly babies covered in powder?](#)

What it means for your diet

- **Gelatine** means a sweet is not vegetarian or vegan, and matters for halal and kosher diets: see [beef gelatine and pork gelatine](#)
- **Beeswax or shellac** as a glaze means a sweet is not vegan.
- **Starch from wheat** matters for gluten, although glucose syrup from wheat is exempt: see [wheat in sweets](#)
- **Sugar.** Jelly sweets are high in sugar: see [how much sugar is in sweets?](#)

Each sweet in our pick and mix has a card that opens up to show its ingredients and allergens, so you can see what is in it before you buy.

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