

How are boiled sweets made?

From the sweeties.net wiki

Boiled sweets are simple in principle: almost all of what you eat is sugar that has been boiled until nearly all its water has gone.

Step by step

1. **Make a syrup.** Sugar is dissolved in water. Recipes may use syrups of sucrose, glucose or fructose. Seaside rock, for example, uses about three parts sugar to one part glucose syrup.
2. **Boil it hard.** The syrup is boiled to a high temperature. Hard sweets are made from syrups boiled to about 160°C, the clear liquid stage, while seaside rock is boiled to about 147°C, the hard crack stage. At this point only a tiny amount of water remains: see [how are sweets made?](#)
3. **Flavour and colour.** Off the heat, the maker may add citric acid for sharpness, food colouring and flavouring, such as a plant extract or an essential oil.
4. **Cool and shape.** The thick syrup is poured into a mould or tray, or onto a cooling table in a factory. When it is cool enough to handle, it is folded, rolled or moulded into the shapes wanted.
5. **Let it set.** As it cools to room temperature, it becomes stiff and brittle.

Pulling for colour and shine

Some boiled sweets are pulled. In rock making, part of the batch goes on a pulling machine, with a fixed arm and two moving arms, which folds air into it and turns it white. Coloured and white sugar can then be combined, as in the casing and lettering of seaside rock: see [how is seaside rock made?](#) and [how are humbugs made?](#)

Why they are glassy

Boiled sweets are amorphous, or non crystalline: the sugar sets without forming crystals, like glass, and contains about 98 per cent or more sugar. That is why they are hard and clear, and why they dissolve slowly in the mouth. Sugar is hygroscopic, so an unwrapped boiled sweet in damp air can pick up moisture and turn sticky: see [why does seaside rock go soft?](#)

A medical past

Hard sweets have long been linked with cough drops. The slow release of flavour from a lozenge was appreciated long ago, and apothecaries used sugar candy to make their medicines easier to take.

Sugar free boiled sweets

Sugar free hard sweets use isomalt instead of sugar, with extra sweetness from an intense sweetener or a polyol such as xylitol: see [sugar free sweets and polyols](#)

Our pick and mix includes boiled sweets such as pear drops, sherbet lemons and kola cubes.

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