

How is toffee made?

From the sweeties.net wiki

Toffee is an English confection made by caramelising sugar or molasses with butter, and occasionally a little flour. Its character depends almost entirely on how hot it is cooked.

Step by step

1. **Melt and dissolve.** Sugar or molasses, or treacle, is heated with butter until the sugar dissolves.
2. **Boil to hard crack.** The mixture is boiled until it reaches the hard crack stage, 149 to 154°C. At this temperature almost all the water has gone: see [how are sweets made?](#)
3. **Add extras.** Nuts or raisins are sometimes stirred in.
4. **Pour and set.** The hot toffee is poured out to cool and harden, then broken or cut into pieces. Slab toffee was traditionally broken with a small toffee hammer: see [slab toffee and the toffee hammer](#)

Where the flavour comes from

As the sugar is heated strongly, it caramelises: it browns and produces new flavour compounds. One of them, diacetyl, has an intense buttery flavour. Caramelisation is a type of non enzymatic browning, like the Maillard reaction, but it happens through heat alone rather than through a reaction with amino acids.

Treacle toffee, made with black treacle, is hard, dark and brittle: see [treacle toffee](#)

Hard, chewy and in between

The higher a sugar syrup is cooked, the more concentrated the sugar and the harder the result. So a toffee taken all the way to hard crack is brittle, while butterscotch, made from brown sugar and butter, is boiled only to the soft crack stage: see [how is butterscotch made?](#)

Violet Mackintosh of Halifax has been credited with changing what the British meant by toffee. In 1890 she and her husband John opened a sweet shop, and her recipe blended traditional hard, brittle English butterscotch with soft American caramel. Sold as Mackintosh's Celebrated Toffee, it was a hit: see [John Mackintosh, the toffee king of Halifax](#)

The word

The Oxford English Dictionary dates the first published use of toffee to 1825, as a variant of taffy, first recorded in 1817. Both began as English dialect words.

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