

How is caramel made?

From the sweeties.net wiki

Caramel means two things in the sweet world. It is the brown, flavourful substance sugar becomes when it is heated strongly, and it is also the name of a soft, dense, chewy sweet made with milk or cream, sugar, glucose, butter and vanilla.

How chewy caramels are made

1. **Heat the sugars.** Sugar and glucose are combined and heated to 130°C.
2. **Add the dairy.** Cream and butter are added, which cools the mixture down.
3. **Reheat.** The mixture is stirred and heated again until it reaches 120°C, the firm ball stage: see [how are sweets made?](#)
4. **Flavour last.** Vanilla, other flavourings and salt are added only once cooking is finished. Added earlier, the flavourings would burn off at the high temperatures.
5. **Set and cut.** The caramel is poured out to set, then cut.

Milk caramel

There is another way. All the ingredients can be cooked together without ever going above the firm ball stage, 120°C. That is not hot enough to caramelize the sugar itself; instead, the milk caramelises. Sweets made this way are often called milk caramel or cream caramel.

Caramel, toffee and butterscotch

Caramel is sometimes called toffee and often compared with butterscotch, but they are different. Toffee and butterscotch are more closely related to each other, and both use molasses or brown sugar, while caramel uses white sugar. All three are cooked at different temperatures and with their own techniques. Toffee goes much hotter, to the hard crack stage of 146 to 154°C, which is why it sets hard: see [how is toffee made?](#)

Where the colour and flavour come from

When sugar itself is heated strongly, it caramelises: it browns and gives off new flavour compounds, including diacetyl, with its intense buttery taste. Above about 171°C, sugar breaks down into many simpler sugars and turns into amber caramel.

The rise of salted caramel

Salted caramel sweets made with milk or butter were sold in Brittany as early as 1946, reviving pre war recipes, but they spoiled quickly. In 1977 the French pastry chef Henri Le Roux, working in Quiberon,

created a much more stable salted butter caramel with crushed nuts, made with Breton salted butter. It was named the best confectionery in France in 1980, and salted caramel went on to become widely popular across France and French speaking countries such as Belgium and Switzerland.

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