

What is sugar panning?

From the sweeties.net wiki

Panning is a way of adding a coating to a small centre, such as a nut, a jelly or a seed. The centres go into a large pan or drum that looks like a cement mixer, with grooves on its inside walls. As it spins, liquid or powder is added, and a coating forms over each piece, layer by layer, drying or setting as it goes.

The three kinds of panning

- **Soft panning.** The centres are wetted with a liquid, then an absorbent powder such as powdered sugar soaks up the moisture. This gives a relatively thick coat. Jelly beans are the classic example: see [how are jelly beans made?](#)
- **Hard panning.** The coating is a sugar syrup made saturated, so that it crystallises on the centres in successive layers, each one extremely thin, as little as 10 to 14 micrometres. M&M's are the classic example of a hard panned sweet.
- **Chocolate panning.** Warm chocolate is applied and then cooled to set it. Raisins and nuts are popular centres: see [how are chocolate raisins made?](#)

Inside the pan

One trade description of soft panning for jelly beans gives a flavour of the work. The centres are wetted again and again with 60 per cent glucose syrup, and fine caster sugar is added each time until the surfaces dry into a soft coating. After two or three stages, the part coated centres are taken out to dry for 2 to 3 hours. The final coat is dried with icing sugar, and the sweets are then left for two days at 20°C in a dust free room. For hard panning, the same source describes adding the syrup at a rate of 10 to 15 per cent of the weight of the centres each time, and building up the colour during the final five or six applications.

A very old craft

Panning is far older than machines. The earliest medicinal uses date back to the 10th century, and commercial panning of sweets emerged in France around 1200. In Renaissance England, comfits, seeds and spices coated in sugar, were made in a balancing pan: the centres were coated with gum arabic, then with many layers of sugar syrup, and dried in the sun. Depending on the syrup, comfits came out smooth or ragged. By the mid 19th century, panning had been mechanised: see [what is the oldest sweet in Britain?](#)

Panned sweets today

Sugared almonds are still comfits. They are thought to descend from the honey coated almonds of ancient Rome, and were coated with sugar once it became more readily available in the 15th century. Our pick and

mix includes gourmet jelly beans, milk chocolate raisins and aniseed balls.

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