

How are marshmallows made?

From the sweeties.net wiki

A marshmallow is a foam: a sugary liquid with gas bubbles spread all through it. It is about 50 per cent air, and the whole art of making one is getting that air in and keeping it there until the sweet sets.

The four ingredients

Modern marshmallows are made from just four things:

- **Sugar**, with the types varying from recipe to recipe.
- **Water**, to dissolve the sugar.
- **Air**, whipped in.
- **A whipping agent**, usually a protein. The two most common are albumen, from egg whites, and gelatine: see [eggs in sweets](#) and [gelatine in sweets explained](#)

The protein gathers where the liquid meets each air bubble and holds the bubbles in place, so the gas cannot escape before the marshmallow sets.

How they are shaped

There are two main ways to shape marshmallows:

- **Starch moulding.** The whipped mixture is poured into shapes pressed into trays of starch, and left to set. This starch mogul method made marshmallows available for mass consumption by the early 20th century: see [what is starch moulding?](#)
- **Extrusion.** In 1956 Alex Doumak patented a process that runs the marshmallow mixture through tubes to form long ropes, which are left to cool, then cut into equal pieces and packed. Marshmallow making has been highly automated ever since the early 1950s, when extrusion was first developed.

Moulded marshmallows are coated, for example with corn starch.

From medicine to sweet

The name comes from the marsh mallow plant, *Althaea officinalis*, a weed of damp marshy ground. Ancient Egyptians are said to have used its root to soothe coughs and sore throats, and the first marshmallows were made by boiling pieces of root pulp with honey until thick.

In the early to mid 19th century, French confectioners made *pâte de guimauve*, a spongy, soft sweet made by whipping dried marshmallow root with sugar, water and egg whites. It took one to two days to make. In the late 19th century, sweet makers switched to the starch mogul, and at the same time began replacing the

mallow root with gelatine.

Our pick and mix includes marshmallow twists and foam bananas: see [what are foam sweets made of?](#)

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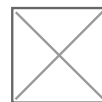
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