

How is liquorice made?

From the sweeties.net wiki

Liquorice is the common name of *Glycyrrhiza glabra*, a flowering plant of the bean family, and the sweet takes its flavour from the plant's root: see [is liquorice a root?](#)

From root to extract

Liquorice grows best in well drained soil in deep valleys with full sun, and it is harvested in the autumn, two to three years after planting. Countries producing it include Turkey, Greece, Iran and Iraq. A sweet, aromatic flavouring is extracted from the root. The word liquorice came about partly through the influence of the Latin *liquere*, to become fluid, reflecting the way the sweet part is drawn out of the roots.

From extract to sweet

The essential ingredients of black liquorice sweets are liquorice extract, sugar and a binder. The binder is typically starch or flour, gum arabic, gelatine, or a combination. Other ingredients can include extra flavouring, beeswax for a shiny surface, ammonium chloride for salty liquorice, and molasses.

1. **Cook.** The ingredients are dissolved in water and heated to about 135°C: see [how are sweets made?](#)
2. **Shape.** For shaped sweets, the hot liquid is poured into moulds made by pressing holes into a container filled with starch powder: see [what is starch moulding?](#) Ropes and tubes are made by extrusion, pushing the mixture through a shaped opening.
3. **Dry.** The moulded sweets are dried.
4. **Shine.** The finished sweets are sprayed with beeswax to make their surface shiny.

Salty and red liquorice

Salty liquorice, popular across the Nordic countries, is flavoured with ammonium chloride: see [how is salt liquorice made?](#)

Red liquorice may be made in much the same way, from a starchy or gummy binder with sugar, extruded into ropes or tubes with a chewy texture. But it contains no liquorice. It is flavoured with things such as strawberry, cherry, raspberry or cinnamon, and newer versions come in apple, mango and blackcurrant.

Things to know

- Liquorice made with flour can contain gluten: see [wheat in sweets](#)
- Liquorice made with gelatine or beeswax is not vegan: see [a guide to vegan sweets](#)

- Real liquorice contains glycyrrhizin, and eating a lot can raise blood pressure: see [liquorice and blood pressure](#)

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