

How are jelly beans made?

From the sweeties.net wiki

Jelly beans are small, bean shaped sweets with soft candy shells and thick gel interiors. They are made mostly of sugar, and they take far longer to make than their size suggests.

What goes in

The main ingredients are sugar, tapioca, corn syrup, and pectin or starch. Smaller amounts of lecithin, an emulsifier, anti foaming agents, an edible wax such as carnauba wax or beeswax, salt and confectioner's glaze are added. The ingredients that give each bean its character, the flavours and colours, make up only a small part. Jelly Belly says its flavours are mixed into both the centre and the shell.

How they are made

Popular Science described the process at the Jelly Belly factory in California in 2022:

1. **The slurry.** Each bean starts as a slurry of sugar, water, cornstarch and corn syrup, with juices, purees and other ingredients added for flavour.
2. **The moulds.** A machine called a mogul presses a metal form into trays of starch, making bean shaped hollows, and the slurry is deposited into them: see [what is starch moulding?](#)
3. **Curing.** The centres cure overnight in a room kept above 100°F, about 38°C.
4. **Steam and sugar.** The centres get a steam bath, which leaves them tacky, so that a shower of sugar sticks to them.
5. **The shell.** They go into spinning drums, where syrup and sugar build up a candy shell and add more flavour and colour: see [what is sugar panning?](#)
6. **The polish.** Alternating layers of confectioner's glaze and carnauba wax give the shine: see [glazing agents explained](#)

The beans rest several times along the way. Jelly Belly says it takes 7 to 14 days to make one of its jelly beans, and Popular Science reported the factory producing some 1.25 million beans an hour.

Where jelly beans came from

It has been claimed that jelly beans were first sold in 1861, when the Boston confectioner William Schrafft urged people to send them to soldiers fighting in the American Civil War. A firmer reference appears in United States Department of Agriculture food testing records published in 1887. Historians suggest jelly beans became linked with Easter in the United States in the 1930s, because of their egg like shape. President Ronald Reagan's favourite treat was jelly beans.

Counting and calories

Jelly Belly says there are 882 of its beans in a kilo, and each has about 4 calories: see [how many sweets are in 100 g of pick and mix?](#)

Diet

Because the wax can be beeswax and confectioner's glaze is shellac, not all jelly beans are vegan: see [a guide to vegan sweets](#)

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