

How is Scottish tablet made?

From the sweeties.net wiki

Tablet, or taiblet in Scots, is a medium hard sugary sweet from Scotland, firmer than fudge and with a brittle, grainy texture: see [Scottish tablet](#). It is made from very few ingredients, and almost all of the craft is in the timing and the beating.

The ingredients

Most modern tablet is made from sugar, butter and condensed milk, often with some milk as well. The traditional recipe used just sugar and cream, but cream tends to burn when it is boiled, so condensed milk and butter took its place. Tablet is often flavoured with vanilla and sometimes has pieces of nut in it.

The method

This is the method described by the Scottish tablet maker Mrs Tilly's and in a published recipe in Sainsbury's Magazine:

1. **Dissolve.** The sugar is heated gently with milk until it dissolves, without boiling.
2. **Enrich.** Butter is added and melted, then the condensed milk is mixed in.
3. **Boil.** The heat goes up and the mixture is boiled, stirred constantly so that it does not catch and burn, until it reaches the soft ball stage. The Sainsbury's Magazine recipe takes it to 120°C. The old test is to drop a little into cold water: at the soft ball stage it forms a soft ball.
4. **Beat.** Off the heat, it is left to settle briefly and then beaten, by hand or in a mixer, until it starts to thicken and set and looks thick and slightly grainy.
5. **Pour and cut.** It is poured into a greased or lined tin, marked into squares once it has firmed up, and left to set for at least a couple of hours, preferably overnight. Kept in an airtight container, the recipe says it lasts at least two months.

Why the beating matters

Beating is what makes tablet tablet. Mrs Tilly's describes it as beaten to encourage sugar crystallisation. A syrup cooked to the soft ball stage is very concentrated, and working it as it cools sets off a great many small crystals, the same principle used to make fondant: see [how is fondant made?](#) Crystalline sweets like this are easy to bite or cut into, which is why tablet snaps and crumbles rather than chews. Fudge also crystallises as it cools, but it ends up much softer and smoother: see [what is the difference between fudge and tablet?](#)

Tablet by the batch

Tablet has long been made at home. Commercially made tablet often uses fondant instead of the milk products, which gives a slightly less granular texture and is said to be easier to make on a commercial scale. Some makers still work in small batches: Mrs Tilly's, based in Larbert, says it has been hand making tablet in small batches in Scotland since 1997, with condensed milk and butter.

An old Scottish sweet, and fudge's ancestor

According to F. Marian McNeill's book *The Scots Kitchen*, tablet is noted in *The Household Book of Lady Grisell Baillie* in the early 18th century. Communities in the Midlands and Cornwall made local versions of tablet for centuries, and by the 1890s these were being called fudge. Cornish fudge traces its origins to the 18th century, when Cornish confectioners began using clotted cream instead of milk in their version of tablet: see [how is fudge made?](#) and [Devon fudge](#)..

Earn rewards on [sweeties.net](#)

Earn loyalty points on every order. Free to join.

+100 pts

Create your free account

Welcome bonus + earn on every order.



100 pts = 1 tree

Plant a tree in Scotland

Pledge points to our reforestation partner.



[sweeties.net](#) · Tunbridge Wells, Kent · hello@sweeties.net · 3-click cancel at [sweeties.net/cancel/](#)