

Sweet rationing in Britain

From the sweeties.net wiki

Rationing came to Britain early in the Second World War. Petrol was controlled from September 1939, and on 8 January 1940 bacon, butter and sugar were rationed. Sweets and chocolate, which depend on sugar, followed on 26 July 1942.

How much?

The first sweet ration was 2 oz a week, about 60 g, roughly half of a traditional quarter pound bag: see [what is a quarter of sweets?](#) A month later the ration was doubled for eight weeks, then cut to 3 oz, about 90 g, a week.

Sweets needed ration coupons, and families found ways to stretch them. The Woolworths Museum, which records the history of the old Woolworths shops, notes that adults, particularly pensioners, handed over their coupons for the little ones, and that the start of sweet rationing brought long queues at Woolworths pick and mix counters: see [Woolworths pick and mix, the story](#)

The false start of 1949

The war ended in 1945, but rationing did not. When sweets were finally taken off ration on 24 April 1949, while sugar was still rationed, there was a rush on sweet shops, and stocks ran short. On 14 July 1949 the government announced that sweet rationing would return, and from 14 August it was back, at 4 oz a week.

At the time, the return of rationing was presented as necessary to feed people in parts of Europe under British control, whose economies had been wrecked by the fighting. That was only part of the story. With many men still in the armed forces, an austere economy and less help from the United States, there was not enough food to go round, and strikes, especially by dock workers, made things worse.

The end, in 1953

Sweet rationing finally ended in February 1953. On 4 February, the Minister of Food announced that the rationing and price control of chocolate and sugar confectionery ended that day. Contemporary newspapers, collected by the food history site CooksInfo, suggest the expected rush was muted, with one report calling the assault on the sweet shops a damp squib.

Sugar itself stayed rationed until September 1953, and food rationing in Britain did not end completely until 1954.

Sweets in wartime

For the sweets people did get during the war, and what they missed, see [sweets in wartime Britain](#)

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/