

The history of the sweet shop

From the sweeties.net wiki

A sweet shop, the British name for what Americans call a candy store, is a shop that sells mainly sweets, often far more of them than an ordinary grocer. For centuries, some sweet makers also sold from their own premises, making the sweets on site.

Georgian glass jars

The image of a sweet shop window full of jars is old. In 1825 the writer William Hone described confectioners polishing their tall glass jars for Twelfth Day, filled with peppermint drops, elecampane, sugar sticks, hardbake, brandy balls and bullseyes, alongside fresh lollipops: see [what were sweets called in Victorian times?](#)

Two years later, in 1827, a shop in the Yorkshire village of Pateley Bridge began selling sweets. It is still trading, in a building dating from 1661, and in 2014 Guinness World Records listed it as the oldest continuously trading sweet shop in the world: see [the oldest sweet shop in England](#)

Sweets on the street

Not every Victorian bought sweets in a shop. In 1851 the journalist Henry Mayhew counted about 200 street sellers of sweet stuff in London, selling rock, candies and hardbake by the halfpenny worth. Between them, he reckoned, they sold about 70 tons of sweets a year, and a typical seller took about 20 shillings a week and cleared about 10.

By the quarter

In the shop, loose sweets were weighed out by the shopkeeper, and the classic British unit was the quarter, a quarter of a pound or about 113 g: see [what is a quarter of sweets?](#) Near schools, a different kind of shop grew up, the tuck shop, from tuck, a slang word for food: see [the history of the tuck shop](#)

The Woolworths counter

In 1909 Woolworths opened its first British shop, in Liverpool, with sweets at tuppence a quarter, and its pic'n'mix counter became a high street fixture for a century. When sweet rationing began in 1942 there were long queues at Woolworths sweet counters, and the museum that records the chain's history says the whole nation queued again when it ended in 1953: see [the history of pick and mix](#)

The revival

Old style sweet shops have made a comeback. Mr Simms Olde Sweet Shoppe, a chain of shops styled on Victorian sweet shops and selling mainly boiled sweets, opened its first shop in Leek, Staffordshire, in

September 2004 and has since grown to dozens of branches in the UK and Hong Kong. Today sweet shops sell everything from regional sweets such as Blackpool rock to vegan and allergy friendly ranges.

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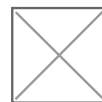
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