

Why is my toffee grainy?

From the sweeties.net wiki

Sweets made from boiled sugar fall into two families. Hard sweets, caramels, toffees and nougats are non crystalline: the sugar sets as a smooth, even mass. Fudge and fondant are crystalline, full of tiny sugar crystals that give a creamy texture. Grainy toffee is a toffee that has crossed over into the wrong family: see [how is toffee made?](#)

Why crystals form

A boiling sugar syrup holds far more sugar than cold water could. As it cools, it is supersaturated, and the sugar is ready to come out of solution as crystals. Once a few crystals appear, they give the rest something to grow on, and the graininess spreads.

The usual causes

- **Stirring the boiling syrup.** Stirring helps crystals start. Recipes for toffee apples, for example, tell you to stop stirring once the sugar has dissolved and the syrup is boiling. Old fudge recipes that were stirred all through the boil turned out crumbly for the same reason.
- **Crystals on the side of the pan.** As the syrup boils, sugar crystals form on the sides of the pan above the liquid. If they fall back in, they can seed the whole batch. Cooks brush the sides with a pastry brush dipped in water, or butter the sides of the pan, to wash them back into solution.
- **Undissolved sugar.** If the sugar had not fully dissolved before the syrup came to the boil, the leftover grains act as seeds.

Ingredients that help

Some sugars get in the way of crystals. Glucose syrup and invert sugar, a mix of glucose and fructose, both help stop ordinary sugar crystallising, which is one reason some toffee recipes include golden syrup, which is about 55 per cent invert syrup, or glucose: see [what is invert sugar?](#) and [what is glucose syrup?](#)

Grainy on purpose

Graininess is only a fault when you wanted smooth toffee. In fudge, the crystals are the point, as long as they stay tiny: see [why is my fudge grainy?](#)

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