

Marzipan

From the sweeties.net wiki

Marzipan is a paste of ground almonds and sugar, sometimes flavoured with almond oil or extract or rosewater. It is eaten on its own, shaped into figures, or rolled thin and used to cover cakes: see [how is marzipan made?](#)

Where it came from

There are two proposed lines of origin, and they may both be true. One runs through the Hanseatic port towns of northern Europe, where marzipan became a speciality. Lübeck marzipan now has protected geographical status, and the city's makers, such as Niederegger, still guarantee that their marzipan is two thirds almonds by weight. Königsberg, in old East Prussia, also had its own golden brown marzipan.

The other line runs through Al Andalus, the Muslim ruled parts of medieval Spain. In Toledo, where the first written reference to mazapán dates back to 1512, it is eaten all year round, and Toledo marzipan is protected too.

The name

The old English name was marchpane, which seems to mean March bread, and Shakespeare used it in Romeo and Juliet. The German name marzipan has since pushed it out. The Italian marzapane is recorded earlier than the word in any other language, but where it ultimately comes from is still unclear.

Marzipan around the world

- **Britain.** Christmas cake is covered with marzipan under white icing, the Easter Simnel cake has a layer inside and another on top, lightly toasted, and Battenberg cake, which comes from England, is wrapped in it.
- **Scandinavia.** Marzipan pigs are eaten around Christmas in Denmark, Sweden and Norway.
- **Germany.** Marzipan loaves and small marzipan potatoes are given at Christmas, and a marzipan lucky pig at New Year.
- **Sicily.** In Palermo, marzipan is shaped and painted to look like fruit, especially at Christmas and on All Souls' Day.

What is in marzipan fruits

Marzipan Fruits, Bysel, as recorded by Open Food Facts. Sugar, almonds (27 per cent), lactose from milk, glucose syrup, sorbitols, invertase, stabilisers, the colours curcumin, carmine, plain caramel and paprika extract, and shellac. Compared with Lübeck's two thirds almonds, that is a very different sweet.

Allergy and diet points

- **Almonds.** Marzipan is made from almonds, a tree nut, so it is unsafe for anyone with a tree nut allergy: see [which sweets contain nuts?](#)
- **Milk.** The marzipan fruits recipe here contains lactose from milk: see [milk in sweets](#)
- **Carmine and shellac.** The same recipe is coloured with carmine and glazed with shellac, both from insects, so it is not vegan: see [what is carmine?](#) and [what is shellac on sweets?](#)
- **Plain marzipan.** Morrisons labels its natural marzipan vegetarian and vegan, as recorded by Open Food Facts.

In our pick and mix

We do not sell marzipan. Each sweet we do sell has a card that opens up to show its full ingredients and allergens.

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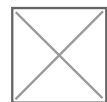
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