

Dutch liquorice

From the sweeties.net wiki

Dutch liquorice, called drop in the Netherlands, is a black or dark brown sweet made from the extract of liquorice root. Drop is popular above all in the Netherlands, and it is also eaten in the Scandinavian countries and in western and northern Germany. Dutch, German and Nordic liquorice typically contains ammonium chloride, which gives it a salty edge.

A Dutch habit

According to the Dutch Wikipedia article on drop, about 80 per cent of people in the Netherlands eat drop at least sometimes, and 14 per cent eat it regularly. Together they get through about 32 million kg a year, around 2 kg a person. The Netherlands is the biggest maker of drop in the European Union, producing about a third of the EU's drop and liquorice extract, ahead of Spain and Germany.

How drop is made

Liquorice roots are dried, ground, mixed with water, filtered and thickened into block liquorice. The drop maker dilutes it again and mixes in sugar, flavours such as honey or salmiak, and a thickener such as modified starch. Heated to 135°C, the starch turns the mix into a dough, which is pressed into moulds made of maize starch and left to harden for 36 hours at 65°C. The starch is then blown off and the sweets are glazed: see [how is liquorice made?](#)

The word drop probably comes from the solidified drops of liquorice root extract sold in 1603. At about the same time in England, Pontefract cakes came on the market: see [Pontefract cakes](#)

Where the salty taste comes from

The salty taste of drop comes mainly from ammonium chloride, called salmiak, rather than from ordinary salt, although some recipes add a little salt too. Sweet drop often contains a little, between 0.5 and 2 per cent, hidden by more sugar. Double salt drop, dubbelzout, can contain up to 8 per cent, and some sugar free drop more than 10 per cent: see [how is salt liquorice made?](#)

How much is too much

Liquorice root contains glycyrrhizic acid, which is about fifty times sweeter than sugar. Eaten in large amounts, it can raise blood pressure. The effect is linked with about 95 mg of glycyrrhizic acid a day or more, which for drop with an average 0.1 per cent works out at about 95 g of drop a day. According to the same article, 1 to 2 per cent of Dutch drop eaters eat more than 100 g a day: see [liquorice and blood pressure](#)

In our pick and mix

We do not sell Dutch drop, but we do sell [SW049](#) and [SW048](#). Recipes differ between makers, so each card opens up to show the full ingredients and allergens for the sweets we actually stock.

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