

Beyond the Basics: Fondants and Grained Confections

Fondant-based and Grained Confections

Fondants play a critical role as a graining agent and base in fudges, creams, cordials and mint confections. Understanding fondant and graining principles is key to their successful use for consistent quality.

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Much has been already written about both fondant-based and grained confections. Relatively recent articles have been published on fondant, including Mark Jarard's 2011 PMCA presentation, *Fondant-based Centers*, and this author's 2016 AACT presentation, *Fondant and Cream Basics for the Confectioner*. A panel discussion on troubleshooting fondant use was combined with other Beyond the Basics presentations at the 2021 PMCA Virtual Production Conference.

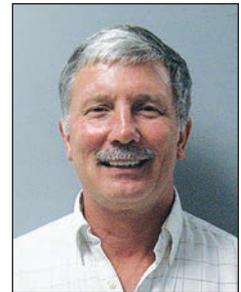
Two major uses of fondant are as a graining agent and as an ingredient base in fudges and certain cast creams. In addition, fondant is also widely used as a base for many popular confections such as creams, cordials and mints. This article will investigate fondant-based and grained confections, looking specifically at their definitions, various types, ingredients used, manufacturing techniques and applications.

Fondant is a saturated sugar paste. A more formal definition of fondant is a partially crystalline confectionery ingredient with numerous small sugar crystals held together by a saturated sugar syrup. Approximately 50 percent of fondant is

crystalline sugar, while the remainder is a syrup component that contains dissolved sugars, syrups, humectants and water. Figure 1 outlines a traditional fondant composition. Traditional cooked fondant is a white, semi-solid paste with a particle size of 5–15 μ . Fondant can be made in-house or purchased commercially, typically in a plastic pail or a poly-lined box.

The most common fondant formulations available are 80/20 and 90/10. These numbers refer to the sugar-to-corn syrup ratio. When comparing the 80/20 to the 90/10 fondant, the former will be softer, less prone to drying and possess lower standup characteristics. It is more suitable for depositing, while the 90/10 ratio is more suitable for extruding applications. When stored well-sealed at ambient conditions in 40 to 50 percent relative humidity (RH), fondant can easily have a shelf-life of more than a year. However, when temperature fluctuations occur in storage, there is a possibility that sugar syrup separation can result.

Fondant sugar is also commercially available. It is a dry, pulverized sugar that is usually co-crystallized with dried invert solids. ➤



Randy Hofberger founded R&D Candy Consultants in 2008. He has more than 35 years experience in the confectionery industry. Previously he was employed at Nestlé Confections in the areas of QA and technical applications.