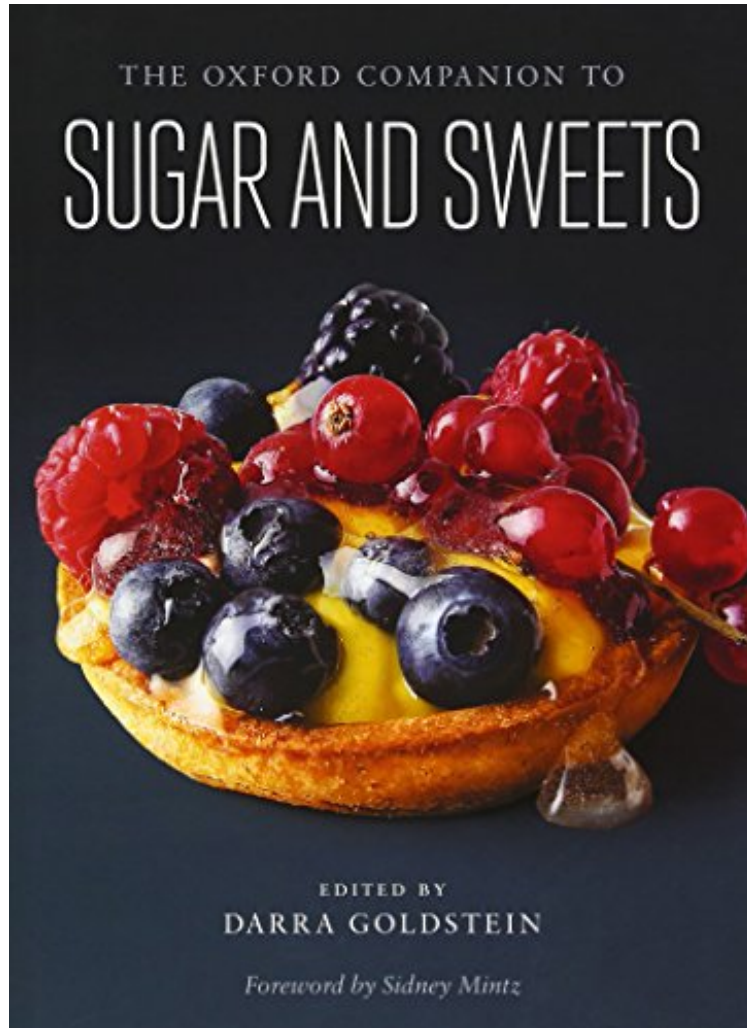


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## The Oxford Companion to Sugar and Sweets (Oxford Companions)

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**From *imusti* :** **The Oxford Companion to Sugar and Sweets (Oxford Companions)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Oxford Companion to Sugar and Sweets (Oxford Companions):

8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. This Sweet Guide Will Become a Classic By Kate McDermott, Art of the Pie I honestly couldn't wait for The Oxford Companion to Sugar and Sweets to be published, and the day it arrived, I immediately sat down to begin exploring it. It was well worth the wait. Of course, I started with articles on pie, pastry and anything remotely related (all are fabulous). But, each time I open it I find myself detouring through articles as diverse as what sound, pitches, and timbres of instruments we relate to sweet tastes, and the sexual innuendos of sweetness and sugar going all the way back to the Old Testament. Sugar and Sweets makes me feel like a

little girl again and the many hours I happily explored volumes of The World Book learning something new on every page. The Oxford Companion to Sugar and Sweets will have an honored place in the reference section of my food books, but it is one that I will also enjoy reading purely for sweet pleasure, too. 6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. An absolutely fascinating, readable, and often unexpected encyclopedia of sweets - writ very large! By Mark Stevens I've spent about ten hours now with the Companion to Sugar and Sweets, and I've never owned an encyclopedia this readable. I was expecting a catalogue of candies and desserts: a little history, maybe some recipes, fun trivia about our proverbial sweet tooth, all wrapped up in a beautiful package. But this is SO much more than that. Entries on my old childhood favorites - bonbons, cotton candy, Marshmallow Fluff, whoopie pie, s'mores - appear right next to entries that I never expected, but that somehow connect to the idea of sweetness, the history of sugar, and the development of our present sweets culture. For example, entries on breakfast cereal (the first presweetened cereal came on the market in 1939, and in the early 1950s Kellogg's "Sugar Smacks" had 55% sugar weight); children's literature (Hansel and Gretel, Winnie the Pooh, The Little House on the Prairie, and Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, among many others); sugar in cosmetics (three broad categories: exfoliation, depilatory, and luster); sexual innuendo ("sweetie," "sugar pie," "honey," and all those endearments dating back all the way to the Old Testament); and the Boston Molasses Disaster ("occurred in 1919 when a molasses storage tank located in a congested city neighborhood ruptured. A flood of viscous molasses estimated to be 20 feet high and 160 feet wide tore through the streets at nearly 35 miles an hour" killing 21 and injuring 150, mostly children attracted by the molasses that had been leaking out of this poorly maintained tank for years). There are entries on difficult topics - slavery, racism, child labor (still a current issue, particularly on cacao plantations), sugar barons, politics (Hawaii's history as it pertains to the U.S. is downright scary), and much else. These are all part of our history that should not be ignored, and kudos to Darra and her team for including them. I learned more about the history of, and intersections between, different cultures and peoples in this Companion than I ever have in a history textbook. In fact, I find it overwhelming trying to review this book - it is so wildly eclectic, and it has so many authors (each of whom signed the entries they wrote), that it makes me want to just list everything for fear of painting an inaccurate portrait of the book, or simply beg the prospective reader to peek at the table of contents. There are 600 entries, and many are surprising, most downright fascinating. All of the entries refer readers to other related entries, so that you might start with something quite specific like "Peeps" and then head over to an entry on "marshmallows" and then on to "medicinal uses of sugar" (since marshmallow root was an effective throat lozenge). And down the rabbit hole we go! In terms of the production quality, it is outstanding - which is a good thing because the book is not cheap. That luscious fruit tart on the jacket alone goes a long way towards justifying the \$65 price tag! The two glossy color inserts (with well-chosen images - including an Andy Warhol Lifesavers ad!), and the colorful collage of hard candies on the inside covers, are nice touches. The paper quality is somehow thin enough for the 900 pages not to bulge the binding too much, while also not being too thin - text and the numerous black and white images do not bleed through the page. In short, this is my new favorite encyclopedia, and it will stay on my bedside table to take me wherever it leads - but it is beautiful enough to sit out on my coffee table, too. The perfect gift for all the foodies in my life, and I'm sure I'll be buying more for my family and friends for the holidays! 6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. I LOVE this book! By Amy G. Peck I LOVE this book! I'm a foodie with a big sweet tooth and this gorgeous tome had me at the luscious fruit tart on the cover. As soon as I opened it and saw the great collage of hard candies on the insides of the front and back covers, I was sucked in (forgive me, I couldn't resist!) I spent a long time just flipping through the book as soon as it arrived; the color inserts are fun and unusual and kept me entertained for quite a while. An Andy Warhol Lifesavers ad, a portrait of a sugarcane worker, a candy-flavored laxative ad, even a comic strip where Batman and Robin distract the mummy with a Twinkie. And then of course there are the entries themselves. The range of this huge book (more than 900 pages) is mind boggling. It is really easy to get sucked into any one topic, and then deposited somewhere totally unexpected, because of all the links to related entries. I was reading about meringues - one of my favorites - which sent me over to the entry on French sweets, and then on to sugar sculptures, and to weddings, then on to the history of wedding cakes and cake decorating, a biography of Marie-Antoine Careme, and on and on! I bought it thinking it would make a beautiful and fun coffee-table book - now I'm thinking I should keep it by my bedside table. This book would make a great gift for anyone who loves food, sweets, history, travel... pretty much everyone you know!!

A sweet tooth is a powerful thing. Babies everywhere seem to smile when tasting sweetness for the first time, a trait inherited, perhaps, from our ancestors who foraged for sweet foods that were generally safer to eat than their bitter counterparts. But the "science of sweet" is only the beginning of a fascinating story, because it is not basic human need or simple biological impulse that prompts us to decorate elaborate wedding cakes, scoop ice cream into a cone, or drop sugar cubes into coffee. These are matters of culture and aesthetics, of history and society, and we might ask many other questions. Why do sweets feature so prominently in children's literature? When was sugar called a spice? And how did chocolate evolve from an ancient drink to a modern candy bar? The Oxford Companion to Sugar and Sweets explores these questions and more through the collective knowledge of 265 expert contributors, from food historians to chemists, restaurateurs to cookbook writers, neuroscientists to pastry chefs. The Companion takes readers around

the globe and throughout time, affording glimpses deep into the brain as well as stratospheric flights into the world of sugar-crafted fantasies. More than just a compendium of pastries, candies, ices, preserves, and confections, this reference work reveals how the human proclivity for sweet has brought richness to our language, our art, and, of course, our gastronomy. In nearly 600 entries, beginning with "la mode" and ending with the Italian trifle known as "zuppa inglese," the Companion traces sugar's journey from a rare luxury to a ubiquitous commodity. In between, readers will learn about numerous sweeteners (as well-known as agave nectar and as obscure as castoreum, or beaver extract), the evolution of the dessert course, the production of chocolate, and the neurological, psychological, and cultural responses to sweetness. The Companion also delves into the darker side of sugar, from its ties to colonialism and slavery to its addictive qualities. Celebrating sugar while acknowledging its complex history, *The Oxford Companion to Sugar and Sweets* is the definitive guide to one of humankind's greatest sources of pleasure. Like kids in a candy shop, fans of sugar (and aren't we all?) will enjoy perusing the wondrous variety to be found in this volume.

"Sweets have a special hold on our senses. Whether it's taffy or turnovers, sandesh or sherbet, maple sugar or macarons, our enjoyment of sweets is informed by traditions and memories. This encyclopedia explores sweet things globally and across time, from the honeycombs our ancestors gathered to the crackly nougatine of today's experimental chefs. But its greatest achievement is that, in over 900 intellectually nourishing pages, it never neglects the senses. Like the medieval subtleties that entertained royal diners with elaborate conceits, this book is playful, surprising, and always-captivating." --Heston Blumenthal

"For all of those who are fans of the pleasure of eating sweets and the perplexities of thinking about their surprisingly complex histories, this book will be a necessity. Who had ever heard of a delicious encyclopedia? This is it." --Adam Gopnik, *The New Yorker*

"For all of us who care about sweets, who make them, study them, write about them, take pleasure in them and find everything about them fascinating—from their histories and creators to the cultures, myths, and sometimes magic that surround them—the publication of *The Oxford Companion to Sugar and Sweets* is a landmark. How we lived without it is a puzzlement; that we have it now is reason to celebrate." --Dorie Greenspan, author of *Baking Chez Moi*

"Like a fresh batch of delicious cookies straight out of the oven, Darra Goldstein's enormous collection of stories, facts, and essays on sweets is a tantalizing delight that is impossible to put down. Whether you are a passionate pastry cook, a curious omnivore with a sweet tooth, or simply an information geek (or all three, like me), you will enjoy reading this book. It is a must for any food, anthropology, or history enthusiast." --Pichet Ong, chef consultant and author of *The Sweet Spot*

"The new Oxford Companion to Sugar and Sweets tempts the intellect more than the palate. It's a thick encyclopedia crammed with plenty of history, social science, physiology and culture." --Florence Fabricant, *New York Times*

"Well-planned entries, which go into great depth, address topics such as pie, children's literature (Hansel and Gretel play their part), sour cream, Tate and Lyles golden syrup, and New Orleans and Twelfth Night cake, also known as king cake ... This reference will serve any kitchen, chef, patisserie, or person with a sweet tooth. Readers will delight in the history and details of the consumption of confections." --Library Journal

"Under the brilliant baton of food writer and historian Darra Goldstein, 265 experts in the culinary world have weighed in with well-researched commentaries about an irresistible subject." --Rozanne Gold, *Huffington Post*

"From la mode to zuppa inglese, this 920-page volume is encyclopedic in ambition - shedding light on myriad aspects of our favorite carbohydrate and its impact around the globe since the beginning of time - and eclectic in execution. Entries by 265 contributors, chemists to chefs to culinary historians, are by turns pedagogical, whimsical, and data-rich." --Stanford Magazine

"The book is as addictive as its subject..." --Dessert Professional

"The Companion abounds with curious theories and facts. Who knew, for example, that the familiar plastic flying toy known as the frisbee was named after the American bakery manager William Russell Frisbie, whose popular flat pies were sold in tin plates with his name imprinted in bold letters on the base? Or that the expression 'to eat humble pie' is related to 'umble' pie - a poor man's dish containing deer offal? Or that early lollipops, first manufactured in Canada at the end of the nineteenth century, were pieces of hard candy stuck on the end of a slate pencil 'meant to keep school pupils' hands clean'?" --The Times Literary Supplement (UK)

"General readers and foodies will discover much to delight over here, while those doing reference work will find solid, substantial answers." --Booklist

"This interesting, approachable text will be of use to students in a number of disciplines, serving as a starting point for research in advertising and marketing fields, hospitality programs, study of cultural foodways, and the history and technology of sugar." --CHOICE

"The most popular reference book of the year is this "tour de force" on all things sugary and sweet" --Library Journal

About the Author  
Darra Goldstein is the Willcox and Harriet Adsit Professor of Russian at Williams College, having earned her Ph.D. in Slavic Languages and Literatures from Stanford University. She combines her love of literature with a passion for food studies, a field she helped pioneer by founding *Gastronomica: The Journal of Food and Culture*, which has been called a culinary *New Yorker* for its incorporation of photography, poetry, and art alongside thoughtful articles on all aspects of the foods we eat. She serves as the Series Editor for *California Studies in Food and Culture* (UCAL Press) and the Food Editor for *Russian Life* magazine. Goldstein is also a prolific author who has written or edited thirteen books, including four award-winning cookbooks.