

M&M's

Come on! Is there anyone who doesn't like M&M's? Certainly, not me! I mean, it's mom, apple pie, and M&M's! People have been enjoying them since 1941, and they're currently sold in over 100 different countries. More than 400 million individual M&M's are produced everyday in the United States. The candy-coated chocolate concept originated from a method used by soldiers which allowed them to carry chocolate without it melting.

Forest Mars, Sr., son of the founder of Mars Company, copied the idea in the 1930s during the Spanish Civil War when he saw soldiers eating British-made *Smarties*, chocolate pellets covered with a hard-panned coating of sugar syrup. Mars received a patent for his own process in 1941, and production started in the same year.

The "M's" in M&M stand for Forest Mars, Sr. and Bruce Murrie, the son of Hershey's chocolate President William Murrie, who had a 20% share in the product,. The arrangement allowed M&M's to be made with Hershey chocolate, since Hershey had control of the rationed chocolate at the time. During the war, M&M's were sold exclusively to the military.

Peanut M&M's were introduced in 1954. They appeared at the same time that the tagline "Melts in your mouth, not in your hand" debuted. Almond-centered M&M's were marketed and withdrawn in 1960, but were appeared again in 1988 and became part of the regular production line in 1992. In 1991, peanut butter M&M's were released. In 1996, Mars introduced "Mars Minis," smaller versions of the traditional M&M's.

Other varieties were also produced; some succeeded, and some didn't. The *Dulce de Leche* M&M's, for example, were introduced in 2001 to areas with large Hispanic populations, but they proved unpopular.

The story of M&M's is certainly a success story, but there *have* been a few bumps along the way. In 1982, for example, the Mars Company rejected M&M's being used in the new movie *ET*. Competitor Hershey, on the other hand, took a chance and OK'ed use of their *Reese's Pieces*, and, with the blockbuster success of the movie, its candy sales increased dramatically , perhaps by as much as 300%. [Wikipedia]

