

Terry's Chocolate Orange Balls, a Delicious History

By Erica Jakeway November 30, 2024

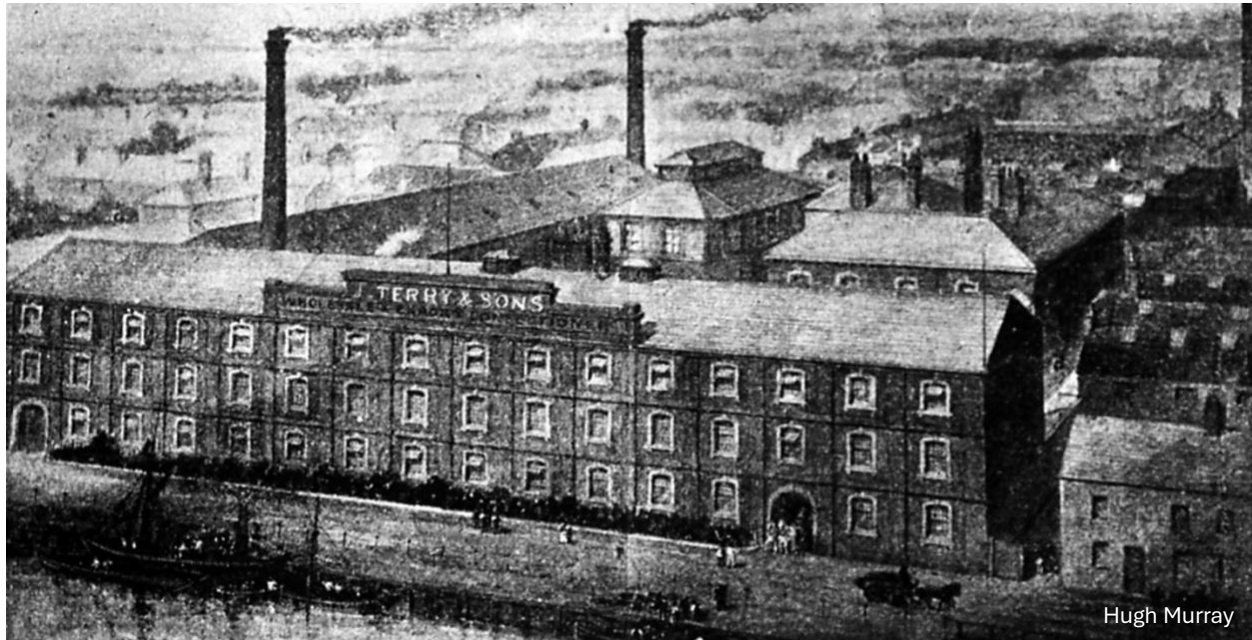


Indulgent treats and the holidays go hand in hand. There are those we create, arising from beloved traditions or out of excitement for something new. Then there are those waiting on the shelves of the store. The special morsel from which the mere sight of sparks joy. For me, that treat comes in a shiny gold ball with a chocolate orb hidden inside: Terry's Chocolate Orange Ball.

For those of us Chocolate Orange lovers, the holidays are not complete until we hear the candy break open with a ceremonial crack. For others, the orange may be a delight of happenstance that appears at a party or is discovered on a prepared dessert. Whatever your connection, this treat has endured the test of time. Its old-fashioned roots bring nostalgia to a holiday season that embraces the traditional most of all.

While you can appreciate the Chocolate Orange Ball all on its own, understanding its rich history makes enjoying one that much sweeter. Since the treat has been around for almost 100 years, it has a shared love that brings together generations, old and young. With that in mind, what could be more fitting than understanding the generations of the Terry family it took to bring it to us?

A Chocolate Family Affair



The tale of the Chocolate Orange and the Terry family's legacy begins in England. Chemist Joseph Terry was invited to join a confectionary shop called "Bayldon and Berry" in 1823, upon Williams Bayldon's retirement. After Robert Berry died in 1825, a man named George Terry became his partner and the shop Terry & Berry was born. A short time later, George Terry left the company and Joseph Berry gained sole ownership in 1830.

To mark this shift, Terry renamed the company Terry's of York. He had newfound freedom to explore new creations and innovations, which were enhanced by his chemistry background. Originally known for sweets and lozenges, the company now had new offerings including chocolates, candied peels, confectionaries and marmalades. Terry also expanded the business by using the North Eastern Railway network to bring his products all around the country, including London. Near the end of his life, his business included his three sons Joseph Jr., Robert, and John. It was aptly renamed Joseph Terry & Sons to reflect these generations. The original chocolate shop still has the Terry's name on the building in St. Helen's Square.

When Joseph Terry retired, the company was handed over to his eldest, Joseph Jr. To meet increasing demand, he opened a new steam-powered factory at Clementhorpe in 1854. With access to the River Ouse, this was notably good for business transit. Twice a week boats provided them with critical supplies, including sugar, cocoa and coal. Joseph Jr.'s success was broadly recognized and he was honored with a knighthood in 1887.

Apples to Oranges

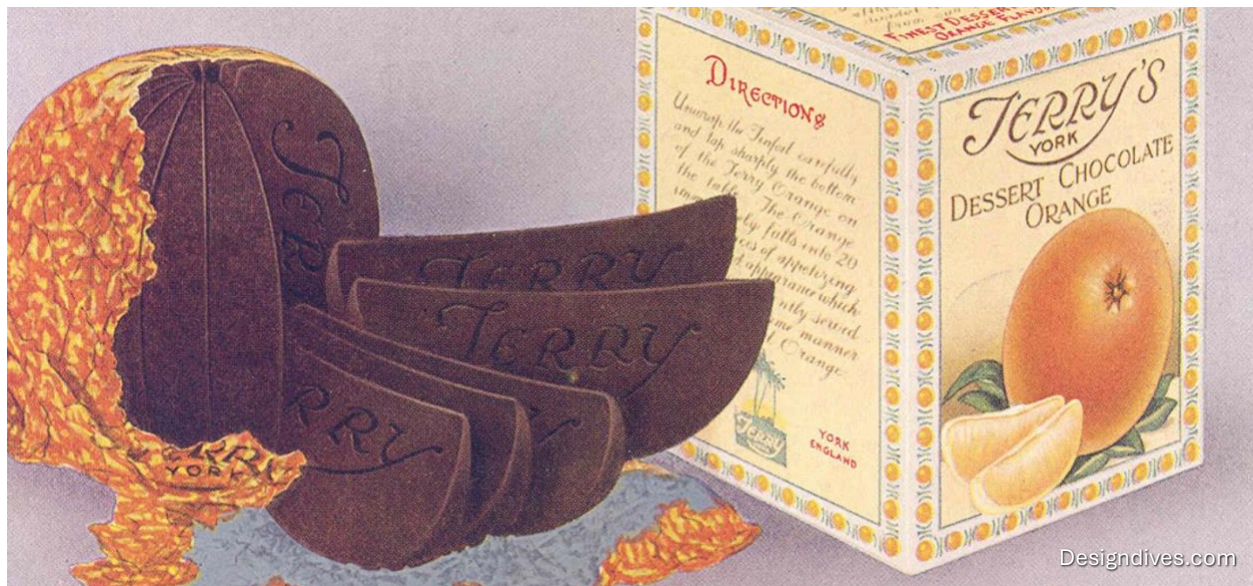


Jump to the year 1923. Joseph Terry's great-grandsons, Frank and Noel, are now in charge. The company built a new gorgeous art-deco-style factory on Bishopthorpe Road and now changed the name to Terry's Chocolate Works. It only took until 1926 for them to begin launching new products, starting with...*not* the Chocolate Orange Ball. Terry's Chocolate World actually invented the Chocolate Dessert Apple first. This delicious treat came as you may have guessed, that traditional segmented ball.

Following that success, a new product was launched in 1931. No, *still* not the chocolate orange ball. It was called Terry's All Gold, a plain chocolate assortment.

Finally, in 1932, we herald the arrival of the beloved Terry's Chocolate Orange. Originally known as the Chocolate Dessert Orange, the candy was made to resemble an actual orange. The use of orange oil in the master recipe brings an intense additional flavor to the chocolate candy. The shared convention of round shape that also broke into segments made this confection an immediate success.

Tough Breaks and Perseverance



With the arrival of World War 2, Terry's Chocolate Works Factory was needed for a less delicious purpose: Airplane parts. To aid the war, the factory was used by F. Hills and Sons of Manchester as a shadow factory to crank out and repair propellers.

Upon return of the factory, it then became known as "Terry's of York. When the Terrys could finally go back to work, supply chain issues were plagued by the post-war sugar rationing and imports of cocoa were limited. To make the best of these limitations, the decision was made to focus on oranges over apples. This ended the run of the original fruit dessert in 1954.

As the company grew and changed over the decades, flavors and shapes also came and went. The chocolate lemon, for instance, debuted in 1979 and lasted three years before it was discontinued in 1982. Terry's Chocolate was not merely confined to fruit either. Other chocolate balls included birthday cake, toffee and cookie crunch, to name a few.

The product has even expanded beyond its rounded shape. Versions of segments, bars, and cookies have made appearances over the years. There are even chocolate orange mini eggs made for Easter, providing another festive opportunity to share Terry's Chocolate with loved ones. Carambar & Co encourages you to hide those for the little ones, though they certainly would look nice on a spring table.

The Company Changes Hands



The brand Terry's Chocolate Orange has changed many hands over the years. In 1977 they were acquired by Colgate-Palmolive, which then moved to United Biscuits. In 1993, Kraft purchased Terry's brand. Their UK factory was shut down in 2005, with production moving to continental Europe. A devastating change at the time, the Chocolate Works factory has transitioned over the years into other commercial and residential developments. Repairs have also been made to preserve its distinctive and beautiful clock tower. The factory remains a gorgeous landmark within York.

In 2018, the most recent shift brought it to Strasburg France under Carambar & Co. The iconic brand has continued to grow and flourish. In 2022 they reported selling 44 million Chocolate Orange Balls worldwide. They are enjoyed by enthusiasts globally including the United Kingdom, Ireland, the United States, Australia, New Zealand and Japan.

While keeping in touch with tradition, Carambar & Co. has kept the original recipes for the milk and dark chocolate varieties. To grow the brand, they have introduced new flavors to bring in new customers. Their creativity has been rewarded with almost triple the sales in the United States. They even introduced Terry's Chocolate Orange Bars in 2020, though finding those are more limited in the states.

The Charm of a Terry's Chocolate Orange Ball



How has the Chocolate Orange Ball worked itself into so many families' traditions? The experience of opening a chocolate ball is unique to the candy. As you open the box, you pull out your candy, still wrapped in foil. Then, without unwrapping it, you tap it against a hard surface. A table or countertop works nicely here. Then you can unwrap it, unveiling 20 segmented pieces, just right for sharing or saving.

While this is fun to do at any age, sharing the act of tapping the chocolate ball with kids simply cannot be beat. My grade school kids thought this was serious fun and were able to accomplish this task solo. The seasonal arrival of these treats in the candy aisle sets up an annual anticipation of the merriment to come.

Terry's Original Orange Balls – Milk vs Dark Chocolate



Unsure which original chocolate orange to buy? My family of four, including two kids and two adults, was happy to indulge. Lucky for us, both the light and dark chocolate oranges are delicious. We did find some distinct differences here that could help a chocolate lover weigh their decision.

Our impression of Terry's Chocolate Orange Milk Ball was a sweet treat with balanced orange and chocolate flavor. The kids' chorus of "Mmmms" reflected the overall enthusiasm. Chocolate is smooth and has a very bright flavor, with the orange lingering through the whole bite. I personally liked the blend of chocolate orange here much better than your filled orange truffle found in those sampler boxes.

The dark chocolate version is wonderful too. The big difference between milk and dark here is the balance of flavor. Terry's Chocolate Orange Dark Ball has a rich cocoa that dominates the first impression. The orange flavor awakens with more subtlety here, coming into focus as the bite continues. Since the dark chocolate ball tastes less sweet, I looked into the sugar content. Both the milk and dark chocolate balls have the same 19 grams of sugar per serving, which confirmed my suspicion. It's not the amount of sugar but the bitterness from the intense cocoa changing our perception of the product. I also found it interesting that the milk chocolate ball had an artificial vanilla flavoring called vanillin as the last ingredient. The dash of vanilla plays well to amplify the sweetness of the orange oils in the milk chocolate.

So, in selecting just one, it comes down to what you desire most: the balance of chocolate and orange in the milk ball or the rich cocoa intensity provided by the dark. It also comes down to

your basic chocolate preference as a family. For those who lean toward milk chocolate, I have more good news. Terry's Chocolate uses this same milk chocolate master recipe on some newer confectionary delights. Let's explore those!

Terry's Chocolate Orange Popping Candy Ball



Have you ever thought, what if I threw Pop Rocks into my mouth along with a Terry's Chocolate Orange Ball? That would be close to this experience. These balls are sold only in milk chocolate flavor, so you can expect that same classic recipe.

When my family tried it out, we observed the popping candy on the back of the orange slice. As we began eating the candy, we felt an immediate crunch from the popping candy. The popping starts as the chocolate swirls around your mouth. Most interestingly, we noticed the popping continued after the chocolate was gone. It falls under the category of a sensation and fun gimmick that you or the kids enjoy or gives you permission to stick with the original. There is no inherent flavor difference, just the sensation from the candy.

Terry's Chocolate Orange Snow Balls



As we were eagerly filling our shopping basket with every Terry's chocolate flavor we could find, the Snow Ball made it home with us. We had zero idea what it was, but given our fondness for the brand, we knew it was a definite try. In keeping with the Chocolate Orange Popping Candy Ball, this confection has an additional inclusion. In this case, the ball features crispy snow-white candy pieces.

Looking at the orange pieces, it was difficult to tell apart the Popping Candy Ball from the Snow Ball. As my family tasted the orange pieces, the texture was very similar. Both gave a nice crunch. The main difference, to us, was that the Snow Ball did not give you the pop and sizzle sensation. One kid preferred the Popping Ball; the other the Snow Ball. I likened the Snow Ball to an elevated crunch bar. I also could be content with crunch or no crunch, since I am here predominantly for the chocolate and orange flavor.

Terry's Chocolate Mint Milk Ball



Introduced in 2023, Terry's Chocolate Ball forewent the orange and went full holiday mint. It's not a completely new idea. Terry's originally made a chocolate Orange Mint, which was taken off the market in 2012. Twelve years later, Terry's reintroduced this idea using a fun clay animation campaign. The "Board of the Unsquare" revealed Terry's Chocolate Mint Milk Ball was on its way.

I was surprised the Terry's Chocolate Mint Milk Ball took a little work to find, at least in my corner of the Midwest. Determined to sample every flavor I could, I found only one local store carrying it and took the extra drive to acquire one. Though the use of a ball is not conventional for mint, Terry's stayed committed to its tap and unwrap convention that makes their treat so fun. Since the segmented orange markings would be weird here, the outside has a linear design which appears more leaf-shaped. The internal design is also no longer pulp-shaped, but more dew like. It is not inherently mint decor, but a good change as well.

Our initial reaction when tasting the Chocolate Mint Milk Ball was to notice the intensity of the peppermint oil within the chocolate. The mint flavor was not as aggressive as a York Peppermint Pattie. It was on par with Fannie May's Mint Meltaways. The general consensus was, if you like chocolate mint, this bit of indulgence is for you. Those who do not prefer those flavors in the house, would pick the orange flavor every time.

The Newest Ball on the Candy Block



In 2024, Terry's Chocolate surprised their fans with a new flavor again, which is actually no flavor. The news was announced with another clay animation, asking the question on the character's mind, "I've always wondered what chocolate orange would taste like without the orange?" The answer: Terry's Milk Chocolate Ball. This move has been seen by connoisseurs of the balls as a bold choice. Previous confections have relied on flavored oils to enhance the chocolate. Without the oils, the quality of the chocolate is now playing the starring role.

Is the quality of the chocolate alone good enough to garner purchases alongside the others? That story is still unfolding. Unfortunately, I was unable to find it locally to sample. If this gains in popularity, we may have our chance in the United States to weigh in.

Terry's Chocolate Balls for Breakfast



If the first thing that popped into your mind was to just eat chocolate oranges for breakfast, I like how you think. For a slightly more nutritious approach, Terry's website has a fun pancake recipe. The basic premise is using chunks of Terry's Chocolate in place of chocolate chips. This leaves room for the personal choice between milk and dark chocolate. To guild the lily here, they add Terry's Chocolate ice cream (not available in the US) and chocolate syrup. It certainly elevates the humble flapjack, screaming holiday fun.

Looking for other ideas? In my mind, there is an equal opportunity for chocolate chip muffins Chocolate Orange Ball style. Why stop there? Any homemade breakfast rolls could have melted Terry's Chocolate as a part of the gooey inside. For an even simpler approach, it could make a great drizzle on top. All the chocolatey possibilities make waking up a treat.

Baking with Balls



Lucky for us, Terry's site offers plenty of [recipe](#) inspiration for those looking for a little chocolate orange magic. You can find kid-wowing treats, including the chocolate bark pictured above featuring Rudolph. For mint lovers, the Chocolate Mint Milk Ball has been turned into a

delectable mouse. Mini Cheesecakes and Rocky Road Doughnuts round out the Chocolate Orange flavor options.

For a creative baking type, the possibilities are endless. Chocolate balls could substitute for chocolate chips and chocolate bars in many sweets or adorn desserts as fun decorations. In my kitchen, I am eyeing the dark chocolate orange segments for the melted chocolate component in my favorite scratch brownie recipe. While we cannot get the delicious-looking Terry's Chocolate Orange Ice Cream Tub, I think a good quality chocolate ice cream with any of the chocolate ball chunks on it could be amazing. Plus, there's always the possibility of melting some down to make a hot fudge recipe. With these kinds of plans, it looks like I am going to need to stock my pantry.