

## Sugar Cutter (or Nips)

Nowadays our sugar comes in different colours and different forms – lumps, soft, brown, granulated – and all instantly useable from the packet. Before the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was sold as a ‘sugarloaf’, or a cone up to 60cm tall and it needed to be cut into manageable pieces, first by the grocer and then subsequently in the home.

These cutters sometimes called sugar nips, were used like scissors to cut pieces from the loaf or cone and were considered an ‘essential’ in the kitchen of those with a sweet tooth<sup>1</sup>.



In medieval times, sugar was brought to Europe from the near East and sold in tiny quantities as it was so expensive. It became more available as the centuries passed. Now 75% of our sugar in the UK is made from a root vegetable – sugar beet with the remainder being from sugar cane grown all around the world. Sugar cane was grown extensively using slave labour in the Caribbean and southern US, where it was a valuable commodity.<sup>2</sup>

A pair of sugar nips was once used as a murder weapon in an Agatha Christie mystery<sup>3</sup>. It was also one of the features in the BBC ‘A History of the World in 100 objects’ program – giving the Museum 2 out of the hundred in its collection<sup>4</sup>. (The Euklisia Rug is our second example from the 100 objects)

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.oldandinteresting.com/sugar-nippers.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_sugar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_sugar)

<sup>3</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sugar\\_nips](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sugar_nips)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/ahistoryoftheworld/objects/3KrYjJGHRzGsidNnCcK97g>