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CHECKLIST

Sweet Box Packaging, Labelling and Costing Checklist

An assorted gift box takes the shelf life of its shortest-lived sweet. One kalakand in a box of kaju katli makes the whole box a same-day box. FSSAI publishes the per-sweet figures, so this is a decision you can settle with data in October rather than guess at in November.

Updated October 2026 7 Pages FY 2026-27

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Shelf-Life Bands
FSSAI's own list, from same-day to around 30 days.

DD/MM/YY
The Date Format
Every sweet is inside three months, so the day is always required.

8 Nov
Diwali 2026
Count the production window back from it.

What's Inside

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01 Build the Box Around Its Shortest Sweet

The one decision that cannot be fixed later. Everything else on this list follows from what you put in the box. The five bands below are FSSAI's own, from its Guidance Note on traditional milk products. Except for the thirty-day band the sweets named are the common ones, not the full list of roughly a hundred, and they are guidance rather than a prescribed limit: use them as the starting point for your own shelf-life decision.

FSSAI's shelf-life bands for Indian sweets

- ✓ **Same day: kalakand and its variants** — Start Here
  To be kept at room temperature and consumed on the same day. Including butterscotch kalakand. A single piece of this in an assorted box makes the entire box a same-day box, which is almost never what a gift box is for.
  FSSAI Guidance Note No. 14/2020, Safety and Quality of Traditional Milk Products

- ✓ **Two days, refrigerated: the Bengali and milk sweets**
  Milk products and Bengali sweets, among them badam milk, rasgulla, ras malai, rabri rasmalai, shahi toast, rajbhog, cham cham, sandesh and malai roll. FSSAI names around two dozen in this band; these are the common ones. To be kept in a refrigerator and consumed within two days of manufacture. A box containing any of them is a box that needs cold storage all the way to the recipient.

- ✓ **Four days: the burfi and peda family**
  Ladoo and khoya sweets, among them milk cake, mathura peda, plain burfi, milk burfi, pista burfi, coconut burfi, chocolate burfi, safed peda, boondi ladoo and coconut ladoo. FSSAI names about thirty here, including motichor modak, kheer kadam and lal ladoo, so check the full list if your sweet is not above. Four days from the date of manufacture, and this is the band most mixed boxes actually sit in.

- ✓ **Seven days: ghee and dry fruit sweets**
  Sweets with ghee and dry fruits, among them dry fruit ladoo, kaju katli, ghewar, sakkar para, gur para, shahi ladoo, moong burfi, aata ladoo, dry fruit gujia and moti boondi ladoo. This is the longest list in the note, around forty sweets, so check it for yours. Seven days from manufacture, and the first band that survives a courier and a few days on a desk.

- ✓ **Around 30 days: the dry, low-moisture sweets**
  Atta laddoo, besan laddoo, chana laddoo, chana burfi, anzeer khajur burfi, karachi halwa, sohan halwa, gajjak and chikki. That is the whole band, not a selection. These are the corporate-gifting sweets, and the only ones that tolerate being made in bulk two weeks out.

What that means for the box you are actually selling

- ✓ **Mark the box with the shortest life in it, not an average**
  If the box holds a four-day burfi and a thirty-day chikki, the box is four days. There is no averaging and no best case. Decide this before the artwork is printed, because the date you print has to be the one the box can keep.

- ✓ **A courier adds days you do not control**
  A box posted to a corporate recipient can sit in a lobby over a weekend. If the contents are in the two-day or four-day band, a delivered box is a complaint waiting to happen. Bands four and five are the ones that travel.

- ✓ **Separate the fridge boxes from the shelf boxes**
  Sweets with milk products are stated to have a short life of one to four days and to be prone to microbial growth. Mixing a refrigerated sweet into a shelf-stable box forces the whole box into the fridge, which changes how you display it and how the customer must keep it.
  FSSAI Guidance Note No. 14/2020, Safety and Quality of Traditional Milk Products

- ✓ **Decide the production window backwards from 8 November**
  Work from the band you are selling. A four-day box made on the 5th is finished on the 9th. A thirty-day box can be made in late October, which is the only way to produce real volume without a night shift on the 6th.

02

Which Rules Apply to Your Box

The same sweets in the same shop can fall under different obligations depending on how the box is made up. Settle which case you are in before you design a label.

The distinction that changes everything

- ✓ **A box packed in advance and put on the shelf** — Check First
  This is a pre-packaged commodity. It is made up without the purchaser being present, in a predetermined quantity, so the packaged-commodity declarations apply to it in full. Everything in section 04 is for this box.

- ✓ **A box filled to the customer's order at the counter**
  Made up in front of the purchaser, to the quantity they ask for. The packaged-commodity rules are written around a pack made without the purchaser present, so a box assembled while they watch is a different case. Do not assume it is exempt from everything: the food safety and date-display expectations still apply, and your own weighing still has to be on a verified scale.

- ✓ **The same split shows up in GST**
  CBIC's own FAQ answers the counter case directly: where a retailer supplies an item loose out of a larger package, that supply is not a supply of packaged commodity for the purpose of the GST levy. The question is how the thing reaches the customer, not what it is.
  CBIC Tax Research Unit FAQ F. No. 190354/172/2022-TRU, 17 July 2022

- ✓ **Write down which case each product line is in**
  Most sweet shops run both at once: trays at the counter and pre-packed gift boxes on a shelf behind. Tag each line, because the labelling obligations differ and an inspector will look at the pre-packed shelf first.

What applies whichever case you are in

- ✓ **The tray or container of loose sweets shows its dates**
  For non-packaged sweets sold from a tray, the container at the outlet should carry the date of manufacture and the best before date, so a customer can see the age of what they are buying. FSSAI's guidance puts display of shelf life for non-packaged products alongside the requirement for pre-packaged ones.

- ✓ **Your FSSAI licence number is displayed**
  On the premises, and carried onto what the customer takes away. A gift box leaving your shop should not be anonymous.

- ✓ **A batch or production reference against each run**
  Not a requirement, but the thing that makes a complaint answerable. In the festive week you may produce several batches of the same sweet in a day, and without a reference on the tray or the box there is no way to tell which one a query relates to, or how far a problem reaches.

- ✓ **Weighing is on a verified, stamped scale**
  A sweet box is sold by weight and the scale is a legal measuring instrument. Verification and stamping before use is a requirement in its own right, and the penalty for using an unverified scale is separate from anything to do with labelling.

03

Costing the Box

Do this before the artwork, because the label carries the price. This costs the box, not the recipe: our free food cost calculator already handles ingredients and recipe costing, and there is no point doing it twice.

Build the cost up in this order

- ✓ **Each sweet at its own cost per kilogram, on the real fill**
  An assorted box is several products at several costs, so cost each component at its own rate per kilogram rather than averaging across the box. Multiply by the grams you actually put in: weigh three finished boxes off your own line and use the average. The gap between the intended 500 g and the real fill is where a festive margin quietly goes, and it is also what your net quantity declaration has to match.

- ✓ **Packaging as its own line**
  The box, the inner tray, the sleeve, the ribbon, the label and the carry bag. Price them per box from your own supplier invoices rather than estimating: on a premium festive pack the packaging is the line most often left out of the sum, and it is the one you can actually look up.

- ✓ **Assembly labour per box**
  Time one person packing ten boxes, divide, and cost it at your actual wage rate. Hand-packed assorted boxes are far slower than a single-sweet box, and festive volume is exactly when you are paying overtime for it.

- ✓ **Wastage and breakage on the fragile lines**
  Kaju katli and chikki break. Add the loss you actually see, measured rather than assumed.

Then decide the price

- ✓ **Set the margin on the finished box**
  Work from the total of the four lines above, not from the sweets alone. A box priced on sweet cost plus a margin is a box sold at a loss once the packaging and the packing time are counted.

- ✓ **Check the price against the shelf life you printed**
  A four-day box has to sell within four days. If it does not, the unsold stock is a write-off and the real margin is lower than the sheet says. Shorter-life boxes need either a lower volume or a faster channel.

- ✓ **Settle the GST treatment before you print the MRP** — Costs Money To Get Wrong
  The MRP on the label is inclusive of all taxes, so the tax treatment has to be settled here, before the artwork in section 04 and not at the till. Where a box holds items that do not share a single rate, the composite and mixed supply rules decide the answer. Our free Diwali Sale GST Invoice Format sets out those rules and quotes the provision.

- ✓ **Price the corporate order separately**
  A bulk order is a different cost line: less retail packaging per box, more assembly, often delivery. Costing it off the shelf price is how a large festive order turns out to be the least profitable work of the season.

- ✓ **A note on the tax and labelling points here**
  Where this checklist touches GST and the labelling rules it is general guidance, not tax or legal advice, and nothing in it should be relied on for a filing or an inspection. Check anything with a tax or licensing consequence with your own adviser.

04

What Goes on a Pre-Packed Box

For the box made up in advance. Work through this before the artwork goes to print, because a label reprint in the last week of October is not a reprint you will get.

The declarations with confirmed clause numbers

✓ **Name and address of the manufacturer or packer**
Where you make and pack it yourself, that is your own name and the address of the premises. Rule 6(1)(a) of the packaged commodities rules.
Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodities) Rules, 2011

✓ **The common or generic name of the commodity**
What the thing is, in plain words: assorted Indian sweets, kaju katli, dry fruit box. Rule 6(1)(b).

✓ **Net quantity** Commonly Wrong
The weight of the sweets, not of the box, the tray or the sleeve. This is the declaration most often got wrong on a gift pack, because the packaging on a festive box is heavy. Rule 6(1)(c).
Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodities) Rules, 2011

✓ **Month and year of manufacture or pre-packing**
Rule 6(1)(d) of the packaged commodities rules. The food labelling rules go further than this for a food pack, so the third group on this page is the one that governs the date you actually print.

✓ **Retail sale price, as maximum retail price inclusive of all taxes**
This is the figure you arrived at in section 03. The declaration itself is Rule 6(1)(e). Rule 2(m) prescribes its wording and permits two forms: "Maximum or Max. retail price Rs ... inclusive of all taxes" or "MRP Rs ... incl., of all taxes". The abbreviation Rs in that declaration is the prescribed wording, so leave it as it is.

Also required, and added by later amendments

✓ **Consumer care details**
A name, address, phone number or email for complaints. Required under the packaged commodities rules by a later amendment. The sub-clause letter is not printed here because it could not be confirmed against the consolidated text.

✓ **Unit sale price**
The price per unit of weight shown alongside the retail price, in rupees to two decimals. It became enforceable in April 2023 after the date was deferred several times, which is part of why it is the most-missed declaration of the lot. Some small packs are reported to be outside it, so if your box is small or cheap enough that you think it might be, check the current position rather than taking either answer from here.

✓ **Best before or use by, for a perishable pack**
Required under the packaged commodities rules as well as the food labelling rules. For sweets the food rule is the stricter one, so follow the next group.

The food labelling rules, which are stricter on dates

✓ **Date of manufacture or packaging AND expiry or use by** Commonly Wrong
Both shall be declared. Best before may also be used, as optional or additional information, but it does not replace the mandatory pair. Our Bakery Business Startup Guide sets out the same position at length if you want the reasoning.
FSS (Labelling and Display) Regulations 2020, Regulation 5(10)

✓ **The format is the day, the month and the year**
Where the shelf life is up to three months the format is DD/MM/YY. Every sweet in section 01 is inside three months, including the thirty-day band, so a month-and-year date is never enough on a sweet box.
FSS (Labelling and Display) Regulations 2020, Regulation 5(10)

✓ **The list of ingredients**
For a pre-packaged milk product the ingredients list and the dates should invariably be mentioned. An assorted box carries several products, so the list has to cover what is actually in the box.

✓ **Allergen information, in the prescribed form**

Sweets are dense with the common allergens: milk, tree nuts, wheat, and in some recipes peanut or sesame. On a pack these are declared separately as "Contains ..." followed by the names of the allergy-causing ingredients. The packaged-label rule prescribes that wording. The permission to show allergens as symbols instead sits in the menu-display rule, which is a different provision covering menu cards and boards, so do not carry it across to a pack: on a box, use the words.

FSS (Labelling and Display) Regulations 2020, Regulation 5(14)

✓ **The veg or non-veg mark**

Required on food packs. Most sweets are vegetarian, but anything with egg takes the other mark, and a mixed box has to be marked for what it actually contains.

Two clause numbers you will see quoted and should not copy

Several widely shared summaries attach specific sub-clause letters to the country-of-origin, best-before, consumer-care and unit-sale-price declarations. Those requirements are real and are listed above, but the letters come from post-2011 amendments and could not be confirmed against a consolidated official text, so they are not printed here. The same caution applies to the section number people cite for the made-in-front-of-the-customer carve-out: the definition sits in the Act rather than the rules, and quoting the wrong provision on a label is worse than quoting none.

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This checklist is provided by Petpooja for informational purposes. Verify all compliance details with official sources before acting.

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PETPOOJA INVOICE

Bill the festive counter *without the arithmetic*

Petpooja Invoice raises GST-compliant bills with the tax worked out automatically, handles barcode scanning and weighing-scale integration, and keeps batch and expiry against each line, so a sweet counter selling by weight is billed and tracked without anyone doing sums at the till.

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