Licorice is a popular candy throughout the world due to its distinct flavour, which is derived from the root of *Glycyrrhiza glabra*, a legume found in Europe and Asia. The root is also used as a tobacco flavouring agent and in traditional medicine. The active ingredient is Glycyrrhizin, which is 33 times sweeter than sucrose. Unfortunately, Glycyrrhizin is also toxic in large quantities. A recent Western News interview with Dr. Stan Van Uum warned that “binge eating the popular confectionary can send your blood pressure soaring, as well as cause dramatically lower levels of potassium in the body, resulting in abnormal heart rhythms and even paralysis”. Moderation is key: avoid eating in excess of 150 g/day.

The seeds of anise, star anise, and fennel contain the chemical anethole, which is similar in taste to licorice. These are regularly used for cooking and are a key ingredient in arak, absinthe, Jägermeister, ouzo, and sambuca. Star anise is also a major source of shikimic acid for synthesizing the anti-influenza drug Tamiflu.


**Glycyrhizin molecule**

**Anethole**

**Shikimic Acid**