TUC crackers: the salty Belgian cracker of 1958

From the crackers.biz wiki

TUC is a salted, golden yellow cracker that began in Belgium in 1958 and once belonged to the French company LU. It is now owned by Mondel?z International, and in the UK it is made by United Biscuits and sold under the Jacob's name. Flavours have included cheese sandwich, barbecue, sour cream and onion, paprika and pizza.

The cracker you eat by the handful

Some crackers are made for cheese. TUC is made for snacking. Light, salty and golden, it is the cracker that disappears from the bowl at parties, and the one that fills lunchboxes in its sandwich form. It is also, a little surprisingly, Belgian.

Belgium, 1958

Wikipedia records that the TUC brand originated in Belgium in 1958 and that it belonged to the French biscuit company LU, the maker of the Petit Beurre, whose story is in LU and the Petit Beurre. Today TUC is owned by Mondel?z International, which also owns LU, Nabisco and Cadbury.

Who makes TUC for Britain

TUC's manufacturing is shared around. Wikipedia says that Jacob Fruitfield Food Group produces TUC crackers for markets in Europe, Asia, North America and North Africa, that in the UK they are made by United Biscuits, and that in Italy they are made by Saiwa, a Mondel?z company. In Britain they carry the Jacob's name, the old Irish biscuit brand famous for the cream cracker; see the Jacob's story.

What a TUC is like

Wikipedia describes TUC as octagonal, golden yellow and salted. It is light and crisp, with a savoury, salty taste, and that combination of salt and crunch is what makes TUC so easy to keep eating.

The flavours

Wikipedia lists original, cheese sandwich, barbecue, sour cream and onion, bacon, garlic and herbs, paprika, pizza and smoky bacon among more than twenty varieties made over the years in different countries. On our shelf:

- Jacob's TUC original, and a twin pack for parties.
- TUC sandwich, cream cheese and chive.

- TUC sandwich, sweet chilli and sour cream.

The TUC Original label lists ammonium bicarbonate and bicarbonate of soda as its raising agents; our article on ammonium bicarbonate explains why cracker makers use it.

TUC or Ritz?

The two great snacking crackers are often compared:

- **Ritz:** round, with a scalloped edge and seven holes, buttery tasting, American, launched by Nabisco in 1934; see Ritz crackers and Nabisco.
- **TUC:** octagonal, salted, Belgian, from 1958.

Both are snacking crackers with more flavour than a plain water biscuit, and both suit cheese, dips and parties.

How to serve TUC

- **On their own,** in a bowl, as a salty snack.
- **With cheese:** a slice of mild cheddar or a soft cheese on a TUC is a quick canapé; see the best crackers for cheese.
- **With dips:** TUC is sturdy enough for a thick dip such as hummus or a cream cheese dip.
- **With soup:** crumbled over a bowl of tomato soup.
- **In a lunchbox:** the sandwich versions come ready filled.

What does TUC stand for?

Nobody seems to know for certain, and Wikipedia does not explain the name. What is certain is that the three letters have been on cracker packets since 1958, and that in Britain they sit beside the Jacob's name.

TUC and cheese

TUC's salty crunch makes it a good partner for milder cheeses, whose flavour it lifts rather than fights:

- **Mild or medium cheddar,** in a thin slice.
- **Soft cheeses** such as brie or a spreadable cream cheese.
- **Cheese and pickle,** for a quick snack.

Stronger cheeses, such as a mature cheddar or a blue, are often happier on a plainer cracker, such as a water biscuit or an oatcake, which lets the cheese do the talking; see the best crackers for cheese.

A party platter

For a party, a mix of crackers gives guests a choice of shapes and flavours. A simple plan: TUC and cream crackers for mild cheeses and dips, Carr's water biscuits for strong cheeses, and oatcakes for something heartier. Put out the cheese about half an hour early so it comes to room temperature, and keep the

crackers in their packs until the last moment so they stay crisp.

Keeping TUC crisp

Crackers are dry, and like any biscuit they soften in damp air once opened. Fold the pack tightly or tip the crackers into a tin with a good lid. If they have gone soft, a few minutes in a low oven, then cooling on a rack, will usually bring back the crunch; see how long biscuits last.

The cracker family

TUC is one member of a big family of savoury biscuits. Cream crackers are made from a fermented, laminated dough, docked with holes and baked very fast in a very hot oven, as we explain in how cream crackers are made; water biscuits such as Carr's Table Water are thinner and plainer; and oatcakes, such as Nairn's rough oatcakes, bring oats to the cheeseboard. For a crisp, plain partner to cheese, try Jacob's cream crackers alongside your TUC.

What to drink with them

TUC crackers are a party snack, so they suit whatever is being served.

Diet notes

TUC crackers are made with wheat, and the sandwich fillings may contain milk. They are salted, so check the pack for salt and allergy information.

Quick facts

Began	Belgium, 1958
Once owned by	LU of France
Owner today	Mondel?z International
Made for the UK by	United Biscuits, as Jacob's
Taste	Salted, golden yellow
Flavours	Original, cheese sandwich, barbecue, sour cream and onion, paprika, pizza and more

Questions people ask

Where do TUC crackers come from?

Belgium. Wikipedia says the TUC brand originated there in 1958.

Who makes TUC crackers?

The brand is owned by Mondel?z International, having belonged to LU. In the UK, TUC is made by United Biscuits and sold under the Jacob's name.

What is the difference between TUC and Ritz?

Both are light, savoury crackers. Ritz is a round, buttery tasting American cracker from Nabisco, launched in 1934, with a scalloped edge; TUC is a salted Belgian cracker from 1958. Both now belong to Mondel?z brands, although UK TUC is made by United Biscuits.

What are TUC sandwiches?

Two TUC crackers with a savoury cream filling. We stock cream cheese and chive, and sweet chilli and sour cream, versions.

What goes with TUC crackers?

They are good on their own, with cheese, with dips, or crumbled over soup.

Sources

1. TUC (cracker), Wikipedia
2. Ritz Crackers, Wikipedia
3. Lefèvre Utile, Wikipedia
4. TUC Original (5000168002286), Open Food Facts

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