Jacob's crackers: cream crackers, Cheddars, TUC and the Aintree bakery

From the crackers.biz wiki

Jacob's is Britain's best known cracker brand. It began with W. and R. Jacob's Dublin steam biscuit factory of 1853, which made cream crackers from around 1885, and opened its first English factory in Aintree, Liverpool, in 1914, which Wikipedia says remains the main UK producer. In the UK, Jacob's is part of United Biscuits and pladis, and sells cream crackers, Cheddars, TUC, Krackawheat and Cornish Wafers.

Britain's cracker brand

If there is one name on the cracker shelf, it is Jacob's. Its cream crackers have been a fixture of British kitchens for generations, and the Jacob's name now covers a whole family of savoury biscuits, from Cheddars and TUC to Krackawheat and Cornish Wafers. We stock 31 Jacob's products, and all but one of them are crackers or savoury snacks, so here is the range, and the story behind it. Wikipedia also lists Cracker Crisps among the brand's savoury products. Cream crackered is Cockney rhyming slang for knackered; see take the biscuit. For Jacob's flaky Cornish Wafers, see Cornish biscuits.

From Waterford and Dublin

Jacob's began in Ireland. W. and R. Jacob grew from a Waterford bakery, and in 1853 the brothers opened the W. and R. Jacob's Steam Biscuit Factory in Dublin, which became one of the city's great employers. The cream cracker was invented in Dublin by Joseph Haughton and made by William Jacob from around 1885. The full Irish story, including the Kimberley and the Jacob's that stayed in Ireland, is in Irish biscuits and the Jacob's story.

Aintree, 1914

Jacob's crossed the Irish Sea just before the First World War. Wikipedia records that Jacob's first English factory opened in 1914 in Aintree, Liverpool, and that it remains the primary UK producer of Jacob's products, including cream crackers and Twiglets. In 1922, the year the Irish Free State was founded, a separate English company was formed, and the Dublin and Liverpool businesses went their own ways.

Today, Wikipedia says, the Jacob's brand is owned in the UK market by United Biscuits, part of pladis, the group that also owns McVitie's and Carr's; see who owns Britain's biscuit brands.

Twiglets

Aintree also makes one of Britain's oddest and best loved snacks. Wikipedia describes Twiglets as a wheat based snack with a distinctive knobbly shape, like twigs, whose taste, often compared to Marmite, comes mainly from the yeast extract in the coating. They were invented in 1929 by the French biscuit maker J. Rondalin, a technical manager at Peek Freans' Bermondsey factory, and from the 1930s until the 1970s they were sold at Christmas in drum shaped tins as a smart cocktail snack. Today, Wikipedia says, they are made in Aintree by Jacob's; the Bermondsey story is in Peek Freans.

Cream crackers

The cream cracker is the heart of the range: a fermented wheat dough, laminated into thin layers, pricked and baked hot and fast, which is why it is flaky and blistered. The name comes from the way the mixture is creamed during manufacture, not from cream; see how cream crackers are made. On our shelf: Jacob's cream crackers 200g, 300g, the twin pack, high fibre and the snack pack multipack.

Cheddars and Mini Cheddars

Jacob's biggest cheese biscuits came from other bakeries. Wikipedia records that Cheddars were originally made by Crawford's, that Mini Cheddars were created by McVitie's in 1984 and 1985, and that they have carried the Jacob's name since 2014, except in Ireland. On our shelf: Baked Cheddars, Red Leicester Cheddars, Smoked Cheddar and the Mini Cheddars sharing box; see cheese biscuits.

TUC

TUC, the salty Belgian cracker launched in 1958, belongs to Mondel?z, but in the UK it is made by United Biscuits and sold under the Jacob's name. On our shelf: TUC Original, the twin pack and the TUC sandwiches in cream cheese and chive and sweet chilli and sour cream; see TUC crackers.

Krackawheat, Cornish Wafers and Choice Grain

Wikipedia lists Krackawheat and Cornish Wafers among Jacob's crackers, and Choice Grain adds a multigrain cracker to the range. On our shelf: Krackawheat, Cornish Wafers and Choice Grain.

Flatbreads, crispbreads, Savours and Bites

The newer ranges follow modern snacking: flatbreads, crispbreads with chive, Savours bakes, Savours thins , the Bites range, Mediterranean crackers and the On the Go fibre boost snack packs.

Biscuits for Cheese

The Jacob's selection for the cheeseboard is Biscuits for Cheese, eight varieties in one box. Its very name shows how the British think of crackers: in Britain a cracker is still a biscuit, while in America it would be a cracker and never a biscuit; see biscuit vs cookie. For more mixed boxes, try Jacob's savoury favourites, and for matching crackers to cheeses, see the best crackers for cheese.

Club moves to McVitie's

Not every Jacob's biscuit has stayed with the name. Club, the chocolate biscuit bar that began as Jacob's Club Milk in Dublin, was sold in Britain under the Jacob's name for decades; after Danone sold the Jacob's brand to United Biscuits in 2004, Club moved to the McVitie's name in 2013; see Club biscuits. In Ireland, Jacob Fruitfield closed its Tallaght plant in 2009, after 156 years of making biscuits in Dublin.

Hovis digestives

Diet notes

Most Jacob's crackers contain wheat, and cheese varieties contain milk; some contain barley, sesame or mustard. Check the pack for allergens and for vegan or vegetarian suitability.

Quick facts

Began	W. and R. Jacob's steam biscuit factory, Dublin, 1853
Cream crackers	Made by Jacob's from around 1885
English factory	Aintree, Liverpool, opened in 1914
Owner in the UK	United Biscuits, part of pladis
Famous crackers	Cream crackers, Cheddars, TUC, Krackawheat, Cornish Wafers
Also makes	Twiglets and Mini Cheddars

Questions people ask

Who owns Jacob's crackers?

In the UK, the Jacob's brand belongs to United Biscuits, part of pladis. In Ireland, the Jacob's biscuit business followed its own path after 1922.

Where are Jacob's cream crackers made?

Wikipedia says Jacob's first English factory opened in Aintree, Liverpool, in 1914, and remains the primary UK producer of Jacob's products, including cream crackers and Twiglets.

What types of Jacob's crackers are there?

Cream crackers, Cheddars and Mini Cheddars, TUC, Krackawheat, Cornish Wafers, Choice Grain, flatbreads, Savours, Bites, Crispbreads and the Biscuits for Cheese selection, among others.

Are Jacob's cream crackers vegan?

Cream crackers are made from wheat flour, vegetable oil and yeast, but recipes change, so check the pack for milk and other allergens.

Why is there a Jacob's in Ireland and in Britain?

The Dublin and Liverpool businesses went their separate ways in 1922, when a separate English company was formed; the story is in our Irish biscuits guide.

Sources

1. Jacob's, Wikipedia
2. Cream cracker, Wikipedia
3. Cheddars, Wikipedia
4. TUC (cracker), Wikipedia
5. Jacob Fruitfield Food Group, Wikipedia
6. Twiglets, Wikipedia
7. Club (biscuit), Wikipedia

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