Seeded crackers: the seeds in crackers, oatcakes and crispbreads, and what to check on the pack

From the crackers.biz wiki

Seeded crackers are crackers, oatcakes or crispbreads with seeds such as linseed, sunflower, pumpkin, sesame, chia, poppy or nigella baked into the dough or scattered on top. Sesame is one of the 14 allergens that UK food businesses must declare, so anyone with a sesame allergy should always check the pack, including any may contain warning.

Crackers with a crunch of seeds

A plain cracker is a blank canvas. Add seeds and it becomes something else: nuttier, crunchier, more interesting with cheese, and prettier on the board. Seeded crackers now fill a whole section of the cracker aisle, from Scottish oatcakes studded with linseed and chia to Swedish style crispbreads crusted with sesame. Here is what goes into them, how the main seeds differ, which seeded crackers we sell, and what to check if you have an allergy. For sesame biscuits and crackers, and sesame as an allergen, see sesame biscuits. For pumpkin seed crackers, see pumpkin biscuits.

What seeded crackers are

A seeded cracker is simply a cracker, oatcake or crispbread with seeds mixed into the dough, pressed onto the top, or both. Seeds add texture, flavour and colour, and some, such as linseed and chia, also help bind a dough. They appear across every kind of cracker: rye crispbreads, oatcakes, wheat thins and sourdough flatbreads. For the wider family, see crackers and crispbread.

The main seeds

These are the seeds you will most often find in seeded crackers:

- **Linseed, or flaxseed.** Wikipedia says the seeds of the flax plant, Linum usitatissimum, are known as flaxseed or linseed, and come in brown and golden varieties. Both kinds turn up in crackers.
- **Chia.** Wikipedia describes chia seeds as the edible seeds of Salvia hispanica, a plant of the mint family native to central and southern Mexico, and says the Aztecs ranked chia among their most important crops. Chia seeds can absorb up to 12 times their weight in liquid and form a gel.

- **Nigella.** The small black seeds of Nigella sativa, also called black cumin or kalonji, native to western Asia and eastern Europe. Wikipedia says they are used as a spice in breads, including some varieties of naan.
- **Sesame.** Pale, nutty seeds, used on crispbreads and crackers across the world, and one of the 14 declared allergens.
- **Sunflower, pumpkin, poppy and millet.** Sunflower and pumpkin seeds add bulk and crunch, poppy seeds add a speckle and a gentle flavour, and millet, strictly a small grain, adds a fine crunch.

Why chia and linseed matter to bakers

Chia and linseed do more than decorate. Wikipedia notes that chia gel is used in place of eggs in baking, and is a common substitute in vegan baking. In a cracker dough, seeds that swell and turn slightly sticky with water help hold everything together, which is especially useful in crackers made without wheat.

Seeded crackers in our range

According to the ingredient records we hold, which you should always check against the pack in your hand:

- Nairn's Super Seeded organic oatcakes list organic wholegrain oats with brown flaxseed, sunflower seeds and chia seeds, and contain gluten.
- Nairn's gluten free super seeded wholegrain crackers list gluten free oats, maize and rice flour with brown linseed, millet and chia.
- Ryvita Thins multi seed list wheat flour with a mix of millet, brown linseed and golden linseed, and some rye.
- Ryvita sesame crispbread lists wholegrain rye flour, rye bran and sesame seeds.
- Peter's Yard seeded sourdough flatbreads list pumpkin, sunflower, poppy and nigella seeds, and the record notes they are made in a bakery that handles nuts and sesame.
- Dr Karg's pumpkin seed thins list wholemeal wheat with chopped pumpkin seeds, sesame and linseed.

We also sell Ryvita pumpkin seed and oat crispbread and, for the lunchbox, Jacob's black seed and quinoa crackers. For the makers, see Ryvita, Peter's Yard and Nairn's.

Allergy notes

Seeds bring allergy questions. The Food Standards Agency lists sesame among the 14 allergens that UK food businesses must declare, alongside cereals containing gluten, milk, nuts and others. Seeded crackers often contain sesame, and even those that do not may be made in bakeries that handle it, which is why some packs carry may contain warnings. If you have a sesame allergy, read the full ingredients and allergy advice on every pack, every time, as recipes change. Most seeded crackers also contain wheat, rye or oats; for crackers labelled gluten free, see gluten free crackers.

Seeded crackers with cheese

Seeded crackers come into their own on a cheeseboard. The nutty crunch of a seeded oatcake suits a crumbly Lancashire or a strong cheddar, sesame crispbreads suit soft goat's cheese, and a seeded sourdough flatbread is a good match for blue cheese and chutney. For more pairings, see the best crackers for cheese and oatcakes.

Making seeded crackers at home

A popular home recipe uses almost nothing but seeds: mix linseed, chia, sunflower, pumpkin and sesame seeds with water and a pinch of salt, leave them until the chia and linseed have formed a gel that binds the rest, spread the mixture very thin on a lined tray, and bake low and slow until crisp, before breaking it into shards. Others add seeds to a simple dough of flour, oil, water and salt. Either way, store them in an airtight tin to keep them crisp, and eat them within a week or so.

Quick facts

What they are	Crackers with seeds in the dough or on top
Common seeds	Linseed, sunflower, pumpkin, sesame, chia, poppy, nigella, millet
Allergen	Sesame is one of the 14 allergens UK businesses must declare
Linseed	Another name for flaxseed
Chia	Seeds of Salvia hispanica, which form a gel in water
Always	Check the pack for allergens and may contain warnings

Questions people ask

What are seeded crackers?

Crackers, oatcakes or crispbreads made with seeds in the dough or on top, such as linseed, sunflower, pumpkin, sesame, chia, poppy or nigella seeds.

Which seeds are used in seeded crackers?

The records we hold for our range list brown and golden linseed, sunflower, pumpkin, sesame, chia, poppy, nigella and millet, in different combinations.

Are seeded crackers gluten free?

Most are not, because they are made with wheat, rye or ordinary oats. Some are made to be gluten free, such as Nairn's gluten free super seeded wholegrain crackers, so look for a gluten free label.

Can people with a sesame allergy eat seeded crackers?

Only if the pack confirms there is no sesame and no may contain warning for it. Sesame is one of the 14 declared allergens, and some bakeries that make seeded crackers also handle sesame.

What is the difference between linseed and flaxseed?

None: they are the same seed. Wikipedia says the seeds of the flax plant are known as flaxseed or linseed, and come in brown and golden varieties.

What are nigella seeds?

Small black seeds of the plant Nigella sativa, also called black cumin or kalonji, used as a spice on breads such as naan and in seeded crackers and flatbreads.

Sources

1. Allergen guidance for food businesses, Food Standards Agency
2. Flax, Wikipedia
3. Chia seed, Wikipedia
4. Nigella sativa, Wikipedia

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