

Hovis Digestive Biscuits: The Wheatgerm Story

From the teas.co.uk wiki

Hovis Digestive Biscuits: The Wheatgerm Story, in summary: A semi-sweet digestive with wheatgerm in the dough, carrying a bread brand's name and sold under Jacob's. Barely sweet with a quiet salt edge, it wants a strong cup, takes a short dunk and sits happily beside cheese.

Last reviewed by the teas.co.uk team in September 2026.

Hovis made its name on wheatgerm, and the germ turns up in this digestive too. Follow that thread and the rest of the biscuit makes sense: plain, wheaty and meant for the same table as the bread.

From germ flour to a biscuit

The story starts in 1886, when a miller, Richard 'Stoney' Smith, worked out a milling process that held on to the wheatgerm; the flour was registered in 1887 as Smith's Patent Process Germ Flour. A national competition in 1890 produced the name, and the winning entry, from Herbert Grime, was Hovis, from hominis vis, Latin for the strength of man. Bread remains the heart of the business, and this digestive goes out under the Jacob's name.

Ownership has changed hands recently. Associated British Foods completed its takeover of Hovis Group in July 2026, and the business now operates alongside Allied Bakeries under the name Hovis Bakeries. For the person holding the pack, what matters is the biscuit, a digestive that takes the germ-flour idea into the biscuit tin. A bread name on a biscuit suits the thing exactly: it eats more like toast than like cake.

Reading the label

The published ingredient list runs from wheat flour, palm vegetable oil and sugar to wheatgerm at 5%, then raising agents, salt, dried whey from milk and natural flavouring. It contains wheat (gluten) and milk, and the product listing marks it as suitable for vegetarians. Sugar sits third, which fits a semi-sweet biscuit, and salt is there by design: it keeps the toasted wheat from tasting flat.

What you get is a sandy, slightly coarse crumb, a toasted-wheat flavour a little nutty at the edges, and sweetness held well back. Nothing is layered on top or sandwiched inside, and that restraint is the point. A barely sweet biscuit leaves the tannin of a strong cup alone, and its open crumb takes in tea quickly, so count two or three seconds in a hot mug and lift it out.

What to pour, and when to reach for it

Reach for it when most of the biscuit tin seems too sugary for mid-afternoon. It wants a proper brew behind it: a malty breakfast blend with milk, or a brisk [Ceylon](#), strong enough to meet the wheat rather than disappear under it. Delicate green teas get buried, so keep those for something lighter. For a gentler cup, a scented [black tea](#) such as [Earl Grey](#) is a reasonable alternative, especially with [cheese](#) on the biscuit.

The same low sweetness is why we also list it among our crackers and crispbreads. Top one with Wensleydale or a gentle Cheddar and pour a strong [English Breakfast](#) beside it for an easy afternoon plate. Once the pack is open, fold the wrapper down tightly or move the [biscuits](#) into a tin; a digestive gives little warning of going stale, because its quiet aroma does not change before it softens.

The packs we stock

- [Hovis Digestive Biscuits, 250g](#) (barcode 5000137046952)

What the label says

The published ingredient list for Hovis Digestive Biscuits, 250g says it contains wheat (gluten) and milk. Check the current UK pack before purchase; formulations and allergen advice can change.

Ingredients, as published: Wheat Flour (with added Calcium, Iron, Niacin, Thiamin), Vegetable Oil (Palm), Sugar, Wheatgerm (5%), Raising Agents: E500, E503, Salt, Dried Whey (Milk), Natural Flavouring.

Typical values per 100g Per 100g

Energy	479 kcal
Fat	20.1g
of which saturates	9.4g
Carbohydrate	64.9g
of which sugars	18.9g
Fibre	3.0g
Protein	8.0g
Salt	1.1g

Ingredient and nutrition information for this product, as published on the manufacturer's label. The pack in your hands is the final word.

What to drink with it

- [Clipper Fairtrade Everyday Tea, 80 Pack 232g](#): A strong everyday blend with milk is the right cup for a quick [dunk](#).
- [Twinings Scotland's Ceylon Tea \(International Blend\), 20 Tea Bags 40g](#): A brisk Ceylon cuts cleanly through the toasted wheat and the salt.
- [Tetley Earl Grey, 50 Tea Bags 125g](#): A scented black tea for the gentler afternoon, or for a digestive with a slice of cheese on top.

Elsewhere in the Hovis range

The full range is on the [Hovis brand page](#).

FAQ

What makes the Hovis digestive different from other digestives? Wheatgerm in the dough, the ingredient Hovis was built on; the published ingredient list gives it at 5%.

Where does the name Hovis come from? It came out of a national competition held in 1890; Herbert Grime's winning entry built it from hominis vis, Latin for the strength of man.

Does the Hovis digestive contain milk? Yes. The published ingredient list includes dried whey (milk) as well as wheat, and the product listing marks it as vegetarian.

Which tea suits a Hovis digestive? A strong, malty breakfast blend with milk or a brisk Ceylon. Delicate green teas get lost against the toasted wheat.

Is it made by Hovis or Jacob's? It carries the Hovis name and is sold under Jacob's. Hovis Group itself passed to Associated British Foods when that purchase completed in July 2026.

Curator's note: Pour a proper strong tea, dunk one for a count of three, and keep the next for a slice of Wensleydale. Lee, [teas.co.uk](#), Tunbridge Wells.

In short: Hovis Digestive Biscuits: The Wheatgerm Story

Field	Detail
Brand	Hovis
Packs we stock	250g
Category	Crackers & Crispbreads
Allergens (as published)	It contains wheat (gluten) and milk.
Sweetness	Semi-sweet, with a quiet salt edge
Best with	A malty breakfast tea with milk
Dunkable	Yes, two or three seconds

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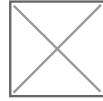
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