

McVitie's Iced Gems: The Party Biscuit Explained

From the teas.co.uk wiki

McVitie's Iced Gems: The Party Biscuit Explained, in summary: Tiny plain biscuits topped with a hard-set cone of icing almost as big as the base. Closer to a sweet than a tea biscuit: never dunk them, keep them dry and serve strong black tea or cold milk.

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

An Iced Gem is really a ratio: a fingernail-sized biscuit carrying a piped cone of hard icing of nearly the same volume. That makes it one of the few things on our biscuit shelf that is not truly a tea biscuit, and it changes how you should store and serve it.

Half biscuit, half icing

Underneath, the biscuit is kept plain and dry to carry the icing. Its job is ballast, stopping each gem from eating like a boiled sweet. On top, the icing is hard-set, not a soft frosting, so it cracks first and then dissolves. Each bite gives two textures a moment apart: first the brittle icing, then the drier, crumbly base.

Sugar leads the published ingredient list, ahead of wheat flour and palm oil, with milk protein, salt and natural flavourings, lemon among them, further down. The colours come from anthocyanins and vegetable extracts of safflower and radish. The allergen advice lists wheat and milk and says the gems may contain soya; the pack in your hands has the final word.

Why five small bags

Size is the problem. A gem is so small that it has a huge amount of surface for its weight, far more than a digestive or a cookie, and both parts suffer when the air gets at them. The base absorbs damp and goes soft instead of crumbling, while the icing turns sticky and loses its brittle crack. A kitchen with the kettle on all morning can do that within a day.

Five sealed bags solve that, since four stay shut while one is open. Each bag is 23g, sized as a handful, which is how people really eat these; nobody takes one at a time. Warmth, oddly, does little harm, because hard icing cracks rather than melting, so a bag survives a warm car far better than anything with [chocolate](#) on it.

Serving them without a dunk

Do not [dunk](#) them. Hot liquid dissolves hard icing on contact, so a dunk strips the gem bare and simply sweetens your tea. Tip a bag into a small bowl instead, for a children's party table, a sweet bite after lunch or a lunchbox treat, and keep the other bags sealed until they are needed.

Sweetness is what the drink has to cut, so reach for tannin or cold milk. A strong [black tea](#) brewed for four minutes and taken without sugar clears the icing from the palate, and a glass of cold milk does the same job for younger guests. A weak or sweetened drink only adds to the sugar, so leave flavoured and syrupy drinks for another day.

The packs we stock

- [McVitie's Iced Gems Biscuits Multipack, 5 Biscuits 115g](#) (barcode 5000168214689)

What the label says

The published ingredient list for McVitie's Iced Gems Biscuits Multipack, 5 Biscuits 115g (barcode 5000168214689) says it contains wheat (gluten) and milk, and it may contain soya. Check the current UK pack before purchase; formulations and allergen advice can change.

Ingredients, as published: sugar, flour (wheat flour, calcium, iron, niacin, thiamin), palm oil, raising agent (sodium bicarbonate), salt, milk protein, colour (anthocyanins), vegetable extracts (safflower, radish), natural flavourings, natural lemon flavouring with other natural flavourings. May also contain soya.

Typical values per 100g Per 100g

Energy	400 kcal
Fat	3g
of which saturates	1.3g
Carbohydrate	86.5g
of which sugars	51.3g
Fibre	2.2g
Protein	4.8g
Salt	0.6g

Ingredient and nutrition data for this barcode: Open Food Facts (openfoodfacts.org), ODbL. The pack in your hands is the final word.

What to drink with it

- [Barry's Tea Gold Blend, 80 Tea Bags 250g](#): A hefty black tea brewed for four minutes without sugar, with enough tannin to clear the icing from the palate.
- [Clipper Fairtrade Everyday Tea, 80 Pack 232g](#): An everyday black tea for a party pot, brewed strong and served unsweetened.
- [Yorkshire Tea Bedtime Brew, 40 Tea Bags 100g](#): A choice from our decaffeinated teas for when an afternoon party runs on into the evening.

Elsewhere in the McVitie's range

- [McVitie's Club Layers Orange, 39g](#)
- [McVitie's Club Mint Biscuit Bars Multipack, 7 Bars 154g](#)
- [McVitie's Club Orange Biscuit Bars Multipack, 7 Bars 154g](#)
- [McVitie's Club Salted Caramel Flavour Biscuit Bars Multipack, 7 x 22g](#)
- [McVitie's Dark Chocolate Digestive Biscuits, 266g](#)
- [McVitie's Digestive Pink Raspberry & Cream Flavour, Limited Edition, 232g](#)

The full range is on the [McVitie's brand page](#).

FAQ

What are Iced Gems? Tiny plain [biscuits](#) topped with a hard-set cone of piped icing, the icing close to the biscuit in volume.

Who makes Iced Gems? McVitie's, the biscuit brand that began with a bakery shop on Rose Street, Edinburgh, in 1830 and is now owned by pladis.

What happens if you dunk an Iced Gem? The icing dissolves as soon as it meets hot tea, leaving a bare biscuit and a sweeter cup, so keep them out of the mug.

Do Iced Gems contain milk? Yes. The published allergen advice lists wheat and milk, and says they may contain soya.

What drink goes with Iced Gems? Cold milk, or a strong black tea with no sugar in it, to balance all that sweetness.

Curator's note: Pour them into a saucer rather than eating from the bag. A handful at a time is how they are meant to go. Lee, teas.co.uk, Tunbridge Wells.

In short: McVitie's Iced Gems: The Party Biscuit Explained

Field	Detail
Brand	McVitie's
Packs we stock	5 Biscuits 115g
Category	Biscuits
Allergens (as published)	It contains wheat (gluten) and milk, and it may contain soya.
Dunkable	No, the icing dissolves
Best with	Strong black tea without sugar, or cold milk
Occasion	Party tables and lunchboxes

More from the tea wiki

- [Tea and Biscuits](#)
- [Biscuit Dunking Physics: The Real Science](#)

- [Tea Pairing Principles: Reason, Don't Memorise](#)
- [Tea With Cake: The Pairing That Never Fails \(If You Get It Right\)](#)
- [Tea and Food Pairing: The Five Principles](#)

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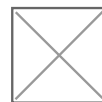
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