

Simmers Abernethy Biscuits

From the teas.co.uk wiki

Simmers Abernethy Biscuits, in summary: A light, crumbly, gently sweet Scottish biscuit with no coating, no filling and, in this recipe, no caraway. It takes a short dunk, it takes butter and it sits happily under cheddar, beside a strong milky tea.

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

An Abernethy is a type of biscuit rather than a brand invention, and the Simmers version is about as plain as a biscuit gets. That plainness is the reason to buy it: with nothing on top, it goes with tea, butter or [cheese](#) without getting in the way.

A surgeon, a captain's biscuit and a Hatton bakery

Tradition gives the credit to the surgeon Dr John Abernethy, who is said to have proposed improving the plain captain's biscuit with a little sugar and some caraway. A rival account exists, so the story is best treated as tradition rather than record. What nobody disputes is the style: a plain, lightly sweetened round, meant to accompany a cup, not replace it.

The Simmers name goes back to 1888, when Forbes Simmers bought a bakery that was already trading in Hatton, Aberdeenshire. Butter [Biscuits](#) have been the line it is famed for since the founder's time. These days the range is sold through Nairn's, who bake oatcakes in Edinburgh, which is a fitting home for a biscuit that behaves more like a companion to the teapot than a treat in its own right.

What goes into the Simmers recipe

The published ingredient list is short: wheat flour, sugar, palm and rapeseed oils, a partially inverted refiner's syrup and golden syrup, salt, dextrose and a natural flavouring. Among the raising agents is ammonium bicarbonate, a traditional bakery leavening, and Simmers describes the result as a light and crumbly Scottish biscuit. The sweetness is gentle, with a faint malty note from the bake, and nothing else on the list competes with it.

Two details matter to a buyer. The natural flavouring is milk-derived, so the biscuit contains milk as well as wheat, which rules it out for a coeliac household or anyone avoiding dairy. And there are no caraway seeds: Simmers uses the flavouring instead, so this Abernethy reads plain rather than seeded. That will please anyone put off by caraway and disappoint anyone who grew up with the older, seeded style.

Dunked, buttered or under cheese

Only gently sweet and with no coating, an Abernethy is a component rather than a centrepiece. It will stand a [dunk](#) of a few seconds in a Scottish breakfast blend or a robust [Assam](#) with milk, and it leaves nothing clinging to the palate to spoil the next sip. Spread one with salted butter and it drifts towards oatcake territory, good with tea or alongside a bowl of soup.

Cheese is where it really earns its tin space. The faint sweetness works under a mature cheddar or a crumbly Lancashire in the way a digestive can, and it gives a little more interest than a plain water cracker. Once the pack is open, move the biscuits to a tin: with no coating to protect it, a plain round softens on the air, and the warm baked-wheat smell fading is the first sign that it is going.

The packs we stock

- [Simmers Abernethy Biscuits, 250g](#) (barcode 011732007960)

What the label says

The published ingredient list for Simmers Abernethy Biscuits, 250g (barcode 011732007960) 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 (Wheat Flour, Calcium Carbonate, Iron, Niacin, Thiamin). Sugar, Sustainable Palm Oil, Rapeseed Oil, Raising Agents (Ammonium Bicarbonate, Sodium Bicarbonate, Sodium Dihydrogen Phosphate). Partially Inverted Refiners Syrup; Lyles Golden Syrup, Salt, Dextrose, Natural Flavouring (Milk).

Ingredient and nutrition data for this barcode: [Open Food Facts \(openfoodfacts.org\)](https://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 strong, full-bodied cup with milk, the kind of brew an Abernethy is made to sit beside.
- [Clipper Fairtrade Everyday Tea, 80 Pack 232g](#): An everyday bag for the mid-morning mug, plain enough to leave the biscuit's gentle sweetness alone.
- [Yorkshire Tea Caramelised Biscuit Brew, 40 Tea Bags 112g](#): A flavoured [black tea](#) whose caramelised-biscuit theme echoes the golden syrup in the recipe.
- [Dragonfly Organic Cape Chai Rooibos, 40 Tea Bags 80g](#): A [rooibos chai](#) for the evening, with enough warmth to partner a buttered Abernethy.

Elsewhere in the Simmers range

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

FAQ

What is an Abernethy biscuit? A plain, lightly sweet Scottish biscuit with no coating or filling. The name describes a style, not a single recipe, so every bakery's version differs a little.

Do Simmers Abernethy biscuits have caraway seeds? No. Simmers states that these contain no caraway seeds and uses a natural flavouring instead.

Do Simmers Abernethy biscuits contain milk? Yes. The natural flavouring is milk-derived, and the biscuits also contain wheat. Check the current pack before buying.

Can you eat Abernethy biscuits with cheese? Yes, and it is one of the best uses for them. Try one under a mature cheddar or a crumbly Lancashire.

Who makes Simmers biscuits? Simmers was founded by Forbes Simmers in Hatton, Aberdeenshire, in 1888, and the range is now sold by Nairn's of Edinburgh.

Curator's note: Butter one, put a sliver of cheddar on the next and keep a strong mug going. A plain biscuit that does three jobs earns its place in the tin more than a fancy one that does one. Lee, teas.co.uk, Tunbridge Wells.

In short: Simmers Abernethy Biscuits

Field	Detail
Brand	Simmers
Packs we stock	250g
Category	Biscuits
Allergens (as published)	It contains wheat (gluten) and milk.
Dunkable	Yes, a few seconds
Best with	A strong milky Assam or breakfast blend
Try it with	Salted butter or mature cheddar

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

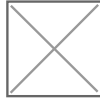
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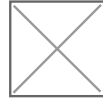
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