

Cookie History

Girl Scout Cookies are an icon of American culture. For nearly 100 years, Girl Scouts, with the enthusiastic support of their families, have helped ensure the success of this annual sale. From its earliest beginnings, the Girl Scout Cookie Program has helped girls have fun, develop valuable life skills, and make their communities a better place.

EARLY YEARS

Girl Scout Cookies had their earliest beginnings in the kitchens and ovens of our girl members, with moms volunteering as technical advisers. The sale of cookies as a way to finance troop activities began as early as 1917—five years after Juliette Gordon Low started Girl Scouting in the United States—when the Mistletoe Troop in Muskogee, Oklahoma, baked cookies and sold them in its high school cafeteria as a service project.

1930s

In 1933, Girl Scouts of Greater Philadelphia council baked cookies and sold them in the city's gas and electric company windows. The cost was just 23 cents per box of 44 cookies, or six boxes for \$1.24! Through this new effort, the girls developed their marketing and business skills and raised funds for their local Girl Scout council. A year later, Greater Philadelphia took cookie sales to the next level, becoming the first council to sell commercially baked cookies.

1940s

Girl Scout Cookies were sold by local councils around the country until World War II, when sugar, flour, and butter shortages led Girl Scouts to begin selling calendars to raise money for activities. After the war, cookie sales resumed, with the national organization licensing local bakers to produce and package cookies. By 1948, a total of 29 bakers were licensed to bake Girl Scout Cookies.

1950s

In 1951, Girl Scout Cookies came in three varieties: Peanut Butter Sandwich, Shortbread, and Chocolate Mints (now known as Thin Mints). With the growth of the suburbs, Girl Scouts began selling cookies at tables in shopping malls. Five years later, flavors had evolved. Girl Scouts sold four basic types of cookies: a vanilla-based filled cookie, a chocolate-based filled one, a shortbread one, and a chocolate mint. Some bakers also offered an additional optional flavor.

1960s

During the 1960s, when Baby Boomers expanded Girl Scout membership, cookie sales increased significantly. Fourteen licensed bakers were mixing batter for thousands upon thousands of Girl Scout Cookies annually. And those bakers began wrapping Girl Scout cookie boxes in printed aluminum foil or cellophane to protect the cookies and preserve their freshness.



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1970s

In 1978, the number of bakers was streamlined to four to ensure lower prices and uniform quality, packaging, and distribution. For the first time in history, all cookie boxes—regardless of the baker—featured the same designs and depicted scenes of Girl Scouts in action, enjoying activities such as hiking and canoeing. And in 1979, the brand-new, Saul Bass–created Girl Scout logo appeared on cookie boxes, which became more original and began promoting the benefits of Girl Scouting.

1980s

In 1982, four bakers still produced a maximum of seven varieties of cookies—three mandatory (Thin Mint®, Peanut Butter Sandwich/Do-si-dos®, and Shortbread/Trefoils®) and four optional. Cookie boxes depicted scenes of Girl Scouts in action.

1984 brought a new twist: some of the licensed bakers produced gift samplings of cookies in special decorative tins.

1990s

In the early 1990s, two licensed bakers supplied local Girl Scout councils with cookies for girls to sell, and by 1998, this number had grown again to three. Eight cookie varieties were available, including low-fat and sugar-free selections that never sold well enough to continue producing.

2000s

Early in the twenty-first century, every Girl Scout cookie had a mission. New cookie box designs, introduced in fall of 2000, were bold and bright, capturing the spirit of Girl Scouting. Two licensed bakers produced a maximum of eight varieties, including three that were mandatory (Thin Mints®, Peanut Butter Sandwich/Do-si-dos®, and Shortbread/Trefoils®). All cookies were kosher. And, much to the excitement of our youngest Girl Scouts, Daisies started selling cookies!



As of 2012, all boxes of Girl Scout Cookies have a new look and a new purpose: to elevate the significance of the Girl Scout Cookie Program, a \$790-million girl-led business. The iconic Girl Scout Cookie package showcases the five financial literacy and entrepreneurship skills that the Girl Scout Cookie Program teaches girls, skills that will last them a lifetime: goal setting, decision making, money management, people skills, and business ethics.

The decision to update the package came about in 2010 as part of an overall brand refresh in advance of the organization's 100th anniversary on March 12, 2012. The package needed to be more contemporary to reflect the new brand identity and to embody the spirit of Girl Scouting, while showing customers how they can reconnect with the organization. GSUSA partnered with the New York office of Anthem Worldwide, the brand development division of Schawk Inc., to redesign the packaging to inspire consumers and engage them on the important role that Girl Scouts plays in girls' lives.