

Christmas Crackers

Crackers are very popular and accompany many meals over the Christmas period, especially on Christmas Day.



A Christmas Cracker is a brightly coloured paper tube, twisted at both ends. There is a banger inside the cracker and when it is pulled by two people, the cracker snaps in half making a loud bang.



Inside the cracker there is a paper crown made from tissue paper (see photo on left), a joke on a slip of paper and a little gift.

How to pull a cracker

The traditional way to pull a cracker is crossing your arms and pulling a whole circle of crackers all around the table. Everyone holds their cracker in their right hand and pulls their neighbours cracker with the free left hand.

History of Christmas Crackers

Christmas crackers were invented by Thomas Smith in 1846. During a visit to Paris he came across the bob-bon, a sugar almond wrapped in tissue paper (with a twist either side of the centrally placed sweet). Thomas decided to try selling similarly wrapped sweets in the lead up to Christmas in

England. His bon-bons sold well at Christmas but not at other times of the year.

In the early 1850s Thomas came up with the idea of including a motto with the sweet. As many of his bon-bons were bought by men to give to women, many of the mottos were simple love poems.

In about 1860, Thomas added the banger, two strips of chemically impregnated paper that made a loud noise on being pulled apart. At first these novelties were called 'cosaques', but they soon became known as 'crackers'.

Unfortunately for Thomas, his 'cracker' idea was copied by other manufactures and so he decided to replace the sweet with a surprise gift.

When Thomas died his two sons took over the business. The paper hat was added to the cracker the early 1900s and by the end of the 1930s the love poems had been replaced by jokes or limericks