

BACKIN | THE BAKING POWDER



In the 19th century, if a housewife wanted to make sure her cake would rise, she had to go to a chemist's. This was the only place she could get the salt of hartshorn needed to make the dough rise and make it light.

Dr. August Oetker, who bought the Aschoff'sche pharmacy in the centre of Bielefeld in 1891, was not ordinary chemist. He had been familiar with baking from an early age from his parental home. So he knew the time and effort housewives had to put into baking. He made it his untiring mission to help them out and develop a raising agent which not only made baking easier but also guaranteed successful cakes.

Justus von Liebig had already invented a baking powder to lighten dough some years earlier, but his mixture had two major drawbacks: It was both relatively expensive and could not be stored because it went off quickly. For these two reasons, Liebig's invention was unusable as an everyday baking aid.

In order to protect his invention from prying eyes, August Oetker withdrew into a tiny chamber behind his chemist's shop. In this "secret den", as he called it, he carried out experiments every day, using different mixtures to find a raising agent that satisfactorily fulfilled his three basic requirements – dough raising, long shelf life and taste neutrality. All in all, it took two years before he succeeded in developing a perfect baking powder which was simple to use and yet guaranteed success. But finally, he had found a mixture "with no misfires", as he put it. He called the mixture Backin.

But while he had been experimenting in the "den", another thought had come to August Oetker. Once he had discovered the right composition, he began to measure Backin out into small quantities which were the perfect amount for a standard cake made using a pound of flour. This idea was to have far-reaching consequences. It showed that August Oetker was not only a scientist and inventor, but also an entrepreneur with real foresight. His aim was to produce his baking powder in his own company

without external financial assistance and to sell it throughout the country for a fixed price of ten pfennigs. This idea represented the birth of the German baking powder industry. Just two decades later, Dr. A. Oetker in Bielefeld could proudly claim the title of "largest baking powder factory in Europe". In 1912, the company sold 99 million packets and bags.

The Backin, sold in the shops today, is still of the same high quality as when it was developed by Dr. August Oetker. As early as the turn of the century, the now familiar white silhouette was appearing on the bags. This involved a housewife in the trademark and it soon became a mark of quality of all the company products, combined with the motto: "Ein heller Kopf verwendet nur Dr. Oetker Fabrikate" (German wordplay: A bright head always goes for Dr. Oetker products). In the 1950s, the Backin packaging featured a pentagon and a silhouette, plus a colour picture of the product on the front. In 1971, the logo was completely reworked. A blue "Dr. Oetker" logo on a white background was added to the silhouette, and the whole thing was given a red border. In 2001, the final touches were given to the Backin packaging when it was slightly redesigned again. And, Dr. Oetker still has recipes on the back of every packet, just like it did 100 years ago – recipes which have helped generations of housewives learn the art of baking cakes.

Now as then, when it comes to cakes: You can't beat Original Backin from Dr. Oetker.



Company name
Dr. August Oetker
Nahrungsmittel KG

Classic product
Dr. Oetker Original
Backin (since 1893)

Established
1891 in Bielefeld/
Germany

Founder
Dr August Oetker
(1862–1918)

Awareness
96 %

Main production site
Bielefeld/Germany