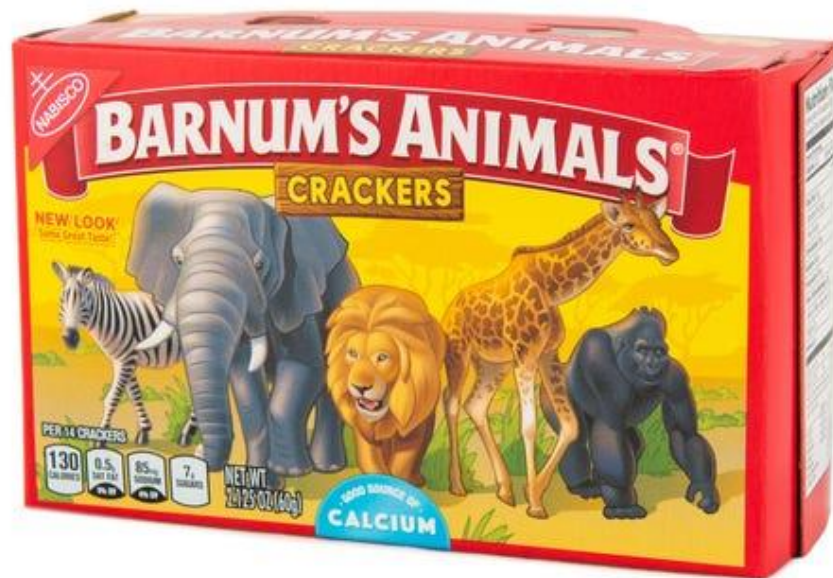


Nabisco uncages its animal crackers after 116 years

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USA TODAY



After 116 years, animal crackers are no longer behind bars.

The packaging of Barnum's Animals, a classic Nabisco snack, doesn't depict the exotic creatures in cages anymore. Instead, a zebra, an elephant, a lion, a giraffe and a gorilla are out roaming among grass and trees.

The change comes at the urging of animal-rights organization People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, who said that in April 2016 it pointed out to Nabisco's parent company, Mondelez International, that circuses often beat, shock, chain and whip animals to intimidate them into performing tricks. Other cruel practices include tearing baby animals away from their mothers and keeping animals in cages and chains, they said.

"It's probably one of, if not the oldest, (product) in our portfolio," said Mondelez spokeswoman Kimberly Fontes. "We're always looking to see how to keep it modern, to keep it contemporary with customers."

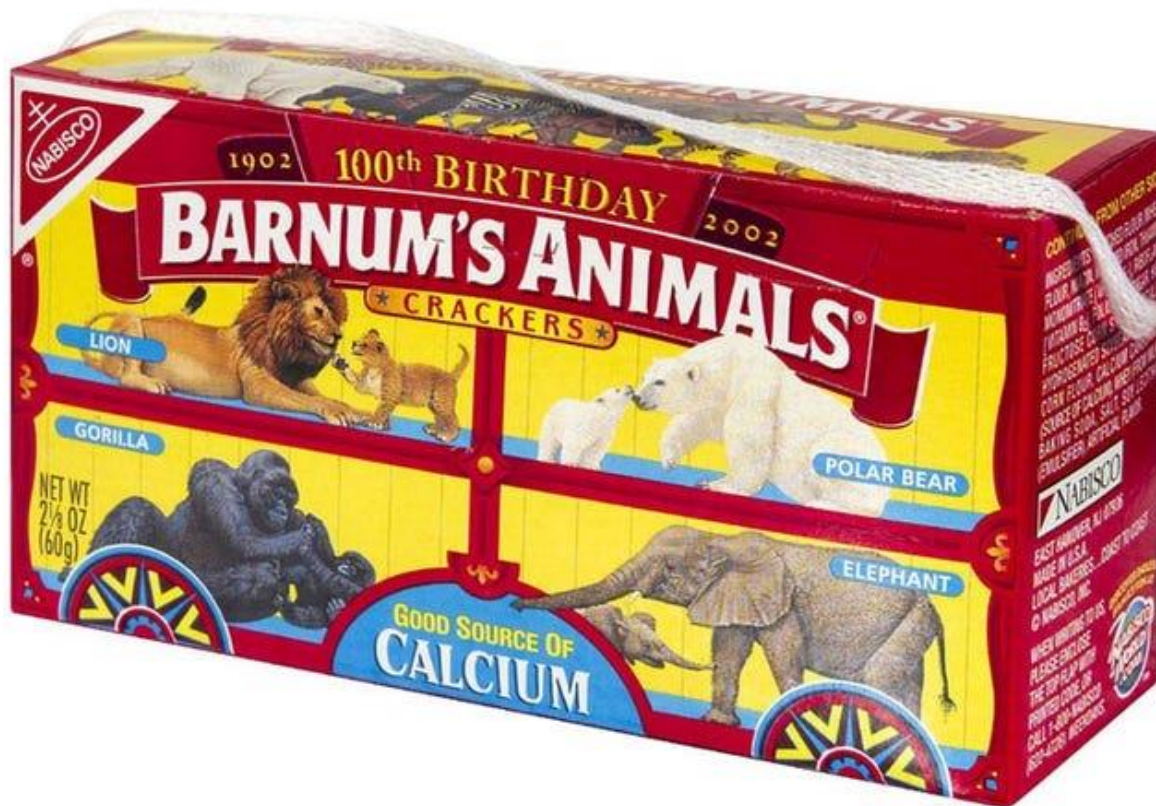
Barnum's Animals has had its packaging refreshed before, she said. Plus, occasionally the snack's box has been revamped temporarily, such as for a World Wildlife Fund awareness campaign. The new cage-free packages are on store shelves now.

Fontes declined to say how much the packaging redesign cost the company.

The animal crackers' name isn't being changed. It's a reference to showman P.T. Barnum, whose name was long part of the most famous circus in U.S. history, Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus, billed as the "Greatest Show on Earth."

Ringling Bros. closed down in May 2017 after 146 years, citing high operating costs, legal fights with animal-welfare groups and declining ticket sales once the circus owners agreed to stop using elephants in the show, a concession to

increasing legal and societal pressure opposed to the practice.



"The new box for Barnum's Animal Crackers perfectly reflects that our society no longer tolerates the caging and chaining of wild animals for circus shows," PETA executive vice president Tracy Reiman said. "PETA is celebrating this redesign, just as we've celebrated the end of Ringling Bros. circus and the introduction of animal-circus bans across the U.S."

Even though the cage bars on the the front of the animal crackers box were small, some people pay close attention to packaging, said Bob Killian, a Chicago-based branding expert.

"They can't lose too much of the look and feel," he said. "What took them so long? There's nobody's who pro-cage, so I don't see what they have to lose."

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/2018/08/21/nabisco-uncages-its-animal-crackers-after-116-years/989928002/>