

01 / THE HOUSE STORY

The people. The point of view.



THE BEGINNING

Levi Strauss; Jacob Davis
co-invented the riveted jean

Levi Strauss established his San Francisco dry-goods business in 1853, and in 1873 Levi Strauss & Co. and tailor Jacob Davis received the patent associated with riveted waist overalls. Levi's long history makes label, tab and construction changes exceptionally useful for dating, but modern heritage revivals mean no single vintage-looking feature should be used alone. Strong official anchors include 1936 introduction of the Red Tab, the shift to lowercase-e tabs around 1971, and the later 2018 premium Big E revival. Levi Strauss & Co. also notes that care labels are a 1970s-and-later clue and that construction details such as inseam finishing can help frame vintage eras. Treat all of these as combined evidence, not one-feature rules.

FOUNDED

1853 (company); riveted blue jean
patented 1873

ORIGIN

San Francisco, USA

WHY THE DETAILS MATTER

Levi's care and product labels can contain style, lot and production-related references that vary by era and market. Use the complete printed information to search official archives and specialist denim references, but do not apply an internet date-code formula across all decades without verifying the specific label family. Before 'decoding' anything, identify what kind of identifier it is: RN/business ID, style/article number, size code, supplier/production reference, serial, date mark, season code, inventory barcode, RFID/NFC or digital passport. Different identifier types answer different questions and are not interchangeable.

Research and catalog observations are distinct. See the linked sources in this guide. Dates describe the cited records; a last recorded year does not establish a line closure.

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Names, lines & relationships

Levi's® Parent denim and apparel brand Denim, apparel, outerwear and accessories.	1853
Levi's® Blue Tab™ Premium product program / elevated line Premium denim, apparel and accessories.	
Levi's® Vintage Clothing Archive reproduction program Archive-specification reproductions of historical Levi's garments.	
Levi's® SilverTab™ Heritage line / current revival program Loose-fit denim and casual apparel rooted in 1990s styling.	

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A story in chapters

1853

Levi's

House origins · Levi Strauss; Jacob Davis co-invented the riveted jean

1853

Levi's®

Line / house introduction in the cited records

COLLECTION CONTEXT

Levi Strauss established his San Francisco dry-goods business in 1853, and in 1873 Levi Strauss & Co. and tailor Jacob Davis received the patent associated with riveted waist overalls. Levi's long history makes label, tab and construction changes exceptionally useful for dating, but modern heritage revivals mean no single vintage-looking feature should be used alone. Strong official anchors include 1936 introduction of the Red Tab, the shift to lowercase-e tabs around 1971, and the later 2018 premium Big E revival. Levi Strauss & Co. also notes that care labels are a 1970s-and-later clue and that construction details such as inseam finishing can help frame vintage eras. Treat all of these as combined evidence, not one-feature rules.

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04 / A WORKED EXAMPLE FROM OUR CATALOG

Read the label. Find the details.



THE COMPLETE ITEM

LEVI'S Size 32 Indigo Contrast Stitch Selvedge Denim Jeans

Marked size = the item's original label. As a US company, Sui Generis lists a US size comparison; use the relevant brand/category chart and actual measurements to check fit.

THE LABEL / MARKING DETAIL



01 / WHAT YOU CAN READ

Levi Strauss & Co. · 501Z XX · W32 · L34

02 / HOW TO USE IT

The patch separates a model reference from waist and length markings. Search 501Z XX as written, while keeping W32 and L34 as distinct size fields.

03 / WHAT TO CHECK NEXT

Heritage wording on a patch alone does not establish that a pair is an original vintage issue. Photograph the interior care label, tabs and hardware before researching an era.

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Research & image credits

Based on the existing Sui Generis guide research and credited references. Catalog photographs are Sui Generis images. Brand names identify the subject; this guide is independent and unaffiliated. Share complete sheets with their credits and a link to the guide.

https://help.levi.com/hc/en-us/articles/360024928672-Are-My-Levi-s-Jeans-Authentic

https://www.levi.com/US/en_US/features/about-us

https://www.levistrauss.com/2021/09/01/85-years-of-the-levis-red-tab/

https://www.levi.com/

https://www.levi.com/US/en_US/blue-tab/c/levi_clothing_blue_tab_us

https://www.levi.com/US/en_US/levis-vintage-clothing/c/levi_clothing_vintage_clothing_us

https://www.levi.com/US/en_US/levis-silvertabTM/loose-fit-mens-jeans/p/A34210001

https://suigenerisconsignment.com/products/levis-size-32-indigo-contrast-stitch-selvedge-denim-jeans

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SIZING / HOW TO READ OUR CATALOG

Marked size & your US size

The marked size is the size printed on the item's original label. Sui Generis is a US company, so our catalog uses a US size comparison to help our customers shop. A US listing size may therefore differ from the number on the designer's tag; it does not change the item's original marked size.

READ THE SIZING SYSTEM

FR or F means French; IT, I or ITA means Italian; JP means Japanese; UK or GB means British; US or USA means United States. D or DE means German. EU (or UE on some labels) denotes a European size where the relevant brand and category chart uses it. French and Italian clothing numbers are not interchangeable, and a manufacturing country does not identify a sizing system.

JAPANESE & BRAND NUMBERED SIZES

Some Japanese designers use their own numbered sizes, such as 1, 2 or 3. These are brand sizes, not automatically US sizes or a universal Japanese conversion. Use the chart for the specific brand, line and item.

MATCH THE CATEGORY. CHECK THE MEASUREMENTS.

When a tag prints several national sizes, retain the brand's own size table instead of substituting a generic conversion. Women's clothing, men's tailoring and footwear need different charts. Letter sizes, denim and accessories also need their own fit information. Compare the original marking, the relevant chart and actual measurements. Vintage fit, alterations and cut can change the fit; a US comparison is a guide, not a guarantee.

If the sizing system or original marking cannot be confirmed from the available photograph, we say so rather than assigning a country or inventing a conversion.

REFERENCE READING

Nordstrom: designer clothing conversion reference

Maison Margiela: category-specific size guide

Yohji Yamamoto: measuring garments

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