



Cigars &amp; Cigar Coolers

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## How To Save Dry Cigars Vs. Damp Cigars

Posted By: Lewis / 0 Comment

**Share:** 7 0 Picture this: you're sitting out on your porch enjoying a cigar when all of a sudden black rain clouds roll in over the horizon. Before you can run back inside, you're caught in a downpour. By the time you get indoors, you're soaked through and so is your cigar.

Disaster? It doesn't have to be. If your cigars have gone bad, gotten either too wet or too dry, don't give up. There are ways to salvage them and turn them back into decent smokes once again.

## Moisture, Humidity, & Cigars



The amount of moisture in your cigar has a direct impact upon its quality. Cigars are hydrostatic, which means they absorb and emit moisture into the air. Put them into a humid environment and they'll absorb moisture. Put them in a dry one and they'll emit moisture. A perfectly humidified cigar should have a moisture level of 12-15 percent. At this level, the oils

and resins in the cigar will bind smoothly to the smoke when you light it up, creating a rich aroma for you to draw on. This humidity level reflects the moisture level in the tobacco leaves after they've been harvested, fermented, and cured by the manufacturer. After they've been rolled, manufacturers will sometimes add a little extra humidity just before shipping, knowing that the cigars will most likely dry out a little during transport, so your cigars have the proper moisture levels when you buy them.

Moisture is also the reason why cigar smokers spend so much on high quality hygrometers, humidifiers, and humidors. They let you control the moisture environment your cigars are exposed to, which essential to preserving their flavor. Anything under 70 percent relative humidity and your cigars start losing moisture. Anything over and they start absorbing it.

## What Happens When Cigars Dry Out



Despite all the precautions taken by cigar smokers, things do occasionally go wrong. A hygrometer might be calibrated incorrectly or maybe a box of cigars just got mislaid. Perhaps you left one outside on the patio, thinking you'd be right back, but then got called away and forgot about it. It doesn't take much to dry up the moisture levels in a cigar. The hot sun, a strong breeze, even excess air conditioning is enough.

When cigars get too dry, the oils and resins in the tobacco leaves become sluggish and stagnant. It makes it hard for the flavors of the different leaves to marry, which reduces their complexity and stunts their taste. When you light a dry cigar, the dry leaves will burn too hot. Instead of blending together in the smoke, the oils and resins will evaporate due to the heat, creating a stale, pungent aroma instead of a rich, earthy one.

### How to Tell if Your Cigar is Too Dry

If you think your cigar has dried out, squeeze it gently between your thumb and forefinger. If the wrapper crackles, it's too dry. A good cigar should be firm, the way your finger feels when you squeeze it.

## What Happens When Cigars Get Too Damp

When a cigar gets damp, the tobacco leaves swell and it becomes difficult to draw smoke through them. Excess moisture also makes it difficult to maintain an even burn and can lead to a number of different problems.

<b>Tunneling</b>	The center of the cigar burns, leaving the binder and wrapper intact. Cuts down on smoke volume
<b>Canoeing</b>	When one side of the cigar burns, but the other does not. Reduces smoke time and negatively affects taste
<b>Running</b>	When the fire burns down the side of the cigar. Creates a line that reached down from the foot of the cigar. Normally burns one side of the wrapper but not the other, essentially unraveling the cigar. Often caused when a tunnel is too close to the surface and bursts through the surface

Cigars get damp when they're exposed to excessive moisture. Often it's caused by storing them near a leaky water source or accidentally spilling water on it while refilling your humidifier. Sometimes the damage is caused by the humidifier itself. Certain types of humidifiers, like green foam, release moisture very fast after they've been filled. If you're using green foam, pay attention to the humidity levels after you put you recharge your humidifier. If this becomes a problem, consider switching to a different humidifier like silica beads or humipaks, which can re-absorb moisture when it gets too high.

### How to Tell if Your Cigar is Too Damp

Squeeze it between your fingers. If it feels spongy or soggy, then it's too damp. Damp cigars also give off thicker smoke, which can deaden their aroma. The thicker smoke overwhelms the olfactory receptors in your nose, preventing you from smelling more than one or two of its flavors.

## How to Save Dry Cigars

Saving dry cigars is simple. All you need to do is re-humidify them. The easiest way is with a [Spanish cedar humidor](#). Place the cigar inside with a humidifier and wait for the moisture to creep back into the cigar. Make sure the humidity is at 70 percent and the cigar is given a quarter turn every 2-3 days, to make sure it's evenly humidified. By the time your cigars have been rotated twice, they should be fully humidified and ready to smoke again. If not, put them back in your humidor and continue the process until the cigar feels firm again. If you don't have access to a humidor, there are a few other methods you can try as well. Be warned that when a cigar dries out, its invariably lose some of its oils and resins. A re-humidified cigar won't ever taste as good as it would have when it was new.

<b>Seal It In a Zip Lock Bag</b>	Punch holes in a zip lock bag and place the dry cigars inside. Seal the bag and insert it into a larger zip lock bag. Put a wet sponge in the second plastic bag, next to the bag with the cigars, a seal it tight. Rotate the cigars every 2-3 days to ensure even humidification
<b>Wrap It In a Damp Paper Towel</b>	Wrap the dry cigar in a damp paper towel and let it sit someplace cool for two weeks. No need to rotate
<b>Humidify It In a Plastic Container</b>	Put the cigars and a hygrometer in a clear, plastic container. Wait 2-3 hours and check the humidity level. If it's below 70%, wet a sponge with teaspoon of water and place it in the plastic container. Wait another 2-3 hours and check the humidity level again. If it's still below 70%, wet the sponge with another teaspoon of water. Repeat until humidity reaches 70%, then wait until the cigars feel firm again
<b>Steam It With a Hot Shower</b>	Place an open box of cigars on the bathroom while you take a hot shower. When you get out of the shower, snap the lid closed to trap the steam inside. Rotate the cigars every 2-3 days until they're fully humidified

Because dry cigars are brittle, take a moment to inspect the cigar for cracks before you try and save it. Cracks can cause big problems with the draw. The smoke will escape out through the crack before you can draw it into your mouth, like trying to drink water through a straw that has a hole in the side. It's big enough, the tobacco may even fall out and the entire cigar may unravel. If the crack is near the foot of the cigar, then you're in luck. Slice off the end of the cigar, where the crack is most serious, and smoke the rest.

## How to Save Damp Cigars



Saving damp cigars is even simpler than saving dry cigars. Just dry them out. Place it out on a dry counter top for a few hours and the cigar will slowly release its moisture back into the air. Place it next to a fan out in a breeze to speed up the process. Make sure it doesn't dry out too much by checking it periodically. If you have a humidor, you can also try placing the cigar inside and letting the wood slowly extract the moisture instead. Spanish cedar humidors work best. The wood is extremely porous and absorbs water readily, making them ideal for dehumidifying your cigars.



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