

# How to Season & Set Up a Humidor

## What is a Humidor?

A humidor is a box that maintains constant humidity that is used to store cigars. Humidor boxes are typically constructed of wood and are also made of materials such as acrylic, glass and metal. The interior is commonly lined with a Spanish cedar or mahogany wood veneer.

## Cigar Preservation Overview

Cigars generally absorb their environment much like a sponge which can have a dramatic impact on the way they smoke and feel. If they are kept in a less than optimal environment, cigars can turn dry or become overly saturated. If they are stored properly, your cigars will age, burn and smoke in perfect balance.

For optimum cigar preservation, your humidor is best kept indoors in temperatures under 77 degrees. Average room temperatures are often maintained by air conditioning and fall between 68-77 degrees so in most instances temperature is something that you do not need to worry about.

The ideal relative humidity (RH) level for cigar maintenance in a humidor ranges between 64-72%. Depending on the smoker's preference, this range can be higher or lower. However, one should always avoid humidity levels over 75% or temperatures over 77 degrees due to the risk of [mold growth](#) or hatching [tobacco beetles](#) which can potentially ruin your cigars.

# Humidor Components

## Passive Humidifiers

A [cigar humidifier](#) is typically a rectangular or round shaped plastic device that is perforated with vents designed to emit moisture in a humidor. The inside of a humidifier generally contains a sponge-like foam core which stores humidity. Most cigar humidifiers are “passive”, releasing contained humidity through diffusion and evaporation. Passive humidifiers are first soaked in water before they are set up inside the humidor. They keep the humidor moist which in turn helps keep the cigars moist. Passive humidifiers need to be re-soaked or “recharged” once the moisture levels begin to drop within the humidor. When propylene glycol solution is not available (this is covered in greater detail below), distilled water should be used when soaking the humidifier due to its lower bacteria, mineral and additive content.

## Electronic Humidifiers

[Electronic humidifiers](#) are humidification systems that automatically maintain humidity levels

with a humidor. Unlike passive humidifiers, electronic humidifiers do not require re-soaking on a regular basis as they come with sizeable built-in water reservoirs that last for extended periods of time. These units typically run untouched for up to 1 year without refilling. The electronic humidifier is equipped with a sensor that measures the humidity within the humidor and then activates a built-in auxiliary fan, which draws air across an internal water reservoir and releases moisture into humidor. Once the preset relative humidity level has been achieved (which is set on the outside of the device), the fan stops. Typically electronic humidifiers come with an audible alarm tone to notify you when the water level is low in the reservoir. Because of its features, electronic humidifiers have the ability to maintain far more stable humidity levels than their passive humidifier counterparts.

### **Humidifier Gel Jars & Tubes**

[Humidifier jars](#) are generally found in 2 oz. sizes and are filled with pre-charged water absorbing crystals. These gel jars can be used in addition to a humidor's existing humidifiers or can be used by themselves. When the top of the jar is opened it can be set in the humidor. An even release of consistent humidity is then emitted through a vented inner insert. Proper humidity levels can be maintained for up to 1-2 months. When the water crystals within the jar shrink, water or humidifier solution can be added directly into the jar. Within a few hours the absorbent crystals will swell back to their full size. Each humidifier jar typically maintains up to 75 cigars. Humidifier tubes work using the same concept. Due to their smaller size, humidifier tubes can maintain up to 25 cigars per tube.

### **Humidifier Solution**

[Humidifier solution](#) is also known as "Propylene Glycol Solution", "PG Solution" or "Humidification Solution". This fluid is used to maintain the life of the humidifier and preserve the freshness of cigars. This solution is normally 50% food grade propylene glycol and 50% distilled water which has a buffer effect on air humidity and in turn helps keep the RH in the humidor at approximately 70%. In addition to its humidity balancing properties, propylene glycol also has antifungal and anti-mold related effects which provide further protection for cigars. Bottles are typically 8 oz. in size and last for approximately 9-12 months in an average humidor with a capacity of 75-100 sticks.

### **Hygrometers**

A [cigar hygrometer](#) is a device used to monitor humidity levels within a humidor. This helps the cigar smoker maintain the ideal humidity range of 64-72%. If the relative humidity falls outside this given range, the hygrometer is in place to inform the smoker when it's time to re-soak the humidifier. It's best practice to keep the humidor full of cigars as often as possible. The more empty space within the humidor, the greater the chance of experiencing a drop in humidity. Please see: [Calibrating a Hygrometer](#).

### **Dividers & Trays**

Most humidors include dividers and or removable trays to enable the smoker to section off their

cigar collection. It is suggested to separate different cigar brands and types from each other when they are stored within the same humidor. The reason for this is that different cigars are made of distinct types of tobacco fillers, binders and wrappers. When a variety of cigars are bundled together, the unique oils and flavors from the different tobaccos can merge which can have an effect on the cigars' flavor.

## Seasoning a Humidor

### How to Season the Interior of a Humidor

When setting up a new humidor for the first time, remove any dust from the manufacturing process by wiping down the interior with a clean DRY cloth. The seasoning process that is discussed here is designed to bring the wood lining inside the humidor as close as possible to operating relative humidity. The wood lining inside the humidor acts as a buffer to regulate moisture so it must be treated properly before introducing the cigars. To begin, if the humidor is new or has not been used for some time, place a small shallow bowl or container of distilled water inside the box. Close the lid and let it sit and acclimate for 12-24 hours. Once the time has passed, if a large portion of the water has evaporated, re-fill the bowl a second time and leave it inside the cigar humidor for another 24 hours. Once the water stops evaporating, proceed to the next step "Charging the Humidifier".

Another commonly used method for seasoning a humidor is to wipe the interior down with a clean cloth dampened with distilled water. The cloth should not be completely soaked. Please ensure that distilled water is used sparingly as excessive amounts can cause the wood to warp.

To simplify this procedure, a [Cigar Oasis electronic humidifier](#) can season the interior of a humidor within 8 hours without the need of going through the steps above.

The porous wood interior of an unseasoned humidor tends to absorb moisture from its humidifier and cigars and in turn can leave the smoker with dried out smokes.

### Charging the Humidifier

Just before loading cigars into the humidor, remove the cigar humidifier unit from the box (this is the sponge like plastic device that is soaked in distilled water). Submerge the cigar humidifier in distilled water or Humidifier Solution for 30 minutes. Remove it from the water or solution, dry it and set it face down on a paper towel for 30 minutes. This is to allow any excess water to escape from the humidifier so that water leakage on to the cigars is avoided. Once this step is complete, secure the humidifier to the inside of the box using the included Velcro adhesive or magnets. The humidor is now seasoned and the cigars can now be set inside.

## Humidity Maintenance & Troubleshooting

**What if Humidity Levels are too Low?**

For the first few days after the humidor is filled with cigars, be sure to occasionally check its hygrometer to make certain the humidifier does not require a re-soak. Overly dry or humid climates that are extreme which bring on cold or hot temperatures may require more frequent monitoring. A reading of 68-70% relative humidity (RH) is most desirable, although a bit above or below (64-72% depending on preference) is not detrimental to your cigars. Once the humidity drops few percentage points below the chosen ideal RH, it is time re-charge the humidifier. If the desired humidity level is still not reached, consider adding additional humidification devices (like humidifier gel jars, gel tubes or additional humidifiers)

**What if Humidity Levels are too High?**

Occasionally a humidor will become overly saturated or its humidity level will be too high. If this is the case, leave the humidor open partially to allow some of the moisture to escape or add additional cigars into the humidor. The cigars will assist in absorbing some of the excess humidity. If this still is not sufficient in reducing the moisture level, remove the humidifier for a period of time.