

## The Land of the Best Tobacco

Category: Flora and fauna

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Pinar del Río is known by many as the tobacco capital of Cuba, because it is precisely here where the plant that makes us unique all over the world is cultivated. This prestige is due to the long and arduous working days dedicated by all the people involved in the production of Cuban cigars.

The work begins in June and July and continues for nine months. However, the ideal season to observe the large plantations in the tobacco plains is November and December, when the climatic conditions are cooler for the plant. In the Cuban countryside, the sun tobacco used as a gut or capote can be seen outdoors. It forms part of the interior of the cigar and the covered tobacco that is cultivated under the cover cloth and used as the coating layer. In order for these plants to reach the required vitality, it is necessary to pass through several moments.

The process begins with the sowing of the seed, from there the farmer is forced to remain at the foot of the sowing to transplant the postures, when they reach about 6 inches after 35 days of sowing, irrigate the furrows, fertilize the soil, eliminate insects and before the plant blooms, cut the terminal buds, which allows the leaves to have better quality. Thirty days after this task, the leaves are collected according to their location in the plant and then taken to the tobacco houses for a little more than 2 weeks. Afterwards, the leaf is fermented to achieve a uniform color and enrich its aroma. This process continues in a small factory called chosen tobacco, where women are dedicated to classify and select the tobacco leaves according to their size, appearance, quality and state of preservation. From there, the leaves are transferred to the stalks to remove the central vein, and finally, it is passed to the dryer, a cedar wardrobe where a second fermentation takes place. After the curing process is finished, the tobacco is packed in royal palm leaves that are sent to the factory where the industrial process begins, which is as important as the agricultural process.

In order to get closer to the cigar elaboration process, it is recommended to visit the Francisco Donatién Tobacco Factory, located in the city of Pinar del Río, where the tobacco is chosen, twisted, ringed and packaged by experts who obtain a product of the best quality and ready to be tasted. In Pinar del Río all types of tobacco

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leaves are produced, but not all lands have the optimal conditions that a Habano requires. The vegas of San Juan y Martínez, San Luis, Pinar del Río and Guane are the most privileged.