



## A Bad Habit...

There was a time, not so long ago, when cigarettes were allowed in restaurants, airplanes, hotel rooms and even hospitals! I remember arriving at Charles de Gaulle airport (Paris, France) and, as soon as I got off the plane, being overwhelmed by the smell of Gauloise cigarettes... Times have changed!

### History<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>

Tobacco (or *Nicotiana tabacum*) and related products have a long history that stretches back to 6,000 BC. The Aztecs smoked a hollow reed or cane tube stuffed with tobacco. Other natives of Mexico, Central America, and

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<sup>1</sup> <https://tobaccofreelife.org/tobacco/tobacco-history/#:~:text=6%2C000%20BC%20%E2%80%93%20Native%20Americans%20first,gift%20by%20the%20American%20Indians>

<sup>2</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tobacco\\_smoking](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tobacco_smoking)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/topic/cigarette>

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.lva.virginia.gov/public/dvb/bio.asp?b=Bonsack\\_James\\_Albert#:~:text=James%20A.,into%20cigarettes%20of%20uniform%20length](https://www.lva.virginia.gov/public/dvb/bio.asp?b=Bonsack_James_Albert#:~:text=James%20A.,into%20cigarettes%20of%20uniform%20length)

parts of South America crushed tobacco leaves and rolled the shreds in corn (maize) husk or other vegetable wrappers.

In 1492, when he first set foot in America, Columbus got gifts from natives, including dried up leaves of the tobacco plant. As they were not edible and had a distinct smell, the leaves were thrown overboard. However, Columbus soon realized that dried tobacco leaves were a prized possession among the natives, as they traded them and often offered them as gifts.

Rodrigo de Jerez and Luis de Torres were the first Europeans to observe smoking. It was on Cuba and Jerez became a heavy smoker, bringing the habit back with him to Spain. Jerez's neighbors were so petrified of the smoke coming out of his mouth and nose that he was soon arrested by the Holy Inquisition and held in captivity for nearly 7 years!!! However, thanks to seafarers, smoking became an entrenched habit in both Spain and Portugal before long.

Frenchman Jean Nicot, from whose name the word *nicotine* is derived, introduced tobacco to France in 1560. By the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, tobacco was present in almost all European countries, and doctors claimed that it had medicinal properties. For instance, in 1571, Nicolas Monardes wrote a book outlining 36 specific ailments that tobacco could supposedly cure...

In the US, tobacco products gained a strong foothold sometime around the Revolution. In 1776, tobacco was even used by revolutionaries as a guarantee for the loans they were getting from France. In 1882, James Albert Bonsack, the inventor of the cigarette-rolling machine, manufactured the Bonsack Cigarette Machine which prospered from the first as one machine could produce as many cigarettes as forty-eight people could make manually .

Cigarettes were most popular during the First and Second World Wars when tobacco companies sent millions of packs to soldiers on the front lines, creating thousands of faithful and addicted consumers. In 1925, Philip Morris started marketing to women, tripling the number of female smokers in just 10 years!

In 1967, the US Surgeon General definitively linked smoking to lung cancer and presented evidence that it was causing heart problems. Between 1965 and 2006, rates of smoking in the US were cut in half (declining from 42% to 20.8%).

## **Smoking in Hotels<sup>5,6</sup>**

The term “smoking room” refers to a room or lounge within a building that is specifically provided and furnished for smoking. Studies show that smoking rooms in hotels have significantly higher levels of toxic chemicals compared to non-smoking rooms - the concentration of harmful substances can be up to 10 times higher, potentially posing a serious health risk to guests and hotel employees.

This may explain why the share of non-smoking rooms in hotels rose steadily from 74% to 97% over the last decade, and the proportion of hotels that only offer non-smoking rooms jumped from 38% in 2008 to 85% in 2016.

In 2006, Westin Hotels and Resorts became the first hotel chain to ban smoking in all their properties in the USA, Canada, and the Caribbean. Later that same year, Marriott International followed suit, and by 2011 several other prominent hotel chains (e.g., Sheraton, Wyndham Hotels and Resorts, and Comfort Suites) had announced similar policies.

## **Interesting facts<sup>7,8</sup>**

- 22.3% of the world’s population smokes (12.5% in the US in 2021)
- Before a hotel can allow smoking rooms, the state must authorize it. There are only seven states that require all hotel and motel rooms to be 100% smokefree in the US: Colorado, Connecticut, Indiana, Michigan, North Dakota, Vermont, and Wisconsin.
- Compared to 100% smokefree hotels, those offering designated smoking rooms have a 35% higher rate of complaints.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://hotelchantelle.com/how-bad-is-it-to-stay-in-a-smoking-room/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.hotels-and-discounts.com/what-is-the-difference-between-smoking-and-nonsmoking-hotel-rooms/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://green-travel-blog.com/smoking-in-hotels-what-is-allowed-where/#:~:text=It%20has%20been%20about%2015,in%20the%20USA%20and%20Europe>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9449509/>

- If you smoke in a non-smoking hotel room, you will be charged cleaning fees that can be as high as \$300-\$500.

Keeping a hotel smoking room clean and odour-free is especially difficult. For instance, housekeepers have to sanitise, wipe and vacuum the room; polish windows, mirrors and blinds, where the cigarette smoke can become embedded; deep clean furniture, walls, ceilings and carpet, as cigarette smoke can become trapped and cause yellowish stains; and constantly change and replace linens such as bedding and towels. In short, it's a major job! That's one of the reasons why it's so important to have an efficient cleaning team.

Unfortunately, staff shortage is the number 1 issue in the hotel industry. To alleviate this, why not favor electronic tipping, like **Tip&Go**, which can increase housekeepers earnings, therefore encouraging them to stay in the business 😊!

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**Francis Léonard, CEO**

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