

What Is A Humidor?

A humidor is, quite simply, a storage container designed to allow controlled air flow and equipped with a device that maintains the internal humidity in the range of 70 to 75 percent; its internal temperature should be maintained in a narrow range of about 68 to 70 degrees Fahrenheit. (Without something to maintain the internal humidity, it's not a humidor; it's just a box.)

Humidors come in all sizes. Travel-sized humidors hold just a few cigars; room-sized humidors hold thousands of boxes of cigars. Note that a humidor is not a sealed environment. Inside an airtight moisturized container, cigars are likely to become moldy. For that reason, it's better to have air circulating between the cigars in your humidor than it is to squish them in too tightly. While a humidor needs a device that maintains moisture levels, it does not necessarily need a gauge.

Some humidors, however, come with hygrometers, which indicate the interior humidity. While the analog models (the round gauges with a needle inside) often have the appealing style of a dial on a sports car's dashboard, they are frequently inaccurate. Digital hygrometers, on the other hand, are usually reliable to a level of plus or minus 2 percent. No matter what a thermometer or hygrometer says, the true measure of your humidor's performance will be the condition of the cigars inside. If the cigars are exuding a little oil, the conditions are perfect. If they seem too dry, you add more water. If they turn moldy, you have to throw out the cigars (probably with a tear or two in your eye), no matter what the hygrometer says.

There's even a species of beetle, called a tobacco beetle, which can quickly bore holes through the contents of humidors. This will sometimes occur when the humidor maintains a temperature above 75 degrees for more than 24 hours. If your humidor becomes afflicted with these insects, freeze the contaminated cigars for 48 hours, then transfer them to the refrigerator for an additional 24 hours before returning them to your humidor. The beetles and their larvae will not survive. Be sure to wipe down your humidor with a damp cloth (using only distilled water) before returning the cigars.