



AS IT IS

Record Sales for Cuban Cigars

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Cuba's state-owned cigar company Habanos S.A. recently reported it had record sales of its famous hand-rolled cigars in 2021.

Travel restrictions in 2020 because of the coronavirus had decreased demand from countries dependent on **tourism**. Restrictions also decreased demand at important duty-free shops in airports around the world.

But Habanos reported a 15 percent increase in income over the previous year in a statement on its website. The news comes as vaccination programs began to take effect and some world travel restarted.

Cuba's hand-rolled cigars are considered by many to be the best in the world.

The report on cigar sales is good news for the Cuban economy. The country has been severely affected by the coronavirus pandemic and increased U.S. sanctions.

Habanos said in its statement it would also make prices the same across markets for its most costly cigars. The company said it would use the Hong Kong market for setting the price of its special Cohiba and Trinidad cigars.

Cigar Aficionado is a top cigar industry publication. It predicted the larger Cohibas will soon reach a price of \$100 on the announcement. The publication noted that the Hong Kong market is among the priciest worldwide.

"Bigger Cohibas will sell for \$100 each ... and boxes will no longer be priced in the hundreds of dollars, but in the thousands," the publication said in a story on its website.

Habanos usually holds a party early in the year for tobacco experts and sellers. The event includes tours of Cuba's historic plantations and factories. Evening social activities provide opportunities to try Cuban tobacco products. This year, however, the party was once again called off.

The Cuban cigar maker said Spain, China, Germany, France and Switzerland are the top markets for Cuban cigars.

Cuba cannot sell its cigars to the United States, the biggest worldwide market for cigars, because of a long-standing U.S. trade embargo.

I'm Jonathan Evans.

Dave Sherwood reported on this story for the Reuters news service. Jonathan Evans adapted this story for Learning English.

Words in this Story

tourism - *n.* the practice of traveling for recreation
