

The following is a broad guide to significant changes in cigarette packaging since the arrival of pre-made cigarettes in 1845.

1845	Pre-made cigarettes as we know them arrive in England Sold loose by weight and wrapped in plain paper wraps. This practice continued until the 1930's. Also sold in card, cedar, and tin boxes of 100.
1870	First printed paper packets of 5 and 10 cigarettes
1880	First printed card packets containing 10 and 20 cigarettes. Cigarettes packed in boxes without any wrapping. This practice continued until the 1940's by many brands
1890	Large tins and packets introduced by many manufacturers. 12's, 25's 50's 100's in card boxes and tins.
1890	Lead wraps for cigarettes known as "Leads" introduced. Intended to stop cigarettes drying out.
1897	First Tin Foil wrap around cigarettes inside cardboard packets introduced. This was a heavy grade of foil looking much like lead, overlaying a thin paper wrap. Exclusively used by W Duke & Sons at this time.
1900	Vacuum sealed tins patented by W.D. & H.O. Wills.
1900	5 for 1d paper packets proliferate
1905	First sealed tins of 50 cigarettes with fixed point cutter lids.
1915	Waxed paper used to wrap some brands within the packet.
1920	5 for a penny paper packet phased out
1930/40	Tin foil internal wrapping starts to come into use
1930	Fixed point cutter lids on tins replaced by moveable point lids. Cutter lids phased out by 1950
1931	Cellophane wrapping starts to appear. Prolongs product life. Early cellophane thick and no tear tape.
1940/45	Wax wrapping paper wrapping on some packets to prevent water ingress
1940/45	War time utility packing for many leading brands. Card packets replaced by paper packets with minimal graphics.
1945	Tin foil replaced by thinner aluminium foil on paper.
1956	Tear strips start to appear on cellophane wrapped packets.
1972/1991	Health Warnings introduced. Text warnings on at least one side panel.
1991/2008	Text health warnings on back and front of packet..
2008/2024	Pictorial warnings on back and front of packet.
2016	Sale of Packets of 10 banned

A selection of old price lists, Smokers Guides, and the UK Cigarette brands library are available in the Resources section of this web site to assist you in dating cigarette packets.