Tobacco is generally grown between the latitudes of 40° north and 40° south. Tobacco farms can be found in over 30 countries, including Argentina, Brazil, China, Greece, Italy, Malawi, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Spain, Turkey, and the United States.

**Tobacco Types:**

The three most commonly used tobacco types are Virginia (or 'flue-cured'), burley, and oriental.

**Virginia (flue-cured)** tobacco is often referred to as 'bright tobacco' because of the golden-yellow to deep-orange color it reaches during curing. Virginia tobacco is cured in heated barns (thus the name flue-cured). The curing process takes a week. Virginia tobacco has a light, bright aroma and taste. Major Virginia tobacco growing countries are Argentina, Brazil,
China, India, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, and the U.S.

**Burley** tobacco is light to dark brown in color. Burley tobacco is air-cured in barns. During the long curing process, which takes up to two months, the tobacco loses most of its natural sugars, and develops a strong, almost cigar-like taste. Major Burley growing countries are Argentina, Brazil, Italy, Malawi, and the U.S.

**Oriental** tobacco is highly aromatic. It has small leaves which are harvested leaf by leaf, much like Virginia tobacco and sun-cured in the open air. Major oriental tobacco growing countries are Bulgaria, Greece, Macedonia, and Turkey.

**Tobacco Blends:**

Cigarette styles are characterized by their tobacco blend. Two of the most common cigarette blends are American and Virginia.

**American blend cigarettes** typically use the three main tobacco varieties: Virginia, burley, and oriental. Normally, American blend cigarettes have added ingredients to replace the sugars lost during the curing of burley tobacco and to provide the distinctive flavor and aroma of each cigarette brand. American blend cigarettes are the most popular cigarettes in the United States, most of Europe, Latin America, Eastern Europe, and many Asian countries.

**Virginia blend cigarettes** are primarily composed of Virginia tobacco. Some Virginia blends, called modified Virginia blends, contain small amounts of burley and/or oriental tobaccos. Virginia-style cigarettes are popular in most of the British Commonwealth (Australia, Canada, India, Malaysia, Pakistan, Nigeria, the U.K., and South Africa). China, the largest cigarette market in the world, is a Virginia market. Virginia blends typically do not use flavor ingredients. However, Virginia blends do use ingredients as processing aids.
Other types of cigarettes include cigarettes made from dark or air-cured tobaccos, oriental tobacco cigarettes, and kretek, which contain cloves and are the most popular style of cigarette in Indonesia.

**Tobacco Grading:**

The type of tobacco leaf is an important element in developing a tobacco blend. The grade of the individual tobacco leaf is another.

After harvesting and curing, the leaf is given a grade, which describes the stalk position, quality, and color. The grading system guides the blending process and ensures that leaves of the right type and quality are used to achieve the tastes and aromas of our different cigarette brands.