



# La Diva Nicotina: The Story of How Tobacco Seduced the World

*Iain Gately*

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## **La Diva Nicotina: The Story of How Tobacco Seduced the World** Iain Gately

When, in 1492, Christopher Columbus landed on a small island he believed to be China, he was met by representatives of the local tribe who offered him gifts of bread, fruit and dried leaves. He threw the leaves into the sea, but Columbus and his crew did not remain ignorant of these leaves' powers or purpose for long. In Africa tobacco was received as spiritual inspiration, the French effused over its beneficial properties, while those "Reeking Gallants" of England and Elizabethan society set about advertising it as the perfect medicine, capable of curing a number of illnesses, and so the "weed" made its way into the palaces of Europe. Through wars, changing fashions, industrialization, anti-smoking campaigns, and the subject of advertising and sponsorship, tobacco has played a prominent part in global culture. This text traces the development of tobacco and smoking, from ritual refreshment to universal habit.

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