Handmade Cigars in The Philippines

**Tabaqueria de Filipinas Cigars** (TDF) may be one of the jewels of the Philippines. Better than a Cuban cigar. The quality compares and to some exceeds those made in Cuba. The big difference is the cost, TDF cigars cost around 133 peso for their more expensive type or about $2.80 per cigar compared to about $10 for the Cubans I was able to find online.

They have three main types of sub-brands in many different styles as well as assorted flavored cigars. I don’t care for the flavored ones though. They are mostly panatella type. For me they didn’t burn that smooth and were a bit bitter to me. The rest? I wish they were not so good and so fun to smoke. They are all handmade. The three types are:

- **Flor de Filipinas** - Their lowest price cigar. Very smooth, mellow and quite good. I usually get these in the panatella style. I use them more for a quick smoke that don’t cost as much.
- **Antonio Gimenez** – This are a bit more spicy and named in honor of their grandfather. I smoked these for a while but then I found their Independence type and went with that instead. These contain Cuban seed filler.
- **Independencia 1898** – I believe they would say this is their premium cigar. It has a Java wrapper and Isabella binder and filler. I have to admit, I’m not versed enough in cigars to know what that means. I know its just hard to stop smoking them. I enjoy the Churchill style of this cigar.

I buy mine from Kultura Filipino in Cebu City. Often you can find unbranded cigars being made by hand outside the store. The booth is not always there though. If they are, buy them out in the mall because they will give you a free one or two that they make outside the store. Those are quite good too.

Kultura Filipino is one of the few stores I like to shop at. If you can find things that are carried here out in the province where they are made you can get them cheaper. Most of the time you wont be able to find it, so you probably should get anything you really just have to have. Many of the items are quite low priced. If you
go to SM Mall, be sure to make a visit by there. Everything is made in the Philippines and highlights the
culture of the Filipino as the name suggest.

If you need help in getting these, let me know. I’ll get them for you at the same cost that one can buy them
from Kultura Filipino that you can find online or go to SM Mall in Cebu City. That’s the only place in Cebu
that I have been able to find them. You’ll need to pay shipping of course and any customs duties. I don’t
know what custom’s duties there would be. All customs issues will be up to you.

If you don’t smoke, maybe you should stay clear of these, they are very good. I hadn’t smoked in over 20
years but now I’m craving these. I try to keep it to no more than two a day. Not always so easy. After
working on an article, I often find I need a smoke break! If you’re going to slowly kill yourself, you might as
well do it with these. They are really good!

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