

City Beat

There are eight million stories in my albums. This is one of them...

In 1913, R.J. Reynolds innovated the packaged cigarette. Prior cigarette smokers rolled their own, which tended to obscure the potential for a national market for a pre-packaged product. Reynolds worked to develop a more appealing flavor, creating the Camel cigarette, so named because it used Turkish tobacco in imitation of then-fashionable Egyptian cigarettes. Reynolds priced them below competitors, and within a year, 425 million packs had been sold.

Camel cigarettes were originally blended to have a milder taste than established brands. They were advance-promoted by a careful advertising campaign that included "teasers" simply stating "the Camels are coming". This marketing style was a prototype for subsequent attempts to sway public opinion into backing the United States' entry into World War I, and later World War II. Another promotion was 'Old Joe', a circus camel driven through towns used to attract attention and distribute free cigarettes. The brand's slogan, used for decades, was "I'd walk a mile for a Camel!"

The iconic style of Camel is the original unfiltered cigarette sold in a soft pack, known as Camel Straights or Regulars. Its popularity peaked through the brand's use by famous personalities such as news broadcaster Edward R. Murrow smoking a Camel no-filter, which became his trademark.

In Europe, Camel is also a brand of cigarette rolling papers and loose cigarette tobacco. On July 1, 2000,

an "Oriental" variety of Camel was introduced, followed by Turkish Gold, a regular cigarette, in 2000, and Turkish Jade, a menthol, in 2001. In 2005 Camel added its name on the cigarette paper and changed the filter color and design on its Oriental version. In 2012, Camel was surpassed by Pall Mall as R.J. Reynolds' most popular brand.

As of June 2012, Camel filters were discontinued in the United Kingdom. Camel Blue, the light version, is available from Tesco. In 2013, Camel celebrated its 100th anniversary. Professor Robert N. Proctor of Stanford University commemorated the occasion with an editorial in the LA Times, noting that over the last century Camel sold over 4 trillion cigarettes.

