Smokeless Tobacco Fact Sheets

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Advancing Science & Protecting Public Health

National Cancer Institute
CDC
Samhällsmedicin
Stockholm Centre of Public Health Centre for Tobacco Prevention
Smokeless Tobacco Fact Sheets

Introduction

Smokeless tobacco products have been in existence for thousands of years among populations in South America and Southeast Asia. Over time, these products have gained popularity in the throughout the world. Smokeless tobacco is consumed without burning the product, and can be used orally or nasally. Oral smokeless tobacco products are placed in the mouth, cheek or lip and sucked (dipped) or chewed. Tobacco pastes or powders are used in a similar manner and placed on the gums or teeth. Fine tobacco powder mixtures are usually inhaled and absorbed in the nasal passages.

There is sufficient evidence that the use of smokeless tobacco causes cancer in humans. Smokeless tobacco contains carcinogens, which contribute to cancers of the oral cavity and the risk of other head and neck cancers. Smokeless tobacco use also causes a number of noncancerous oral conditions and can lead to nicotine addiction similar to that produced by cigarette smoking.

This compendium of fact sheets on smokeless tobacco products includes information about the brand and common names of the products, their geographic location of use, their constituents (ingredients), how the products are used, who primarily uses the products, and the processes for manufacturing the products. This information has been organized by geographic region of the world – the Americas, Europe, Asia, Africa and the Middle East.

These fact sheets were prepared by NCI and CDC specifically for the participants of the “3rd International Conference on Smokeless Tobacco, Advancing Science & Protecting Public Health,” September 22-25, 2002, Stockholm, Sweden. They are works in progress and should be considered drafts. Any additional information on smokeless tobacco products would be greatly appreciated for the development of future editions.

Please forward additional information to:

Michelle Roland, PhD
Office on Smoking and Health
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
4770 Buford Highway, N.E.
Mailstop K-50
Atlanta, GA 30341-3717
Tel: (770) 488 – 5582
mroland@cdc.gov

Co-Chairs, Program Committee, 3rd International Conference on Smokeless Tobacco:

Samira Asma, DDS, MPH
Director for Global Tobacco Control Programs
Office on Smoking and Health
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Cathy Backinger, PhD, MPH
Health Scientist
Tobacco Control Research Branch
National Cancer Institute
Acknowledgements

The following people significantly contributed to the development of the smokeless tobacco fact sheets:

Samira Asma, DDS, MPH
Office on Smoking and Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, GA, USA

Cathy Backinger, PhD, MPH
Tobacco Control Research Branch, National Cancer Institute, Bethesda, MD, USA

Bill Blatt, MPH, CHES
Tobacco Control Research Branch, National Cancer Institute, Bethesda, MD, USA

Maria Rosaria Galanti, PhD
Karolinska Institutet, Stockholm, Sweden

Rachel Grana, BSHS
MasiMax Resources, Inc., Rockville, MD, USA

Ricardo Granero, MD, MHSc
Research Center Ascardio, Barquisimeto, Venezuela

Prakash Gupta, DSc, FACE
Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, India

Ali Idris, BDS, MSc, PhD
Toombak and Smoking Research Center, Khartoum, Sudan

Brian Judd
Office on Smoking and Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, GA, USA

Michelle Roland, PhD
Office on Smoking and Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, GA, USA

Susan Giarratano Russell, EdD, MSPH, CHES
Office on Smoking and Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, GA, USA

Scott Tomar, DMD, DrPH
University of Florida College of Dentistry, Gainesville, FL, USA
# Smokeless Tobacco Products by Region of the World

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¹ Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakstan, E. Turkestan (Xinijiang), Afghanistan, Pakistan, Baluchistan, Mongolia, parts of Iran

² Philippines, New Guinea, Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Cambodia, Thailand, Myanmar

³ India, Western & Central States of India, Bihar, Maharashatra, Gujarat, Bhavnagar, Sri Lanka
Chimó

BRAND NAMES: San Carleño, El Tovareño, El Tigrito, El Sabroso, El Gran Búfalo, El Dragón, El Morichal

COMMON NAMES: None

GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION OF USE: Venezuela

PRODUCT CONSTITUENTS: Tobacco leaf, sodium bicarbonate, brown sugar, ashes from the Mamón tree (Melicocca bijuga), and vanilla and anisette flavoring. The ingredients vary according to the region within Venezuela.

HOW USED: A small amount of Chimó is placed between the lip or cheek and the gum and left there for some time, usually 30 minutes. The mixture of Chimó and saliva is spit out.

WHO USES: Children, teenagers, unskilled workers in rural and urban areas. Chimó use has become fashionable in the last 5 years among urban teenagers, regardless of social and economic status.

PROCESSING / MANUFACTURING: Tobacco leaves are crushed and boiled for several hours, starch and fiber are discharged. The remaining portion becomes a concentrated product, 10 kilos of tobacco becomes one kilo of “Pasta”. For maturation it is then placed in natural containers, or “taparas”(the dried fruit from Tapara tree), or wrapped in banana leaves. The matured paste is “seasoned” with other ingredients, listed above. Finally packaged in small tins or candy-like wrapped cylinders. Most factories are small.


Seelkopf C, Rojas A. Estudio sobre el Chimó. Universidad de Los Andes, Venezuela.

Nicotine Lozenge

BRAND NAMES: Ariva

COMMON NAMES: None

GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION OF USE: United States

PRODUCT CONSTITUENTS: tobacco, mint, eucalyptus

HOW USED: Held in mouth and sucked until dissolved.

WHO USES: Not yet determined.

PROCESSING / MANUFACTURING: Commercially manufactured by Star Scientific.
Loose Leaf Chew

BRAND NAMES: Red Man, Red Man Golden Blend, Red Man Select, Granger, Work Horse (Swedish Match products), Scotten, Dillon, Levi Garrett, HB Scott, Taylors Pride, Red Fox (Conwood products), Beech-Nut Regular, Beech-Nut Wintergreen, Beech-Nut Spearmint (National products), Chattanooga Chew (Swisher product)

COMMON NAMES: chewing tobacco, spit tobacco

GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION OF USE: United States

PRODUCT CONSTITUENTS: leaf tobacco, sweetener, and/or licorice

HOW USED: A piece of tobacco 0.75 to 1 inch in diameter is placed between the cheek and lower lip, typically toward the back of the mouth. It is either chewed or held in place.1 Saliva is spit or swallowed.

WHO USES: In 2000, U.S. prevalence of current (used within the past 30 days) smokeless tobacco use (includes both snuff and chewing tobacco) for those 12 years old and over was 3.4%: 6.5% of males and 0.5% of females.2

PROCESSING / MANUFACTURING: Commercially manufactured. Loose cigar tobacco leaves are air-cured, then stemmed, cut or granulated and loosely packed to form small strips of shredded tobacco. Most brands are sweetened and flavored with licorice. Typically sold in pouches weighing about 3 ounces.1 Loose-leaf tobacco has a high average sugar content (approximately 35%).3

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Moist Plug

BRAND NAMES: Red Man Moist Plug, Totems, RJ Gold (Swedish Match products), Levi Garrett Plus, Taylors Pride (Conwood products)

COMMON NAMES: chewing tobacco, spit tobacco

GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION OF USE: United States

PRODUCT CONSTITUENTS: enriched tobacco leaves, fine tobacco, sweetener, and/or licorice

HOW USED: Chewed or held between the cheek and lower lip. Saliva is spit or swallowed.

WHO USES: In 2000, U.S. prevalence of current (used within the past 30 days) smokeless tobacco use (includes both snuff and chewing tobacco) for those 12 years old and over was 3.4%: 6.5% of males and 0.5% of females.

PROCESSING / MANUFACTURING: Commercially manufactured. Enriched tobacco leaves (Burley and bright tobacco or cigar tobacco) or fragments are wrapped in fine tobacco and pressed into bricks. Moist plug tobacco has at least 15% moisture. Most plug tobacco is flavored and sweetened with licorice. Plus tobacco is packaged as a compressed brick or flat block wrapped inside natural tobacco leaves. Typically weighs 7 to 13 ounces. Sugar content is approximately 24%.


Plug (chew)

**BRAND NAMES:** Days Work (Swedish Match product), Conwood (Conwood product), Brown & Williamson (Brown & Williamson product)

**COMMON NAMES:** chewing tobacco, spit tobacco

**GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION OF USE:** United States

**PRODUCT CONSTITUENTS:** enriched tobacco leaves, fine tobacco, sweetener and/or licorice

**HOW USED:** Chewed or held between the cheek and lower lip.¹ Saliva is spit or swallowed.

**WHO USES:** In 2000, U.S. prevalence of current (used within the past 30 days) smokeless tobacco use (includes both snuff and chewing tobacco) for those 12 years old and over was 3.4%: 6.5% of males and 0.5% of females.²

**PROCESSING / MANUFACTURING:** Enriched tobacco leaves (Burley and bright tobacco and cigar tobacco) or fragments are wrapped in fine tobacco and pressed into bricks. Plus or “firm plug” tobacco has less than 15% moisture. Most plug tobacco is flavored and sweetened with licorice. Plus tobacco is packaged as a compressed brick or flat block wrapped inside natural tobacco leaves. Package typically weighs 7 to 13 ounces.¹

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Twist Roll (chew)

**BRAND NAMES:** Conwood (Conwood product), R.C. Owen (R.C. Owen product), R.J. Reynolds (R.J. Reynolds product)

**COMMON NAMES:** chewing tobacco, spit tobacco

**GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION OF USE:** United States

**PRODUCT CONSTITUENTS:** tobacco, tobacco leaf extract

**HOW USED:** Chewed or held between the cheek and lower lip. Saliva is spit or swallowed.

**WHO USES:** In 2000, U.S. prevalence of current (used within the past 30 days) smokeless tobacco use (includes both snuff and chewing tobacco) for those 12 years old and over was 3.4%: 6.5% of males and 0.5% of females.

**PROCESSING / MANUFACTURING:** Handmade by commercial manufacturers. Dark, air-cured leaf tobacco is treated with a tar-like tobacco leaf extract and twisted into rope-like strands that are dried. Typically, no flavoring or sweetener is added. The final product is a pliable, but dry, rope. The product is sold by the piece in small (1 to 2 ounce) or larger sizes based on the number of leaves in the twist.

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**Gul**

**BRAND NAMES:** None

**COMMON NAMES:** Gadakhu

**GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION OF USE:** Central and Eastern India

**PRODUCT CONSTITUENTS:** tobacco powder, molasses, other ingredients

**HOW USED:** Often used for cleaning teeth.

**WHO USES:** Primarily women.

**PROCESSING / MANUFACTURING:** Commercially manufactured. Since 1986, gul has been machine produced and sold in toothpaste-like tubes.

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Gutkha

BRAND NAMES: Manikchand, Moolchand, Tulsi, Shimla, Sikandar, Pan Parag

COMMON NAMES: None

GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION OF USE: India, Southeast Asia, United Kingdom

PRODUCT CONSTITUENTS: betel nut, catachu, tobacco, lime, saffron, flavoring

HOW USED: Held in the mouth and chewed. Saliva is generally spit out, but sometimes swallowed.

WHO USES: Very popular among boys and young men due to targeted advertising and marketing.

PROCESSING / MANUFACTURING: Commercially manufactured. Tobacco, betel nut and catechu are mixed together with several other ingredients, flavored, and sweetened. Product is sold in small brightly-colored packets, which appeal to children.


Iq’mik

**BRAND NAMES:** None

**COMMON NAMES:** None

**GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION OF USE:** Alaska (United States)

**PRODUCT CONSTITUENTS:** tobacco, punk ash

**HOW USED:** Users pinch off a small piece and chew the iq’mik. The user may pre-chew the iq’mik and place it in a small box for later use by others, including children and sometimes teething babies.

**WHO USES:** Alaska Natives (men, women and children). One study found that 52% of Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Alaska Natives used iq’mik.

**PROCESSING / MANUFACTURING:** Fire-cured tobacco leaves are mixed with punk ash (ash generated by burning a woody fungus that grows on the bark of birch trees). The ingredients are available at grocery stores and retail outlets, but are generally combined by the user before use. It is believed that the punk ash in the mixture raises the pH level in the mouth, increasing the dose and enhancing the delivery of nicotine to the brain.

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1 J. Kaur & F.E. Jackson (personal communication, March 27, 2001).

Khaini

**BRAND NAMES:** Raja, Kuber

**COMMON NAMES:** None

**GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION OF USE:** Bihar (India), Western and central states of India,\(^1\) Maharashtra (India)\(^2\)

**PRODUCT CONSTITUENTS:** tobacco, slaked lime paste,\(^3\) sometimes areca nut

**HOW USED:** Held in the mouth, in a similar manner to moist snuff.\(^4\) The product is kept in the mouth for 10 to 15 minutes\(^5\) and sucked from time to time.\(^2\)

**WHO USES:** Most common among men but used by women as well.

**PROCESSING / MANUFACTURING:** Powdered tobacco and slaked lime paste are combined by the user in his/her palm and formed into a ball.\(^6\) Areca nut is sometimes added.\(^1\) Usually prepared by a user from basic ingredients at the time of use.

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Qiwam (kimam)

**BRAND NAMES:** None

**COMMON NAMES:** None

**GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION OF USE:** India

**PRODUCT CONSTITUENTS:** tobacco, spices (cardamom, saffron and/or aniseed), additives such as musk

**HOW USED:** Paste is placed in the mouth and chewed. Also used in betel quid.

**WHO USES:** Upper socio-economic groups.

**PROCESSING / MANUFACTURING:** Tobacco leaves are processed by removing their stalks and stems, then boiled and soaked in water flavored with spices and additives. The resulting pulp is mashed, strained, and dried into a paste.

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Mawa

BRAND NAMES: None

COMMON NAMES: None

GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION OF USE: Bhavnagar (India), Gujarat\(^1\)

PRODUCT CONSTITUENTS: tobacco, slaked lime, areca nut

HOW USED: Placed in the mouth and chewed for 10 to 20 minutes.

WHO USES: Young men.

PROCESSING / MANUFACTURING: Small pieces of sun-cured areca nut are mixed with tobacco flakes and slaked lime (liquid calcium hydroxide). The mixture is rubbed together to combine. The resulting mixture is about 95% areca nut.

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Mishri (masheri, misheri)

**BRAND NAMES:** None

**COMMON NAMES:** None

**GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION OF USE:** Maharashtra (India)

**PRODUCT CONSTITUENTS:** tobacco

**HOW USED:** Applied to the teeth and gums, often for the purpose of cleaning the teeth. Users then tend to hold it in their mouths (due to the nicotine addiction).

**WHO USES:** Predominantly women. More common in lower socio-economic groups.

**PROCESSING / MANUFACTURING:** Tobacco is baked on a hot metal plate until toasted or partially burnt, then powdered.

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Nass (naswar, niswar)

**BRAND NAMES:** None

**COMMON NAMES:** naswar, niswar

**GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION OF USE:** Central Asia, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Baluchistan (India)

**PRODUCT CONSTITUENTS:** Nass: tobacco, ash, cotton or sesame oil, water, and sometimes gum. Naswar, niswar: tobacco, slaked lime, indigo, cardamom, oil, menthol, water.

**HOW USED:** Held in the mouth for 10 to 15 minutes. Naswar is sometimes chewed slowly.

**WHO USES:** Information not available.

**PROCESSING / MANUFACTURING:** Sun- and heat-dried tobacco leaves, slaked lime, ash from tree bark, and flavoring and coloring agents are mixed together. Water is added and the mixture is rolled into balls.

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Pan Masala (betel quid)

**BRAND NAMES:** Manikchand, Mahak, Pan Parag #1, Vimal, Crane, Rajdarbar, Kuber, Yamu, Badshah, Tulsi, Rahat, Pan King, Jubilee, Kanchan

**COMMON NAMES:** betel quid

**GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION OF USE:** India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Philippines, New Guinea, Taiwan, China

**PRODUCT CONSTITUENTS:** Tobacco, areca nuts, slaked lime, betel leaf. “Chewing tobacco” is sometimes used, and flavoring agents such as menthol, camphor, sugar, rosewater, aniseed, mint, or other spices are sometimes added in different regions.

**HOW USED:** A quid is placed in the mouth (usually between the gum and cheek) and gently sucked and chewed. Pan masala is sometimes served in restaurants after the meal.

**WHO USES:** Most common among women, but used by men as well.

**PROCESSING / MANUFACTURING:** Commercially prepared, vendor prepared or assembled at home. Areca nut is boiled, roasted, or sun-dried. Tobacco may be used raw, sun-dried, and roasted, then finely chopped, powdered and scented. Alternatively, the tobacco may be boiled, made into a paste and scented with rosewater or perfume. To assemble, slaked lime and catechu are smeared on a betel leaf. The betel leaf is folded into a funnel shape and tobacco, areca nut and any other ingredients are added. The top of the funnel is folded over, resulting in a quid, which is placed in the mouth for use.

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1 Halarnkar S. A New Way to Die? India Today 1997 Aug 11; p. 72-73.


Creamy Snuff

**BRAND NAMES:** Ipco (Asha Industries product)\(^1\), Denobac, Tona, Ganesh

**COMMON NAMES:** tobacco toothpaste

**GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION OF USE:** India

**PRODUCT CONSTITUENTS:** tobacco, clove oil, glycerin, spearmint, menthol, camphor

**HOW USED:** Often used to clean teeth.\(^2\) The manufacturer recommends letting the paste linger in the mouth before rinsing.\(^1\)

**WHO USES:** Primarily women.\(^3\)

**PROCESSING / MANUFACTURING:** Commercially manufactured. Sometimes marketed as a dentifrice.

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Dry Snuff

BRAND NAMES: Al Capone Powder, Conwood (Conwood product), Swisher (Swisher product), US Tobacco (U.S. Tobacco product), Brown & Williamson (Brown & Williamson product)

COMMON NAMES: tapkeer

GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION OF USE: United States, United Kingdom, India

PRODUCT CONSTITUENTS: tobacco

HOW USED: Typically, a pinch is held between the lip and gum or cheek. It may also be inhaled into the nostrils.\(^1\)

WHO USES: In 2000, U.S. prevalence of current (used within the past 30 days) smokeless tobacco use (includes both snuff and chewing tobacco) for those 12 years old and over was 3.4%: 6.5% of males and 0.5% of females.\(^2\)

PROCESSING / MANUFACTURING: Tobacco is fire-cured, then fermented and processed into a dry, powdered form. The moisture content of the finished product is less than 10%. It is packaged and sold in small metal or glass containers.\(^1\)

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Moist Snuff

BRAND NAMES: Copenhagen, Skoal, Skoal Bandits, Happy Days (U.S. Tobacco products), Hawken, Kodiak (Conwood products), Red Wood, Gold River, Silver Creek (Swisher products), Red Man, Timber Wolf, (Swedish Match products)

COMMON NAMES: spit tobacco, dip

GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION OF USE: United States

PRODUCT CONSTITUENTS: tobacco

HOW USED: A pinch (called a dip) or a pouch is placed and held between the lip and cheek or gum.¹ Saliva may be swallowed or, more commonly, spit out.

WHO USES: In 2000, U.S. prevalence of current (used within the past 30 days) smokeless tobacco use (includes both snuff and chewing tobacco) for those 12 years old and over was 3.4%: 6.5% of males and 0.5% of females.²

PROCESSING / MANUFACTURING: The tobacco is either air- or fire-cured, then processed into fine particles (“fine cut”) or strips (“long cut”). Tobacco stems and seeds are not removed. Moisture content of the final product is up to 50%. The tobacco is sold either loose (in such products as Skoal, Copenhagen and Kodiak), or packaged in small, ready-to-use pouches called packets or sachets (in such products as Skoal Bandits). Nicotine is released more rapidly from the fine cut form due to the greater surface area. Moist snuff is the most commonly used form of tobacco in the United States.¹

Snus (snuff)

**BRAND NAMES:** Catch, General, Timber Wolf (Swedish match products)

**COMMON NAMES:** None

**GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION OF USE:** Sweden, India

**PRODUCT CONSTITUENTS:** tobacco, water, sodium carbonate, sodium chloride, moisturizer, flavoring, nicotine

**HOW USED:** A pinch (called a *dip*) is placed between the gum and upper lip. The average user keeps snus in the mouth for 11 to 14 hours per day. In Sweden, the portions come in two different doses: regular and “mini-portions” (1.0g and 0.5g of tobacco).

**WHO USES:** Approximately 20% of Swedish men and about 2% of Swedish women use snus daily. The number of women using snus is increasing.

**PROCESSING / MANUFACTURING:** Finely ground dry tobacco is mixed with aromatic substances, salts, water, and humidifying agents. The product is kept cold to avoid fermentation. The final product has a moisture content of about 50% and has a damp consistency.

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Toombak

BRAND NAMES: None

COMMON NAMES: None

GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION OF USE: Sudan

PRODUCT CONSTITUENTS: tobacco, sodium bicarbonate

HOW USED: Product is rolled into a ball, weighing about 10g, called a saffa. The saffa is held between the gum and the lip or cheek, or under the tongue on the floor of the mouth. It is sucked slowly for 10 to 15 minutes. Male users periodically spit, while female users typically swallow the saliva generated. The user usually rinses his/her mouth with water after the saffa is removed.¹

WHO USES: About 34% of Sudanese men and 2.5% of women aged 18 years and older.¹

PROCESSING / MANUFACTURING: Tobacco leaves are harvested and left in a field for uniform drying. The leaves are then tied into bundles, sprinkled with water, and stored for a couple of weeks at 30 to 45°C to allow fermentation. The leaves are then ground up and aged for up to a year. After aging, toombak vendors (in toombak shops) place the product in bowls and gradually add sodium bicarbonate until the mixture is approximately 4 parts tobacco to 1 part sodium bicarbonate. The mixture is blended by hand and constantly tested with the tips of the fingers until it becomes moist and hardened. The toombak is then placed in an airtight container for about 2 hours prior to sale.¹

Red Tooth Powder

BRAND NAMES: Dabur

COMMON NAMES: lal dantmanjan

GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION OF USE: India

PRODUCT CONSTITUENTS: tobacco

HOW USED: Most often used to clean teeth.

WHO USES: More often used by women.

PROCESSING / MANUFACTURING: Unknown
Zarda

**BRAND NAMES:** Baba, Bharat, Gopal

**COMMON NAMES:** None

**GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION OF USE:** India, Arab countries

**PRODUCT CONSTITUENTS:** tobacco, lime, spices, vegetable dyes, areca nut

**HOW USED:** Often used as ingredient in betel quid.¹ Chewed.

**WHO USES:** Men and women in middle to upper socio-economic groups.

**PROCESSING / MANUFACTURING:** Tobacco leaves are broken up and boiled with lime and spices. The mixture is dried and colored with vegetable dyes, then mixed with finely chopped areca nuts.²

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Gupta PC. India: Swedish Match steps in. Tob Control 2001 Dec;10(4):304E.


J. Kaur & F.E. Jackson (personal communication, March 27, 2001).


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