

## Spittoon or Spitoon



A **spittoon** (or **spitoon**) is a receptacle used for spitting into, especially by people who chewed tobacco. It is also known as a **cuspidor**, (the Portuguese word for "spitter" or "spittoon"). Spittoons appeared both in the United Kingdom and the United States under the same name about 1840.

In the late 19th century spittoons became a very common feature of North American and Australian saloons, hotels, stores, banks, railway carriages, and other places where people (especially adult men) gathered. Brass was the most common material for spittoons. Other materials used for mass production of spittoons ranged from basic functional iron to elaborately crafted cut glass and fine porcelain.

Spittoons are flat-bottomed, often weighted to minimize tipping over, and often with an interior "lip" to make spilling less likely if they tip.

Use of spittoons was considered an advance of public manners and health, intended to replace previously common spitting on floors, streets, and sidewalks. Many places passed laws against spitting in public other than into a spittoon.

Spittoons were also useful for people suffering from tuberculosis who would cough up phlegm.

After the 1918 flu epidemic, both hygiene and etiquette advocates began to disparage public use of the spittoon, and use began to decline. Chewing gum replaced tobacco as the favorite chew of the younger generation. Cigarettes were considered more hygienic than spit-inducing chewing tobacco.

A rare profession which commonly uses spittoons is that of the wine taster. A wine taster will sip samples of wine and then spit them into a spittoon in order to avoid alcohol intoxication.

Artifact from the Central Manitoulin Historical Society

Information Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spittoon>