

The Zippo Lighter: Eternal Flame [B2]

Questo accendino dalla fiamma resistente a tutte le stagioni offre una garanzia a vita ed è uno dei preferiti dai consumatori da oltre novant'anni.

A small metal box with a [hinged lid](#), the Zippo lighter might be [cold to the touch](#), but it produces instant heat with the [flick](#) of a finger. Even while cigarettes have [fallen out of fashion and favour](#), the Zippo remains [revered](#) as an art deco design classic, its flame burning [steadily](#) whatever the weather.

ONE HAND

Early models of cigarette lighters were [unreliable](#) and difficult to use, even with two hands. George G. Blaisdell was working for the family machinery company in Bradford, Pennsylvania in 1932, when he observed a friend struggle to light a cigarette. Blaisdell applied his engineering skills to design a new lighter, which could be operated with one hand. He named the lighter Zippo, from 'zipper' (zip fastener), a name he felt represented the modern era.

WIND-PROOF

Initially made of [brass](#), the Zippo lighter consisted of a [flint](#) wheel and a small [flint](#) to create a [spark](#). Refillable lighter fluid [dampened](#) a [wick](#) that was ignited and produced a flame. Blaisdell improved the [chimney](#) (the neck of the lighter) by [drilling](#) small holes in it, and designed its lid so that it could be used as a [wind shield](#). He founded the Zippo Manufacturing Company during the Great Depression, and the first Zippos appeared in 1933. They cost \$1.95 each and came with a lifetime guarantee. The slogan the company used was: "It works or we [fix](#) it free."

WARTIME

In 1941, the US entered World War Two and Zippo focused its [supply](#) on the US military. It [switched](#) the lighter [casing](#) to a black [crackle steelfinish](#), and millions of Zippos were carried across the world into battle. Later, when US forces fought in the Vietnam War, they personalised their lighters with engraved slogans and [stuck-on](#) icons. Many of these are now collectors' items.

MUSIC

Blaisdell died in 1978, but the family-owned Zippo factory continues production in Bradford. It has now produced more than six hundred million lighters. The original Zippo lighter, designed by George Blaisdell, is displayed in the museum here. Featured in numerous films and adverts, the Zippo lighter has such a unique 'click' when it is opened, ignited and closed, that it has been sampled on music and film tracks, including It's Probably Me by Sting and Eric Clapton in 1994.

Glossary

- **wind shield** = paravento
- **crackle steel** = acciaio sbiadito, screpolato
- **flick** = dare un colpetto
- **revered** = adorare
- **flint wheel** = pietra di selce
- **flint** = pietra
- **wick** = stoppino
- **chimney** = camino
- **fix** = riparare
- **switched** = cambiare
- **hinged lid** = coperchio a cerniera
- **fallen out of fashion and favour** = passare di moda e perdere popolarità
- **unreliable** = inaffidabili
- **spark** = scintilla
- **finish** = finitura
- **cold to the touch** = freddo al tatto
- **drilling** = forare
- **supply** = provviste
- **casing** = involucro esterno
- **steadily** = costantemente
- **brass** = ottone
- **dampened** = inumidire
- **stuck-on** = incollate