

China Country Guide - IAM

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Country Guide: China

Due to the current coronavirus/COVID-19 situation and restrictions in various countries, the below information may not be accurate. This pandemic is a fluid situation. Check with authorities for local laws and restrictions concerning movements.

Updated: August 01, 2018



[Find a foreign embassy in China](#)

[Find China's embassies in other countries](#)

Used Household Goods and Personal Effects

Documents Required

- Original passport with residence permit (valid at least 12 months)
- Original work permit (valid at least 12 months)
- Packing inventory list in English or Chinese (diplomat list must be signed and itemized)
- Ocean bill of lading (OBL) / telex release / air waybill (AWB)
- Arrival notice (sea shipments)
- List of electronic items

- Baggage declaration form, if applicable (2 copies, matching identically)
- Alcohol / wine list
- Original passport with diplomatic visa (diplomats)
- Consulate officer certificate (diplomats)
- Import permit (consulate or embassy must apply for diplomats)
- Diplomatic card (diplomats)
- Pro-forma invoice (diplomats)

Specific Information

- All non-diplomatic household goods shipments are subject to import duties.
- There are no duties on diplomatic shipments.
- The import of personal effects must be arranged at least 6 months before the expiration of the residence permit.
- The import of any luxury or high-value items into Beijing must be declared to Customs and the owner of the goods must have documented proof of value (i.e. receipt):
 - For foreigners any item over the value of RMB 5,000 (approximately US \$730).
 - For returning citizens any item lower than RMB 1,000 (approximately US \$146).
- The import permit takes approximately 2-3 working days to process and is valid for 30 days after issuance.
- The baggage declaration form is required by some cities only.
Contact agent for more information.
- Customs clearance for returning citizens takes approximately 10-12 business days.
- Chinese passport holders should contact the agent for restrictions on import shipments.
- It is recommended that each antique included in the shipment is photographed.
- Diplomatic shipments are exempt from inspection, duties, and taxes.
- If the owner of the goods has both, sea and air shipments, an import permit application for both shipments must be completed at the same time.
If the owner of the goods imports an additional shipment (air or sea), all items in the shipment are subject to tax and duty.
- All electrical items must be clearly indicated on the inventory including; model, serial number and size.
- Only one sea and one air shipment are allowed per residence permit.
- Sea shipments take approximately 10-15 working days to clear Customs.
- Air shipments take approximately 3-5 working days to clear Customs.
If gross weight is over 300 kg, it may take approximately 10-15 working days to clear Customs in some cities, e.g. Shanghai.
- Estimates are based on completed documentation available at the time of shipment arrival and for Customs clearance.

- Duty rates for air shipments are usually 30% higher than sea shipments.
- An official Customs duty receipt will be issued and provided to the owner of the goods upon delivery.
- Import duties for alcoholic beverages are extremely high and beverages are not recommended for inclusion in the shipment.
- It is recommended that food items, alcohol, cosmetics, health products, and toiletries are not included in air shipments to China.
- Business / tourist visas are issued for a maximum duration of stay for 30, 60, or 90 days as determined by the Chinese consulate overseas.
- Wood packaging material imported into China must be heat treated or fumigated with methyl bromide and properly marked according to ISPM-15 standards.
- If a shipper has previously imported a shipment into China, their new shipment will be subject to full customs duty.
- As of August 1, 2018, China accepts electronic documents from customs clearance.

IAM Note: Customs regulations may differ between cities. It is important to contact agent for specific information prior to importation.

Motor Vehicles

Documents Required

- Original purchase invoice / log book with chassis and engine number
- Details of the vehicle including brand name and style (e.g., sedan, SUV, color, vehicle identification number (VIN) number, etc.
- Import permit (diplomats)

Specific Information

- Only left-hand drive vehicles with no conversion can be imported.
- Only persons with diplomatic card / working for a joint venture / a wholly-owned foreign company can import motor vehicles.
- Automobiles manufactured prior to January 1, 2005, must comply with Euro IV standards and undergo environmental and mechanical inspections.
- The import of motor vehicles, including automobiles, is not recommended for non-diplomatic shipments.

Pets

Documents Required

- Vaccination record
- Veterinary health certificate

IAM Note: The documentation for household goods and personal effects also applies to the importation of pets.

Specific Information

- Animals are subject 30 days quarantine upon arrival.
- Animals are subject to examination by an inspector at the owner of the goods' residence in China within 30 days following arrival.
- A small fee is required for the examination of pets by an inspector.

Restricted/Dutiable Items

- CDs, VCDs, DVDs, LDs, and videotapes may total no more than 100 items to import duty free; items are subject to inspection and will be returned approximately 4 weeks after clearance is completed.
 - More than 20 pieces is dutiable for returning citizens.
 - These items are subject to a Customs inspection of approximately 2-3 weeks.
- Personal computers with encryption capabilities require an approval of installed software prior to importation.

Personal computers with simple password software, such as Microsoft products, contained in the household goods and personal effects shipment are generally acceptable.
- Antiques should be registered to avoid issues upon re-export in the future due to the strict regulations on Chinese Customs regarding the export of antiques.
- Milk powder and manufactured meat cannot be included in air shipments.
- Electrical appliances (duties of 20%)
- Books (a letter of explanation must be included and detail where the books were purchased, the total number, the book titles, and value of each, the subject matter etc., e.g., work, study. More than 10 books are dutiable (returning citizens).
- Food products must be dry goods, original canned or vacuum packed, in sealed packaging only.
 - One small carton of food items may be included in air shipments and 2-3 small cartons for sea shipments.
 - Food products are subject to duties of approximately 10% of the declared value.
 - Customs reserves the right to levy higher duties and taxes on quantities deemed commercial.
- Duty rates apply to the items listed as follows:

Golf clubs	30%
Furniture	15%
Lamps	30%

Prohibited Items

- Firearms and ammunition
- Drugs
- Perishable food items (items containing the essence or extract from eggs are subject to confiscation or destruction)
- Pornographic materials
- Politically subversive materials
- Medicines and other items from epidemic stricken areas
- POE / AOE Chengdu: billiard and pool tables
- Fax / photocopy machines
- Grand and baby grand pianos (contact agent for specific information)
- Alcohol (Beijing)

Consignment Instructions

Recommended: Contact the destination agent to ensure all requirements have been met prior to import, especially for differences regarding air / sea shipments.

Cultural and Other Information

[CIA World Factbook](#)

[Wikipedia Entry for China](#)