



Border Force

# Bringing food products into the UK

Don't break the law

Check the rules before you travel



There are very strict controls on what food products you can bring into the European Union (EU). This is because food products can carry pests and diseases, which can devastate our environment, agricultural and horticultural industries. The Foot and Mouth Disease outbreaks in 2001 and 2007 showed what damaging effects an animal disease can have on communities, business and the economy.

If you are travelling from a country within the EU (see the list on page 4), you may bring in any meat, dairy or other animal products. If you are travelling from a country outside the EU, many animal products are banned – with a few exceptions – see pages 5 to 8.

Please note that what you may bring in depends on where you are travelling from (i.e. from another EU country or from outside the EU), and not where the food product was produced or packaged.

## About this leaflet

This leaflet is not comprehensive and will only give you a summary of the rules. Because pests and diseases can occur very suddenly, these rules can change at any time and at short notice.

For up-to-date information, contact the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) – their contact details are on the back of this leaflet.

## Sending or receiving your items by post

All the rules described in this leaflet also apply to any items you send or receive by post (including those ordered online).

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## Travelling from a country within the European Union (EU)

If you are travelling from a country within the EU (see the list below), you may bring in any meat, dairy or other animal products.

### Meat and dairy products



### Any other animal product

for example fish, bivalves (such as oysters, mussels or clams), honey and eggs.



### EU Countries are:

Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus\*, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland (Republic of), Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal (including Madeira), Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the UK

For these purposes, EU countries also include Andorra, Canary Islands, The Channel Islands, The Isle of Man, Liechtenstein, Norway, San Marino, Switzerland (except for caviar where additional restrictions may apply – see the endangered animals or plants section on page 9)

Although Gibraltar is part of the EU, it is outside the Community customs territory so is therefore treated as a non-EU country

\*Though the whole of Cyprus is part of the EU, goods from any area of Cyprus not under the effective control of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus are treated as non-EU imports

## Travelling from a country outside the European Union (EU)

If you are travelling from a country outside the EU, you cannot bring any meat or dairy products into the UK unless you are travelling from the Faroe Islands, Greenland or Iceland, when you are allowed a combined weight of up to 10kg per person.

You may bring in a limited quantity of other animal products, such as fish, bivalves, honey and eggs. Please check pages 6 to 8. For further details about permitted products, contact Defra – their details are on the back of this leaflet.

If you have specific questions about fish, shellfish or bivalve products, contact the Food Standards Agency – their contact details are on the back of this leaflet.

### Don't break the law, check the rules before you travel.

**Meat products** include any fresh, cooked or dried meat such as beef, lamb, pork or chicken and such products as patties, curries, ham, biltong, pot noodles which contain meat, meatballs, meat pickles, cured or cooked sausage, pate and meat paste. Live snails, dead snails still in their shells and water snails are also not permitted.

**Dairy products** include fresh, dried or concentrated milk, cream, butter, ghee, mithai, cheese and products containing fresh cream.

**Fish Products** include fresh, dried, cooked, cured and smoked fish and fish products, such as canned tuna, fish sauces, prawns, shrimps, squid, lobster, crab and crayfish.

**Bivalve products** include oysters (including oyster sauce) mussels, clams, cockles, scallops, whelks and winkles.

**Egg products** include omelette, mayonnaise and dried eggs.

Only the most common examples in each category are listed above. More detailed information is available from Defra – see contact details on the back of this leaflet. Meat and dairy products from outside the EU

## Meat and dairy products from outside the EU



You are not allowed to bring in any meat or dairy products to the UK.

However, if you are travelling from the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Iceland, you are allowed up to 10kg combined weight per person.



## Fish and fish products



You are allowed up to 20kg combined weight per person of fish and fish products (including dead bivalves) or the weight of one fish whichever weight is highest. Fish can be dried, cooked, cured, smoked or fresh but fresh fish is only allowed if it is gutted.

If you are travelling from the Faroe Islands or Iceland, there is no weight restriction per person.

Caviar of sturgeon species is subject to additional weight restrictions and controls – see the endangered animals or plants section on page 10.



## Other animal products



You are allowed up to 2kg combined weight per person of other animal products (i.e. other than meat, dairy and fish products) such as honey, eggs and egg products, snail meat and live bivalves. Please check the rules before travelling [www.gov.uk/bringing-food-animals-plants-into-uk/food](http://www.gov.uk/bringing-food-animals-plants-into-uk/food)



If you are travelling from the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Iceland, you are allowed up to 10kg combined weight per person of other animal products

## Special foods for medical reasons



You are allowed up to 2kg combined weight per person of powdered infant milk, infant food, and special foods required for medical reasons provided that:

- The product does not require refrigeration before consumption
- It is a product in commercially branded packaging
- The packaging is unbroken unless in current use

You are also allowed up to 2kg of pet food made from animal products required for medical reasons subject to the same conditions above.

If you are travelling from the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Iceland, you are allowed up to 10kg combined weight per person of special foods within this category.



## Declaring your items

It is important that you declare any banned food products that you are bringing in from outside the EU. If you are unsure about any of the food products you are bringing in, speak to a Border Force officer in the Customs Red Channel or on the Red Point telephone. If you declare any banned or restricted food items to us, we will take these away and destroy them and no further action will be taken. If you are bringing back more than you are allowed, we will seize the whole amount.

Bringing in goods that are banned is illegal, and there are heavy penalties for smuggling. If you fail to declare any items that are not permitted, you could face severe delays, and prosecution.

## Other banned and restricted items

### Plants and plant products

If you are travelling from a country outside the EU, there are restrictions on bringing fruits, vegetables, seeds and bulbs into the UK. Some plants, soil and other plant products (including potatoes) may not be brought to the UK unless you have obtained the relevant official certificate or licence.

See the leaflet 'Bringing fruits, vegetables or plant products into the UK' for an overview of the restrictions which is available to download at:

**[www.gov.uk/bringing-food-animals-plants-into-uk/plants](http://www.gov.uk/bringing-food-animals-plants-into-uk/plants)**

For more information and advice, contact the Animal and Plant Health Agency on +44 (0)300 1000 313.

### Endangered animals or plants

Regardless of where you are travelling from, you are not allowed to bring back parts of endangered animal or plants to the UK without the correct permits. This also includes caviar (any amount sent by post or above 125gms in your personal luggage), ivory, skins, hides and shells, and any products made from them.

For more information and advice, contact APHA at the Centre for International Trade – Bristol **[www.defra.gov.uk/environment/natural/biodiversity/internationally/cites](http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/natural/biodiversity/internationally/cites)** or call them on +44 (0)117 372 3700 – lines are open Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5pm.

## Other items

There are other items, such as alcohol and tobacco which are restricted if you are travelling from certain countries, and some items, such as unlicensed drugs and weapons, which are banned completely.

For information about other prohibited and restricted items see the Border Force leaflet 'UK customs information'. You can also visit: **[www.gov.uk/duty-free-goods](http://www.gov.uk/duty-free-goods)**

## **More information and advice**

For more information about the rules referred to in this leaflet, visit:

**[www.gov.uk/bringing-food-animals-plants-into-uk/food](http://www.gov.uk/bringing-food-animals-plants-into-uk/food)**

or call the Defra helpline on:

03459 33 55 77 (from the UK)  
+44 (0)20 7238 6951 (from outside the UK) Lines are open Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm

You can also email the Food Standards Agency at:  
[imported.food@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:imported.food@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk)

Or call them on +44 (0)20 7276 8018  
Lines are open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.