



Border Force

# UK customs information

What you **can** bring in

What you **can't** bring in

What you **must** declare



## Contents

This leaflet tells you about going through Customs when entering Great Britain (England, Scotland and Wales) in the United Kingdom (UK). There are different rules for travellers entering Northern Ireland (NI), these can be found on **[gov.uk/government/publications/travelling-to-the-uk](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/travelling-to-the-uk)**.

This leaflet details what you are and are not allowed to bring in, and your allowances for different types of goods below which you do not have to pay tax and/or duty.

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We have a duty to protect the UK from drugs, firearms and other harmful goods and to stop smugglers evading taxes. This includes goods that travellers should pay UK tax and duty on. To do this, we need your help and co-operation. If we stop you and ask you about your baggage, please co-operate. We may stop you to ask questions, make checks and if you break the rules, seize your goods (including any vehicle you use to transport them).

## Don't Risk It All

If you get caught smuggling goods or selling goods you did not declare, you could face prosecution and imprisonment. If we are satisfied that the goods are for a commercial purpose and you have not declared them, we may seize them and any vehicle used to transport them, and may not return them to you. If you are unsure about the goods you are carrying for your personal use, you can find more information and make an online declaration from 72 hours in advance of arrival using the HMRC Online Service for Passengers at [gov.uk/duty-free-goods](https://www.gov.uk/duty-free-goods).

If you are carrying commercial goods, please visit [gov.uk/hmrc/goods-in-baggage](https://www.gov.uk/hmrc/goods-in-baggage).

If you need assisted digital support to make your declaration call HMRC from 72 hours in advance of arrival on **0300 322 9434 (Mon – Fri 8am – 6pm)**. Make your declaration ahead of arrival where possible, however, outside these hours of service, please use the red point phone or red channel.

## Going through Customs

Most of our ports and airports have two exits or 'channels': the red and green channel.

Some ports and airports only have one exit and a red point phone where you can declare goods.

If you let a coach, ferry, train or aircraft store your goods while travelling to the UK, you must make sure you collect the exact goods obtained by you and go through the correct channel.

### Green Channel

Use the green channel if you are travelling with goods that:

- do not go over your allowances
- are not banned or restricted
- have been declared using the Online Service for Passengers
- have been declared using the Merchandise in Baggage Online Declaration Service, or
- cash that has been declared using the online form.

### Red Channel or Red Point Phone

You must use the red channel or the red point phone if you are arriving and you:

- have personal goods or cash to declare,
- have commercial goods to declare
- you need to make a declaration.

## Travelling to the UK from another country



You can bring in goods up to the limits below without paying UK duty and/or tax. These goods must be for your own use or intended as gifts.

If you intend to sell or accept any kind of payment for the goods you bring in then this is classed as commercial use.

Details of your allowances are set out in the following pages.

If you have any goods that exceed these allowances, you will need to make a declaration and pay tax and duties due on the full amount of goods in the category or categories exceeded. You can check allowance details, make a declaration, and pay any tax and duty due from 72 hours in advance of arrival using the HMRC Online Service for Passengers at **gov.uk/duty-free-goods**.

If you need assisted digital support to make your declaration call HMRC from 72 hours in advance of arrival on **0300 322 9434 (Mon – Fri 8am – 6pm)**. Make your declaration ahead of arrival where possible, however, outside these hours of service, please use the red point phone or red channel.

If you have made a declaration at **gov.uk/duty-free-goods** and have nothing further to declare, you can use the Green Channel when going through customs. You should retain the reference number and your email receipt for your declaration as Border Force officers may ask to see this.

If you do not declare goods exceeding these limits, then we may seize all of the goods you are carrying within that allowance category, not just those that exceed the allowance.

Passengers transferring at a UK airport should check the security rules on the carriage of liquids (including duty free) purchased at airports outside the UK as these items may not be permitted through the security search point on transfer.

Further information can be found on the GOV.UK website:

**[www.gov.uk/hand-luggage-restrictions](http://www.gov.uk/hand-luggage-restrictions)**

## Alcohol and tobacco



You are allowed to bring in the following without paying UK duty and/or tax:

### Alcohol

4 litres of spirits or strong liqueurs (over 22% ABV (Alcohol By Volume), **or**

9 litres of fortified wine (such as port or sherry), sparkling wine or any other alcoholic beverage of less than 22% ABV. You may combine these allowances, provided that you do not exceed your total alcohol allowance. For example, if you only bring back 4.5 litres of fortified wine (50% of your full allowance of 9 litres), you may also bring back 2 litres of spirits (50% of the full allowance of 4 litres) to make up your 100% alcohol allowance. Please note, this is only an example and other combinations are also allowed.

In addition, you may also bring back:

42 litres of beer, **and**  
18 litres of still wine

## Tobacco

200 cigarettes, **or** 100 cigarillos, **or** 50 cigars, **or** 250g of tobacco\* (including shisha tobacco) **or** 200 sticks of tobacco for heating.

You can combine these allowances, provided that you do not exceed your total tobacco allowance. For example, if you only bring back 100 cigarettes (50% of your full allowance of 200), you may also bring back 25 cigars (50% of the full allowance of 50) to make up your 100% tobacco allowance. Please note, this is only an example and other combinations are also allowed.

**Please note that you cannot combine your alcohol and tobacco allowances. For example: you cannot bring more alcohol back if you do not bring any tobacco.**

**Alcohol and tobacco allowances are only available to those aged 17 and over. This means if you are under 17 and bring back any of these goods you must pay tax and duty on the full amount.**

\* All references to tobacco products include herbal smoking products. The allowance on cigarettes includes all types of cigarettes – normal, herbal or a combination of both.

## Other goods (including gifts and souvenirs)



Most travellers can bring other goods into the UK worth up to £390 (e.g. perfume and electrical goods) without paying duty and/or tax in the UK.

However, passengers travelling by private plane or boat for pleasure purposes are only entitled to an allowance of £270 worth of goods.

If you bring in goods over your allowance, you must pay UK taxes on all of the goods in that category, not just those above the allowance.

You cannot share your personal allowances with other passengers.

If you have any goods over these limits, you can pay any tax and duty due from 72 hours in advance of arrival using the HMRC Online Service for Passengers at [gov.uk/duty-free-goods](https://www.gov.uk/duty-free-goods).

If you have made a declaration at [gov.uk/duty-free-goods](https://www.gov.uk/duty-free-goods) and have nothing further to declare, you can use the Green Channel when going through customs. You should retain the reference number and your email receipt for your declaration as Border Force officers may ask to check this email.

## Food and plants



From most countries outside the EU, you are not allowed to bring in any meat, honey or dairy products (except infant milk or special foods required for medical reasons, also not exceeding 2kg). This is because they can carry diseases, which can devastate our environment and economy.

Other animal products may also be banned although you may bring in a small quantity of some products from certain countries for your own use.

For more information please visit:

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

Passengers arriving into Great Britain from countries outside the EU will be required to have their plants and plant products accompanied by a phytosanitary certificate. For further information please visit the link below.

For passengers arriving from the EU from 1 January 2021, the requirement for high-priority plants and plant products to be accompanied by a phytosanitary certificate will apply. From April 2021, all regulated plants and plant products, including high-priority plants, will need to be accompanied by a phytosanitary certificate when arriving from the EU.

**[www.gov.uk/guidance/smarter-rules-for-safer-food-how-to-import-from-third-countries](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/smarter-rules-for-safer-food-how-to-import-from-third-countries)**

## Declaring cash



If you are carrying cash equivalent to £10,000 or more when you enter or leave Great Britain to or from any other country you must declare it. A declaration form can be found on line at [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) 'declare cash you carry into or out of the UK'. You may make the declaration from 72 hours in advance of arrival. Alternatively, at ports where there is a red channel you may obtain a form BOR 9011 from a Border Force Officer.

## Commercial goods

If you are carrying commercial goods which are below the £1,500 threshold which are not restricted or excise goods or weigh not more than 1,000kg, you can make an online declaration within 5 days of arriving at the GB port, by going to **[gov.uk/hmrc/goods-in-baggage](https://www.gov.uk/hmrc/goods-in-baggage)**. For goods over the £1,500 threshold and restricted and excise goods, and goods over 1,000kg you will need to make a full customs declaration either by yourself or through an agent.

## Air transfers

On arrival in the UK, if you are transferring to a UK domestic flight operating under an airline transfer scheme (for example, where your hold baggage is moved directly from the arriving aircraft to your transfer flight without you having access to it), and you are carrying goods that you must declare, you must make your declaration at the following place:

- Online at **[gov.uk/duty-free-goods](https://www.gov.uk/duty-free-goods)**. If you have done this and have nothing further to declare, you may use the Green Channel when going through customs controls.
- Goods to be declared carried with you on your person (such as in your pockets or in your hand luggage), and which have not been declared at **[gov.uk/duty-free-goods](https://www.gov.uk/duty-free-goods)**, must be declared at the red point phone or to an officer in the red channel at the first UK airport you arrive in.

- Goods to be declared carried in your hold baggage which have not been declared at [gov.uk/duty-free-goods](https://www.gov.uk/duty-free-goods) and not declared at the first place of arrival in the UK, must be declared at the red point phone or to an officer in the red channel at your final destination.
- At any point you may be requested to make a declaration by an officer.

If your baggage is not checked through to your final UK destination you must collect it all and clear customs at your first point of arrival in the UK.

### Bringing your personal belongings or your car into the UK?

See 'Notice 3' available on GOV.UK.

### Banned goods



**There are certain goods you are not allowed to bring into the UK – this is to protect society, animal and public health and the environment.**

**If you are not sure about any of the goods you are bringing into the UK, speak to an officer in the red channel or on the red point phone.**

Please note that this is not an exhaustive list, but it includes the most important examples.

### The following goods are banned completely:



**Controlled Drugs** such as cocaine, heroin, MDMA (Ecstasy), cannabis, barbiturates, amphetamine and methamphetamine.



**Offensive weapons** such as flick and gravity knives, butterfly knives, push daggers, belt-buckle knives, death stars, swordsticks, stealth (non-metallic) knives, knives disguised as everyday objects, knuckledusters, blowpipes, truncheons, and some martial arts equipment.



### Other weapons

Self-defence sprays and electric shock devices such as stun guns.

**Indecent and obscene material** such as books, magazines, films, videos, DVDs and software.

This includes:

- material featuring children;
- material containing extreme violence; and
- any other pornography that cannot be legally bought in the UK.

**The following goods may be seized and you may be prosecuted by the intellectual property right holder:**



**Counterfeit, pirated and patent infringing goods** such as CDs, DVDs, clothing, footwear and designer goods.

**The following are also banned but in certain cases may be brought into the UK if you have obtained the relevant licence or permit:**



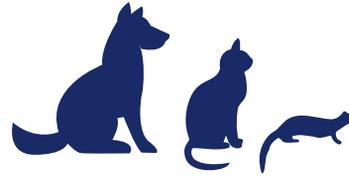
**Firearms, explosives and ammunition** including blank firing or replica firearms that can be converted to fire bullets.

Realistic imitation firearms can only be imported for an authorised purpose or function such as participating at an historical re-enactment.



**Samurai Swords** with a curved blade exceeding 50cms in length can only be imported for an authorised purpose or function such as participation in martial arts events or religious ceremonies.

**For more information, call the Helpline on 0300 200 3700**



**Pet animals and recognised assistance dogs** – pet dogs, cats, ferrets and

recognised assistance dogs must be compliant with the requirements laid down in the Pet Travel Scheme prior to entry into Great Britain. The entry requirements will vary depending on where the pet has travelled from. If the pet is not compliant with the entry requirements, travel may be refused by the carrier or the authorised pet checker, and any illegally landed pets may be seized and quarantined.

If entering or returning to Great Britain via a ferry or rail service with a recognised assistance dog, the assistance dog should have been checked for compliance prior to boarding. Passengers travelling by air must ensure they alert the Passengers with Reduced Mobility provider upon landing at the earliest opportunity to ensure the assistance dog is checked and compliant with the entry requirements.

For further information on the above and for information on travelling with other types of pet animals, visit Gov.uk ([www.gov.uk/bring-pet-to-uk](http://www.gov.uk/bring-pet-to-uk)) or email [PetTravel@apha.gov.uk](mailto:PetTravel@apha.gov.uk)



Pet birds from non-EU countries may only be imported at specific ports if they are licensed by APHA and are checked by them on arrival. Horses, farm animals and productive poultry may not be imported as “pets”.

**For further information and advice on importing birds or farm animals, visit the Defra website ([www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-environment-food-rural-affairs](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-environment-food-rural-affairs)) or contact APHA by email at [imports@apha.gov.uk](mailto:imports@apha.gov.uk) or by telephone on 01245 398 298.**



**Endangered animals or plants** including live animals, birds and plants, or goods made from them, such as jewellery, shoes, bags and belts, even if they were openly on sale in the countries where you bought them, unless you have a valid CITES permit. This also includes caviar, ivory, coral, shells and crocodile, alligator and snake skin taken from endangered animals, timber products made from endangered trees and cosmetic or medicinal products made from endangered plants.

**For more information and advice, go to [www.gov.uk/guidance/cites-imports-and-exports](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/cites-imports-and-exports) or, contact APHA at the Centre for International Trade, Bristol +44 (0)117 372 3700. Lines are open Monday to Friday, 8am to 5pm.**

**Non-Harmonized animals** are those that are not covered for any specific legislation. It includes: invertebrates (except molluscs, crustaceans and bees), amphibians (except salamanders) and reptiles.

There is no animal health certification requirements for these animals; national rules will apply. They will have to comply with CITES, Invasive species and Plant pests' laws.

More information on non-harmonised animals will be made available on [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) shortly.



**Certain radio transmitters** such as CB radios and cordless phones that are not approved for use in the UK.

**For more information and advice, call Ofcom on 020 7981 3000.**



**Rough diamonds** If you are bringing in rough (i.e. uncut or unpolished) diamonds you must have a valid Kimberley Process Certificate.

## Bringing illegal goods into the UK



Carrying goods that are banned or for which you don't have the necessary licence or permit is illegal – if you get caught smuggling, there are severe penalties including imprisonment. It is important that you follow the advice below.

- Never bring banned goods into the UK.
- Never carry anything into the UK for someone else.
- If you are driving, make sure all your passengers know what goods are banned and restricted.
- If you are using a vehicle for smuggling goods, we may also seize your vehicle.
- Never smuggle an animal into the UK. Even though a pet may be tame, it can carry rabies, which could have disastrous consequences.

## Contacting us about smuggling

Call the Fraud Hotline to report suspicious activity in relation to smuggling, customs, excise and VAT fraud including:

- alcohol, cigarettes and tobacco, drugs and oils
- money laundering
- other banned or restricted goods and weapons

### Telephone

0800 788 887

### Outside UK

0203 080 0871

### Opening times

8am to 8pm everyday

Find out about call charges

**[www.gov.uk/call-charges](http://www.gov.uk/call-charges)**

### Online

Any information you may have regarding suspicious activity in relation to smuggling, customs, excise and VAT fraud can be passed to HMRC by using their secure online web form:

**[www.gov.uk/government/organisations/hm-revenue-customs/contact/customs-excise-and-vat-fraud-reporting](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/hm-revenue-customs/contact/customs-excise-and-vat-fraud-reporting)**

## Feedback

We welcome your feedback as it can help us improve our service to you. If you want to make a complaint or compliment:

Email: **complaints&compliments@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk**

Or write to us at:

Complaints & Compliments,  
Long Corridor, 11th Floor, Lunar House,  
Wellesley Road, Croydon, CR9 2BY

For full details on how to make a complaint or compliment or to see how we have been acting on feedback visit.

**[www.gov.uk/government/organisations/border-force/about/complaints-procedure](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/border-force/about/complaints-procedure)**

## Your rights

As a traveller, you have the right to expect our officers to be courteous, impartial and behave with integrity.

If you break the rules we may seize your goods and any vehicle used to transport them. We will give you information that details the seized items and why we seized them. It will also include details on how you can appeal if you think the seizure was unlawful and how to ask for your goods or vehicle back.

For more information about the appeals process, see 'Notice 12A'.

## Our rights

Our officers expect to do their job with the co-operation and support from the travelling public. We have the right to stop, question and check travellers for banned or restricted goods, and seize any smuggled goods, or vehicles used for smuggling.

## More information and advice

Further information and copies of the other leaflets and notices mentioned are available at **[www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)**

If you cannot find what you are looking for on the website, then you can phone the Helpline:

0300 200 3700 (in the UK)  
+44 2920 501 261 (outside the UK) Lines are open Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm.

Text phone 0300 200 3719

If English is not your first language and you need a translator to help with your enquiry, let one of our advisers know when you call us.

If you would like to speak to someone in Welsh, call 0300 200 3705

Lines are open Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm.

Visit: **[www.gov.uk/browse/abroad/travel-abroad](http://www.gov.uk/browse/abroad/travel-abroad)**

Working in partnership with



**HM Revenue  
& Customs**

Notice 1

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