

Travelers bringing food into the U.S. for personal use

Can I bring in food as a traveler (fruit, cheese, meat, etc.)?

The information contained in this answer does not apply to food being sent to the U.S. through the mail, courier services or other means.

This information only covers food (fruit, cheese, meat, etc.) entering the United States in passenger baggage for personal use.

You may be able to bring in food such as fruits, meats or other agricultural products depending on the region or country from which you are traveling. Restrictions are placed on these products to protect community health, preserve the environment and prevent the introduction of devastating diseases to domestic plants and animals.

You must declare all food products. Failure to declare food products can result in up to \$10,000 in fines and penalties.

The following are generally admissible:

-Condiments such as ketchup (catsup), mustard, mayonnaise, Marmite and Vegemite and prepared sauces that do not contain meat products

-Olive oil and other vegetable oils

-Bread, cookies, crackers, cakes, granola bars, cereal and other baked and processed products

-Candy and chocolate

-Cheese- Solid cheese (hard or semi-soft, that does not contain meat); butter, butter oil, and cultured milk products such as yogurt and sour cream are not restricted. Feta cheese, Brie, Camembert, cheese in brine, Mozzarella and Buffalo Mozzarella are permissible (USDA Animal Product Manual, Table 3-14-6). Cheese in liquid (such as cottage cheese or ricotta cheese) and cheese that pours like heavy cream are not admissible from countries affected by foot-and-mouth disease (FMD). Cheese containing meat is not admissible depending on the country of origin.

-Canned goods and goods in vacuum packed jars (other than those containing meat or poultry products) for your personal use

-Fish- personal amounts of fish, shrimp, abalone and other seafood are allowed and can be fresh, frozen, dried, smoked, canned or cooked

-Dried Fruit- things like apricots, barberry, currants, dates, figs, gooseberries, peaches, prunes, raisins, tomatillos, and zereshk (USDA Miscellaneous and Processed Products Manual, Table 3-69)

-Liquid milk and milk products intended for use by infants or very young children are admissible if in a reasonable amount or small quantity for several days' use.

-Powder drinks sealed in original containers with ingredients listed in English. However, admissibility is still under the discretion of the Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Agricultural Specialist.

-Juices- commercially canned (USDA Miscellaneous and Processed Products Manual, Table 3-75)

-**Tea**- commercially packaged and ready to be boiled, steeped or microwaved in liquid. Coca, barberry and loose citrus leaves are prohibited (USDA Miscellaneous and Processed Products Manual, Table 3-148)

-**Coffee**- roasted or unroasted if there is no pulp attached. (USDA Miscellaneous and Processed Products Manual, Table 3-48)

-**Spices**- most dried spices are allowed except for orange, lemon, lime and other citrus leaves and seeds, lemongrass, and many vegetable and fruit seeds

-**Honey**- comb honey, royal jelly, bee bread, or propolis if it is not intended to be fed to bees (USDA Miscellaneous and Processed Products Manual, Table 3-100)

-**Noodles and ramen** that do not have meat or eggs in the spice packets

-**Rice**- (See **ALERT** below) white rice, basmati rice, brown rice, husked rice, polished rice, rice flour and other products that do not have the hull attached (USDA Miscellaneous and Processed Products Manual, Table 3-130).

ALERT: Effective July 30, 2011 non-commercial quantities of rice from countries where Khapra beetle is known to occur will be prohibited from entering the United States. Failure to declare rice will result in fines.

-**Flour**- wheat, rice, oat and cornmeal

-**Mushrooms**, fresh and dried- above ground parts that are clean and free of soil

-**Nuts**- All nuts are allowed if they have been boiled, cooked, ground, oven dried, pureed, roasted, or steamed. Other nuts may be allowed if they are free from their husks (the shell remains), such as almonds, betel nuts, Brazil nuts, cashews, coquilla nuts, filberts (hazelnuts), Java olives, kara nuts, ginkgo nuts, macadamias, pecans, pili nuts, pine nuts (pinon nuts), pistachios, and walnuts. (USDA Miscellaneous and Processed Products Manual, Table 3-105, 3-106)

-Bakery items, candy, chocolate, and dry mixes containing dairy and egg ingredients [such as baking mixes, cocoa mixes, drink mixes, instant cake mixes, instant pudding mixes, liquid drink mixes containing reconstituted dry milk or dry milk products (including those that contain sugar), potato flakes, and infant formula] commercially labeled and presented in final finished packaging are generally admissible.

Fruits and Vegetables:

Travelers may check the general admissibility of fruits and vegetables by consulting APHIS's FAVIR database. Simply select the type of fruit or vegetable in the "Approved Name:", and then select the country of origin in the "Country/Region:" field. You will receive one of the following results:

· 0 entries found means the fruit or vegetable is NOT allowed into the United States

· # entry(ies) found [followed by the name of the commodity and the name of the country] click on "CIR".

- If the import requirements indicate: 1 Subject to Inspection: This commodity is subject to inspection at the port of entry and all general requirements of 7 CFR 319.56-3. The fruit or vegetable is allowed into the United States pending Inspection.
- If the import requirements indicate: Condition of entry treatment then the fruit or vegetable is NOT allowed into the United States in passenger baggage.

Every fruit or vegetable must be declared to a CBP Agriculture Specialist or CBP Officer and must be presented for inspection - regardless of its admissibility status. Fresh fruits and vegetables need to be clean and may be prohibited if they have insects or diseases.

Note: See FDA Web site [Food products imported from Japan](#) and radiation safety.

The following items are admissible:

- Aloe- above ground parts
- Coconuts-husks must have been completely removed and cannot have sprouted
- Garlic- peeled cloves
- Ginger- clean roots
- St. John's bread- pod
- Tamarind bean pod
- Water chestnut- corm or nut only

Animal Products and Animal By-Products:

Meat, milk, egg, poultry, and their products, including products made with these materials, such as dried soup mix or bouillon, are either prohibited or restricted from entering the United States, depending on the types of animal diseases which occur in the country of origin. Fresh (chilled or frozen), dried, cured, and fully cooked meat is generally prohibited from most countries. Canned meat is allowed entry, except caprine and ovine meats, including lamb, mutton, and goat, etc., from Canada and countries affected by bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE).

Products containing raw egg ingredients are prohibited from most regions.

Eggs and egg products from Exotic Newcastle Disease (END) and Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) affected regions, including cooked eggs, if not accompanied by a USDA Veterinary Service import permit remain prohibited regardless if those items are for personal consumption. Effective February 15, 2012, travelers may once again bring fully cooked eggs from Mexico into the U.S.

Pork should be commercially canned and labeled in unopened containers. Pork and pork products are not admissible from Mexico, except for cooked pork in small amounts for a meal.

Effective January 14, 2010, cooked pork skins (also known as pork rind) entering as commercial cargo or in passenger baggage from regions affected with foot-and-mouth disease (FMD), swine vesicular disease (SVD), African swine fever (ASF), or classical swine fever (CSF) must be accompanied by an original certificate issued by an official of the National Government of the region of origin.

Canadian Agricultural Products:

For fruits and vegetables from Canada, consult the [FAVIR database](#).

Fruits and vegetables grown in Canada are generally admissible, if they have labels identifying them as products of Canada. Fruits and vegetables merely purchased in Canada are not necessarily admissible, i.e. citrus or tropical fruits such as mangos, which clearly were not grown in Canada because it does not have a climate that supports those crops. (Potatoes from western regions of Canada are currently restricted because of a disease outbreak. While commercial imports are permitted under stringent guidelines, travelers from Canada should avoid bringing raw potatoes with them into the U.S.).

Food products from Canada, including pet food and fresh (frozen or chilled), cooked, canned or otherwise processed products containing beef, veal, bison, and cervid (e.g. deer, elk, moose, caribou etc.) are now permitted from Canada in passenger baggage. Products containing sheep, lamb, or goat will not be allowed entry. Food products should be commercially packaged and sealed with ingredients listed in English.

The passenger must provide proof of the origin of beef, pork, poultry, cervid meat, and pet food in order to bring them into the United States. Examples of proof of origin include the grocery store receipt where the product was purchased or the label on the product indicating the province in which it was packaged.

Hunter harvested game birds (pheasant, quail, goose, etc.) or cervid carcasses (e.g. deer, moose, elk, caribou, etc.) from Canada are allowed entry when importers present to the Customs and Border Protection officer evidence such as a hunting license that the product is hunter harvested wild game. Hunter-harvested wild non-cervid animal (e.g. wild sheep, goats, or bison/buffalo, etc.) meat or carcasses, which must be eviscerated and head removed, are allowed when the hunter shows to CBP officers a hunting license, tag, or equivalent.

Mexican Eggs/Poultry:

The regulations regarding bringing cooked poultry-such as chicken and turkey-meat, including deli-sliced poultry meat, and cooked hard-boiled eggs into the U.S. from Mexico have changed. The U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service informed CBP that APHIS is implementing new requirements for processed (including cooked) poultry meat and cooked, hard-boiled eggs brought by passengers arriving from regions where APHIS considers Exotic Newcastle Disease (END) to exist. Currently, Mexico is a country recognized by APHIS as being affected by END.

According to the new requirements, processed poultry meat brought by passengers arriving from Mexico or from any region classified by the USDA as affected with END or HPAI must be accompanied by government certification confirming that the meat was cooked to a minimum internal temperature of 74 degrees centigrade. This requirement is for all poultry meat (excluding canned, hermetically sealed, shelf stable meat), poultry meat products, and poultry products. There is no exception for cooked eggs from the Mexican states of Sinaloa and Sonora.

Certification of poultry having been cooked at a temperature of at least 74 degrees centigrade does **not apply** to poultry meat products intended for personal consumption (poultry meat and meat products in passenger baggage or carry-on, personal meals). For movement into the U.S., CBP officials must still visually inspect these items to certify that poultry meat and poultry products in checked or carry-on passenger baggage or in meals, from END or HPAI affected regions, for personal consumption appear thoroughly cooked throughout. Amounts greater than 50 pounds found in passenger baggage are considered commercial and will require a USDA APHIS Veterinary Services certificate as part of the entry packet.

Further Information:

APHIS has posted country/regional fact sheets on agricultural items that can or cannot be bought into the U.S. For Mexico, Canada, Hawaii and Puerto Rico fact sheets visit [APHIS/USDA website](#). See "Region Specific Information" on the right side of the page. More counties will be added in the future.

Other than the above general guidelines, it is impossible to advise you in this forum about the admissibility of specific food items because it is so susceptible to change. Disease and pest outbreaks which impact the admissibility status of fresh and packaged food items may occur all over the world at any time.

The USDA establishes criteria for the admissibility of plant, dairy, meat and other animal products returning with travelers and they make the determination for what may be admitted into the U.S. For more detailed information, visit the [USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service \(APHIS\) Web site](#). If you have any questions, or require further information related to imports of specific animal products or by-products, please contact National Center for Import and Export at AskNCIE.Products@aphis.usda.gov. You may also call APHIS at 301-851-3300 or toll-free at 877-770-5990.

All commercial and personal imports of products from endangered species and other wildlife are subject to FWS permit requirements. For more information, please call the FWS at (703) 358-2093.

CBP Agricultural Inspectors are stationed at ports of entry and along our land and sea borders. Because of the complexities of regulations governing the importation of food they may need to contact specific agencies for information about what is or is not admissible. If no expert is available, food may be detained in the interest of preventing possible outbreak of foreign diseases in the U.S.

Requirements for importing alcohol for personal use

How do I import alcohol for my personal use?

Shipping alcoholic beverages by mail is prohibited by U.S. postal laws. The importer must be 21 to bring alcoholic beverages into the United States.

Shipping alcoholic beverages through a courier is permitted, however, duty will be collected on the entire shipment (there is no duty exemption for alcohol not accompanying a traveler), and the courier will probably charge handling and Customs Broker fees that could significantly raise the cost of the shipment.

Please be aware that State ABC laws govern how much alcohol a person may import into their state without a license and those laws are enforced by CBP. You must check with the state ABC board where your shipment will enter the country to determine their limits.

There is no federal limit on the amount of alcohol someone may import into the U.S. for personal use, however, large quantities might raise the suspicion that the importation is for commercial purposes, and a CBP Officer could require you to obtain an Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB) import license before releasing it.

If you intend to have a large quantity shipped to you for personal use, we suggest you contact the entry branch of the port where your shipment will be entering the country to discuss your situation in advance.

Duty rates on alcoholic beverages are based on the percent of alcohol per liter in the product - not on units of packaging such as per bottle/case. Duty on wine and beer is generally low, \$1-2 per liter, while fortified wines and spirits are considerably higher. Duty rates can be obtained in Chapter 22 "Beverages, Spirits and Vinegar," in the Harmonized Tariff Schedule.

Federal IRS Excise tax is also collected.

If you intend to bring in a wine collection as part of your household/personal effects, you will be subject to these same regulations.