

Information regarding Import Procedures for Food

*As this is general information, consulting a forwarder prior to shipping is highly recommended.

BEVERAGES	
Alcohol	Spirits are relatively easy to get through customs. An alcohol inspection is required if you will offer samples/tastings. This may be time consuming so take this into account when deciding the transportation date. Always write proof and quantity on the invoice to allow alcohol tax calculations. Otherwise a time-consuming content inspection is required. Liquors often require additional time for an artificial color inspection.
Wine	Clearing customs is relatively easy even though a sorbic acid and SO2 inspection is required.
Juice	An analysis inspection based on import regulation on soft drinks is required. This may be time consuming so take this into account when deciding the transportation date. If a juice has been exported to Japan previously, attached analysis documents from when it passed customs will be deemed as reference materials facilitating the standards inspection. The valid term for analysis is, as a rule, six months from the last inspection.
Coffee	Raw beans are subject to plant quarantine and need a quarantine certificate. Roasted beans will be opened at customs (taking time and money) unless the invoice describes the contents precisely e.g. Roasted Coffee. As for coffee in liquid form, an analysis inspection is required. This may be time consuming so take this into account when deciding the transportation date.
Tea	Teas packaged for retail, such as tea bags, pass customs easily. When shipped in bulk, they must undergo a plant inspection.
FRUITS AND VEGETABLES	
<p>The following information is required for advanced screening: the product's properties and processing method (including heating or freezing temperature if applicable), the plant's English name and the plant's scientific name. Regulations vary for the same product depending on processing methods and properties, i.e. whether the product is fresh, dry, frozen, heated, prepared or otherwise treated.</p> <p>However, items that have clearly been heated (roasted coffee, fried potatoes, etc.) or prepared (pickles, canned beans, etc.) do not require quarantine. Dried products (such as dried tomatoes, dried beans) may require inspection.</p>	
Fresh fruits and vegetables	<p>Fresh fruits and vegetables must undergo plant quarantine and require a quarantine certificate (original) during transport. Paperwork requires time and money. If insects are discovered on arrival in Japan, more time and money is needed for fumigation. In some cases, products may be disposed of immediately. If any dirt or mud is found attached to the plants, expensive procedures are required for cleansing, selection, boiling and disposal. After plant quarantine, some plants must undergo a residual pesticide concentration inspection at the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare.</p> <p>Please note that clearing customs of fresh fruits and vegetables is extremely difficult.</p> <p>* The import of fresh fruits and vegetables from some countries are prohibited in accordance with the Plant Protection Law. Dried fruits are restricted if they have simply been sun-dried without being treated through sugar preservation, heating or some other method.</p>

	<p>Frozen products can pass plant quarantine under the assumption insects die if completely frozen. However, even slight thawing may prevent import. If the words “frozen to under -18 degrees Celsius” are written on the quarantine certificate and the original is affixed, thawed products can be refrozen and re-inspected. Otherwise they may be disposed of or shipped back. Pickled vegetables require the attachment of a Manufacturing Process Chart List and must be verified at time of import since some pickled products are prohibited. Freeze dried fruits and vegetables basically do not require quarantine.</p> <p>* Examples of prohibited imports: South America: Most fresh fruits and vegetables (except some fresh fruits such as pineapple) Europe: Most fresh fruits and vegetables including apples and pears (except some fresh fruits such as pineapple) Asia, Oceania: Products including papayas, mangoes, apples, pears, grapes, peaches, melons, tomatoes, eggplant, peppers and potatoes (except some fresh fruits such as pineapple) Middle East: most fresh fruits and vegetables including apples and pears (except some fresh fruits such as pineapple) Africa: Most fresh fruits and vegetables (except some fresh fruits such as pineapple) These are just representative examples. Check with a forwarder to learn if certain items are prohibited imports.</p>
Ginger	<p>The scientific name is needed in advance to determine whether import is permitted. The local examination agency must implement a cultivation region inspection in accordance with Japanese requirements. The products may be imported if the phrase “does not contain harmful animals or plants that must be quarantined” appears on the quarantine certificate. (The conditions for each product should be confirmed individually since they differ for each country)</p>
Seeds and bulbs such as sesame and garlic, etc.	<p>If the products have not been heat processed, they must undergo a germination inspection. This may take a very long time. (The conditions for each product should be confirmed individually since they differ for each country.)</p>
Bananas	<p>Green bananas that are unripe at time of arrival in Japan may be imported. A quarantine certificate is needed. (The conditions for each product should be confirmed individually since they differ for each country.)</p>
Pineapples	<p>The possibility that insects will be discovered upon arrival in Japan is quite high, resulting in time and additional costs for fumigation.</p>
Mangoes	<p>Mangoes originating from countries including Pakistan, the Philippines and Vietnam are designated as prohibited products but they may be imported if they clear strict plant quarantine regulations. These regulations include insect removal/disinfection at a local fumigation warehouse specified by Japan’s Plant Protection Station, an on-site product inspection conducted by a Japanese special agent for the prevention of epidemics (dispatched by the Japanese government) together with a local plant epidemic prevention agent, the affixation of a “FOR JAPAN” label of specific size and number, and the covering of the boxes with a special mesh (to release heat and prevent insects contamination). Paperwork involved is very complicated and costly.</p>
Papayas	<p>Conditions for import are the affixation of a “FOR JAPAN” label of specific size and number, and the covering of the boxes with a special mesh (to release heat and prevent insects contamination).</p>

Dried vegetables and fruits	<p>With the exception of sugar-preserved and powdered items, a quarantine certificate must be attached at time of transport as these products require plant quarantine. However, import is easy in comparison with fresh products. Time is needed for quarantine so take this into account when deciding the transportation date.</p> <p>The exact contents and amount must be noted on the invoice and quarantine certificate.</p> <p>Simply stating mixed vegetables or mixed fruits is not sufficient.</p> <p>If you will offer samples/tastings, products including powdered and other processed products will also require an additive inspection so take this into account when deciding the transportation date.</p>
Canned vegetables and fruits	<p>Plant quarantine is not required. However, if you will have tasting sessions, they will also require an additive inspection so take this into account when deciding the transportation date. The exact contents and amount must be noted on the invoice and quarantine certificate.</p> <p>Simply stating fruit cocktail/mix is not sufficient.</p>
Vegetables chips and fruit chips	<p>Plant quarantine is not required. However, if you will offer samples/tastings, they will also require an additive inspection so take this into account when deciding the transportation date.</p>
Frozen vegetables, frozen fruits, frozen mixed vegetables, frozen mixed fruits	<p>There should not be any large problems passing customs if they are completely frozen. However it is often difficult to maintain a state of complete frozenness in the freezer at Narita airport. Sometimes frozen fruits and vegetables cannot be imported if even slight thawing is evident at time of inspection. If the words "frozen to under -18 degrees Celsius" are written on the quarantine certificate and the original certificate is affixed, thawed products can be refrozen and re-inspected. If this is not done, or if the products prohibited from import when fresh are found, the whole shipment may be disposed of or shipped back. Products deemed to be frozen foods are subject to an analysis inspection (additives, Bacillus Coli, etc.) based on frozen food standards. They take time to clear customs.</p> <p>The exact contents and amount must be noted on the invoice and quarantine certificate.</p> <p>Simply stating mixed vegetables or mixed fruits is not sufficient.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Example : ABC BRAND FROZEN MIXED VEGETABLE 5 packs/10 kg Consisting of;</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">Fresh frozen cut carrot: 2.5kg</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">Fresh frozen corn: 2.5kg</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">Fresh frozen green pea: 2.5kg</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">Fresh frozen xxx: .2.5kg</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Total 10kg in 5 packs/ @2.0kg/pack</p> <p>When importing frozen foods, please be aware that it is the responsibility of the exhibitor to rent a freezer at the fair. This will cost approximately 50,000 yen.</p>
Fruit puree	<p>Purees of import-prohibited fruits are exempt from the Plant Protection Law as processed items if they have been processed through methods such as sugar preservation. However, fruit puree is prohibited if it has simply been crushed into pulp. If completely frozen, import-prohibited products can pass plant quarantine under the assumption that insects will die if completely frozen. However, if the</p>

	<p>products have begun to thaw even slightly at time of inspection, they may not be able to be imported. If the words “frozen to under -18 degrees Celsius” are written on the quarantine certificate, the original certificate is affixed, and the products are refrozen if thawed, they can be inspected once again. However, if this is not done they may be disposed of or reshipped.</p>
<p>Fruit sherbet</p>	<p>Sherbets that contain fruit pulp are subject to the Plant Protection Law. However, frozen products can pass plant quarantine under the assumption that insects will die if completely frozen. However, even slight thawing at the time of inspection may prevent import. If the words “frozen to under -18 degrees Celsius” are written on the quarantine certificate and the original is affixed, thawed products can be refrozen and re-inspected. However maintaining quality and product value is difficult. The bonded freezer at Narita airport only freezes to about -10 degrees Celsius and the actual temperature is much higher since it is always being opened. This makes it difficult to maintain a completely frozen state. Furthermore, if you will offer samples/tastings, products must clear strict inspections including the wrapping container sterilization inspection, ingredient inspection, processing method inspection and bacterial inspection. These inspections take over one month. The importer must also visit the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare to fill out paperwork. It is impossible for JETRO to fill out the paperwork as the importer.</p> <p>When importing frozen foods, please be aware that it is the responsibility of the exhibitor to rent a freezer at the fair. This will cost approximately 50,000 yen.</p>

MEATS

<p>Meat</p>	<p><u>*Since clearing customs is almost impossible, EXHIBITING PRODUCTS OF THIS CATEGORY IS NOT ALLOWED IN THE JETRO ZONE*</u></p> <p>A great deal of time money and paperwork is necessary to import meats.</p> <p>As a rule, all meat products are subject to animal quarantine regardless of whether they are fresh, frozen, refrigerated or heat-treated. Check with a forwarder with the information on the formal name, location, registration number and other details for each factory (slaughter/cutting/packaging), and the state of the product for pre-import approval inspection. (Handling also differs for different hooved animals (beef, pork) and poultry (chicken, ducks)).</p> <p>The imports of meats from certain countries are prohibited. Even if import of meat from a particular country is allowed, they will be import-prohibited once transported via prohibited country. Check with a forwarder to learn which products from which countries are forbidden.</p> <p>For hooved animals such as cows and pigs, an absolute minimum condition is for all slaughter/cutting/packaging performed at a factory certified by Japan's animal quarantine center. Products that do not pass this regulation will be disposed of or shipped back.</p> <p>You can try to bring in samples under the condition that they are not to be tasted. However, you must understand there is a possibility that they may not pass inspection and may be disposed. In such cases, JETRO will not be responsible in any way for any related paperwork or costs.</p>
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SEA FOODS

Fish and other seafood	<p>The scientific name is needed in advance to determine whether import is permitted. Products such as mackerels and sardines generally have import quotas and therefore are generally imported by ship by specialized companies with a quota allocation.</p> <p>Fresh fish and even fish frozen for transport are relatively easy to import. Fish that have been frozen after being boiled are not considered frozen products and must only undergo an SO₂ (bleach) inspection and artificial color inspection if you will hold a tasting session. However, fish processed in other ways and frozen are considered frozen food and must undergo an analysis inspection (additives, Bacillus Coli, etc.) based on frozen food standards. Therefore, they require more time to pass customs. When importing frozen foods, please be aware that it is the responsibility of the exhibitor to rent a freezer at the fair. This will cost approximately 50,000 yen.</p> <p>For smoked fish and seafood, SO₂ inspection, preservative inspection and other additives inspections are likely to be required if you will offer samples/tastings. This may take time. Take this into account when deciding the transportation date. Refrigerated transport is highly recommended.</p>
Fish sausage	<p>The scientific name is needed in advance to determine whether import is permitted. Additives inspections and other analysis inspection (Bacillus coli, Salmonella, etc) are likely to be required if you will offer samples/tastings. This may take time. Take this into account when deciding the transportation date.</p>
Sea plants such as wakame seaweed, hijiki seaweed, kelp, etc.	<p>The scientific name is needed in advance to determine whether import is permitted. These products generally have import quotas and therefore are generally imported by ship by specialized companies with a quota allocation. Several weeks are required for application and approval. Evidence of a financial transaction, such as a contract between the exporter and importer, is also required. Non-profit samples with a CIF of 181,000 yen or under can be imported through the application of import regulations for small amounts. However, if the price exceeds this amount (calculated by adding the cost of actual airfreight and insurance to the FOB price. Note the exchange rate that applies is the rate during the week the products enter customs.), it will take several months to obtain a quota and storage fees will increase.</p>

MILK PRODUCTS

Milk products such as butter, powdered skim milk, condensed milk, etc.	<p>Importers are required to apply to the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries or another controlling ministry or authority such as the Agricultural/Livestock Promotion Corporation for a special license. It takes several days to deliver and receive it and importers will be required to pay the necessary tax or bond before customs clearance can proceed. It is impossible for JETRO to fill out the paperwork as the importer.</p>
Cheese	<p>If you wish to offer samples/tastings, these items require additive and preservative inspections at customs. These take time. Regulations on ingredients, production method, labels, etc are determined by Health, Labour and Welfare Ministry ordinance, so you must check with the Ministry before shipping.</p>

Ice cream	<p>*Since clearing customs is almost impossible, EXHIBITING PRODUCTS OF THIS CATEGORY IS NOT ALLOWED IN THE JETRO ZONE*</p> <p>The bonded freezer at Narita airport only freezes to about -10 degrees Celsius. Furthermore, the actual temperature is much higher since it is always being opened, making it difficult to maintain quality. Furthermore, if you will offer samples/tastings, products must clear strict inspections including the wrapping container sterilization inspection, ingredient inspection, processing method inspection and bacterial inspection. These inspections take over one month. The importer must also visit the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare to fill out paperwork. It is impossible for JETRO to fill out the paperwork as the importer.</p> <p>Importers are required to apply to the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries or another controlling ministry or authority such as the Agricultural/Livestock Promotion Corporation for a special license. It takes several days to deliver and receive it and importers will be required to pay the necessary tax or bond before customs clearance can proceed. It is impossible for JETRO to fill out the paperwork as the importer.</p> <p>When importing frozen foods, please be aware that it is the responsibility of the exhibitor to rent a freezer at the fair. This will cost approximately 50,000 yen.</p>
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GRAINS

Rice, wheat, rice cake, etc	Based on the "Law for Stabilization of Supply, Demand and Prices of Staple Food", applications and the payment of duties must be made to the general foods division of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. In the case of rice, allow sufficient time for plant quarantine when deciding the transportation date, and a quarantine certificate must be attached at time of transport.
Minor grains such as millet, buckwheat, etc.	A quarantine certificate must be attached at time of transport as these products require plant quarantine. Time is needed for quarantine so take this into account when deciding the transportation date. Unlike rice and wheat, no application and payment is needed for the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.
Beans and nuts	An aflatoxin inspection is required if you will offer samples/tastings. This may take time. Take this into account when deciding the transportation date. The scientific name is needed in advance as some bean types are import-prohibited
Tubers	Since some of these items fall under the category of items prohibited from import, the scientific name is needed in advance.

FROZEN FOODS

Frozen foods containing meat and vegetables such as frozen pizza, etc.	<p>Animal quarantine is required if the foods contain meat. Plant quarantine is required if they contain vegetables. Both animal and plant quarantine is required if they contain both. The import of vegetables and meat from certain countries is prohibited. Even if import of vegetables and meat from a particular country is allowed, they will be import-prohibited once transported via prohibited country.</p> <p>Frozen products can pass plant quarantine under the assumption insects die if completely frozen. However, even slight thawing may prevent import. If the words "frozen to under -18 degrees Celsius" are written on the quarantine certificate and the original is affixed, thawed products can be refrozen and re-inspected. Otherwise they may be disposed of or shipped back.</p> <p>Further, to pass animal quarantine, all meat must be slaughtered, processed and heat-treated at a factory certified by Japan's animal</p>
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quarantine center. Otherwise it will be disposed of or shipped back. Frozen products must also undergo an analysis inspection (additives, Bacillus Coli, etc.) based on frozen food standards. Therefore, they require more time to pass customs. When importing frozen foods, please be aware that it is the responsibility of the exhibitor to rent a freezer at the fair. This will cost approximately 50,000 yen

SEASONINGS, SPICES

Sugar	Importers are required to apply to the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries or another controlling ministry or authority such as the Agricultural/Livestock Promotion Corporation for a special license. It takes several days to deliver and receive it and importers will be required to pay the necessary tax or bond before customs clearance can proceed. It is impossible for JETRO to fill out the paperwork as the importer.
Salt	Importers are required to apply to customs for a special license to import and sell salt. It is impossible for JETRO to fill out the paperwork as the importer. All salt except natural salt is subject to inspections if you will offer samples/tastings.
Vinegar	SO2 inspection and preservative inspection are likely to be required if you will offer samples/tastings. This may take time. Take this into account when deciding the transportation date.
Spices	An aflatoxin inspection is required if you will offer samples/tastings. This may take time. Take this into account when deciding the transportation date.
Vanilla beans	Raw beans are subject to plant quarantine but processed items (fermented items) are not. Since all vanilla falls under the Washington Convention, it is necessary to note the scientific name and the fact that they have been artificially cultivated on the invoice.
Honey, honey products	In the case of natural honey, a public certificate indicating the honey is natural is required (if a public certificate is not attached during transport it will be deemed as artificial honey and a 50% tax will be levied. The tax for natural honey is 25%). Furthermore, if you will offer samples/tastings. for the honey or product containing honey, an antibacterial inspection is required. This takes time. Processed honey items must also undergo an artificial coloring and artificial scent inspection at customs. This takes time. Take this into account when deciding the transportation date.
Sauces	Requires an artificial coloring, additive and thickener inspections at customs. These take time.
Edible Oil	Subject to inspections if you will offer samples/tasings which may take time. Take this into account when deciding the transportation date.

ORGANIC PRODUCTS

Organic foods and beverages

Items can not be labeled as "Organic" or "Organically produced" under any circumstances if they have not undergone a certification inspection in accordance with JAS (Japan Agricultural Standards) and are not affixed with an "Organic JAS mark". Note this provision also applies to items that have been certified as organic by official agencies in the exhibiting country.

HEALTH FOODS

Propolis, royal jelly, agaricus, noni juice, supplements, and other products

In Japan, even items sold as health foods may be considered pharmaceuticals under Japan's Pharmaceutical Affairs Law. Advanced confirmation is required. Items such as capsules, tablets and powders are prohibited from exhibition as they cannot be differentiated from pharmaceuticals/health foods therefore may conflict with Pharmaceutical Affairs Law. Care must be taken even with health foods in other forms (such as liquids). They may conflict with the Pharmaceutical Affairs Law if their labels or advertisements claim pharmaceutical-like effects, and they should indicate no instruction on dosage and administration.

Even beverages and candies may conflict with the Pharmaceutical Affairs Law if their labels or advertisements claim pharmaceutical-like effects, and they should indicate no instruction on dosage and administration. Such items may only be exhibited as beverages or candies. Offering samples and tastings is prohibited.

Health promoting foods such as noni juice can be exhibited, but they may as well conflict with the Pharmaceutical Affairs Law if their labels or advertisements claim pharmaceutical-like effects, and they should indicate no instruction on dosage and administration.

OTHER

Other processed foods

If you wish to offer samples/tastings, these items require an artificial coloring, additive and preservative inspections at customs. These take time.