



Importing Personal Property Into Costa Rica

HOUSEHOLD GOODS AND PERSONAL EFFECTS

CUSTOMS REGULATIONS AND REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

Customs Regulations:

All household goods and personal effects must be unloaded in a bonded warehouse for Customs inspection. All shipments are subject to physical inspection with the exception for those with diplomatic status. Used household goods and personal effects are subject to import taxes and duties. The average tax on CIF value of used goods is approximately 37%.

Returning Nationals who have lived abroad a minimum of 24 months are granted partial reduction in fees incurring a tax at 27%. They must apply for a letter from the Costa Rican consulate stating their period of residence abroad. The Franchise can take up to three weeks to be approved in Costa Rica.

NOTE: All documents must be originals. Cost for delays due to incomplete or incorrect documents will be charged to the client. Number of boxes noted on OBL/AWB must be identical to what is unloaded to avoid fines and delays.

Ports: Santa Maria (air); San Jose (ocean); Port Limon (Atlantic) Port Caldera (Pacific)

Required Documents:

- Passport including photo page, signature and entry stamp to Costa Rica
- Bill of Lading/Air Waybill (Telex is acceptable)
- Comprehensive Inventory - in English or Spanish, signed by client; state values, electrical appliances require make, model & serial numbers. New items require original invoices/receipts
- Document stating insurance coverage
- Authorization Letter - allowing Destination Agent to clear shipment on client's behalf

Diplomat Status:

Foreign diplomats, members of government or international organizations are granted tax and duty-free entry of their personal effects and household items either new or used. Tax exemption must be requested to the Ministry of Foreign Relations. The Embassy or Mission must endorse the exemption.

All diplomatic shipments **MUST** be unloaded at a bonded warehouse prior to delivery.

Required Documents:

- Diplomatic Franchise/Exemption
- Passport - copy
- Comprehensive inventory list in English or Spanish

RESTRICTED/DUTIABLE ITEMS

- Appliances/Electronics - i.e. freezers, fridges, TV's etc must not exceed one of each item; state make, model & serial number on Inventory List
- Firearms - require an original invoice & registration at origin. Must apply for a permit with the Firearm and Explosives Department upon arrival. Must be for personal use only and are subject to Import Tax of up to 141%
- New items - subject to 35% tax, require original receipts
- Computers - are subject to import regulations, must include invoice, instruction book

- Alcoholic beverages, tobacco and foodstuffs require special permits if in large quantities from the Department of Health and or IHAM. Duties are about 110%

PROHIBITED ITEMS

- Narcotics/illegal drugs of any kind
- Pornography and subversive material
- Explosives, ammunitions and weapons
- Foodstuffs & Alcohol - requires permits from the Department of Health and or IHAM
- Used tires
- Animal or agricultural products or plants

IMPORTATION OF PETS

Quarantine is not required. However, if a pet looks ill or unhealthy upon examination by a Customs officer your pet will be kenneled in a government facility for 30 days.

Required Documents:

- Certificate of Vaccination – including rabies, dated less than 30 days prior to arrival
- Health Certificate - dated less than 30 days prior to arrival, endorsed by a Veterinary Service
- Authorization from Costa Rican Health Ministry - obtained at origin from the Consulate/ Embassy
- Invoice indicating value of pet

IMPORTATION OF VEHICLES

Vehicles are subject to high import taxes and duties. Amount to be paid depends on value, model, year, cubic centimeters and accessories. Expect to pay 53%-73% for automobiles and 35%-60% for motorcycles. Boats are 69%.

All vehicles must have an EPA Smog test signed by the Consulate at origin from the country which the vehicle is being exported to. Contact your Destination Agent prior to consigning the vehicle.

Required Documents:

- Certificate of Title and Registration - must be original
- Commercial/Purchase Invoice – must be original

NOTES:

Entry & Exit Requirements: Costa Rican Immigration may deny entry if the passport is damaged in any way. U.S. citizens should carry photocopies of their passport data page and Costa Rican entry stamp on their persons, and leave the original passport in a hotel safe or other secure place. Costa Rican immigration authorities conduct routine immigration checks at locations, such as bars in downtown San Jose and beach communities. U.S. citizens detained during one of these checks who have only a copy of the passport may be required to provide the original passport with appropriate stamps.

Dual national U.S./Costa Rican citizens as well as U.S. citizens who are legal residents must present an exit permit issued by immigration authorities.

Safety & Security: US citizens are encouraged to enroll in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program, to stay current with the latest safety and security announcements dispersed by the Embassy in your area. Your enrollment can also help the Department of State reach your family and friends in case of emergency.

Crime: Daytime robberies in public places occur, and thieves have been known to brandish weapons or use violence if victims resist. Never leave valuables in your vehicle. The U.S. Embassy receives several reports daily of valuables, identity documents, and other items stolen from locked vehicles, primarily rental cars.

Fumigation of Wood Packing Materials: Costa Rica has adopted measures in line with ISPM15 for wood packaging

material (WPM).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

APA Worldwide Movers; San Jose, Costa Rica

Department of State: http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1093.html

Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui/>

USDA: www.aphis.usda.gov

International Association of Movers

The information presented herein is based on customs data available at the time of printing and is frequently subject to change without notice. It is the responsibility of the owner or importer of the household goods to comply with the current customs restrictions, regulations, and duties of the country to which the goods are imported. We strongly advise customers to contact the consulate or embassy of the destination country for the most current information on customs regulations, restrictions and duties for importing household goods, personal effects and vehicles.