



Bahrain

CAPITAL

Manama

OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

Arabic

CURRENCY

the Bahraini dinar (BHD)

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This Country Guide reflects information believed to be correct at the time of publication. Regulations, procedures and charges are subject to change. IAM does not accept liability for errors, omissions, inaccuracies or misinterpretations in this guide. The information provided should not be considered as having been provided or sanctioned by the customs authorities of the country or territory concerned.

Overview

Duty-Free Eligibility

Duty-free conditions: Per the GCC Unified Customs Law (confirmed on customs.gov.bh and by multiple industry sources), used personal effects and household items are exempt from customs duties for nationals residing abroad or foreigners coming to reside in Bahrain for the first time, subject to conditions set by the Director General of Customs. Used household goods can be imported duty-free provided: the owner intends to make Bahrain their new place of residence; they are the owner of all items; goods are imported within 6 months of arrival in Bahrain; items are for personal use, not commercial purposes; and the owner has a valid Residence Permit with Ministry stamp and QR code plus CPR card.

New items within shipments: Any new items are subject to 5% customs duty plus 10% VAT. Whether used or new, customs duty of 5% applies to personal computers and musical instruments. Videos attract a duty of approximately USD 0.55 per video.

VAT: 10% VAT applies on imports (in addition to customs duty where applicable).

Documents

Required Documents

- **Sea waybill, surrendered/express bill of lading, or original bill of lading**
- **Original air waybill (for air shipments)**
- **Clear copy of the packing list in English**
- **Clear copy of passport with signature page**
- **Clear copy of valid Residence Permit endorsed for all shipments**
- **Clear copy of Central Population Registry Card (CPR ID, both sides)**
- **Signed authorisation letter to customs**
- **Signed customs declaration form**
- **House/property lease agreement copy (as proof if client resides in Bahrain but works in Saudi Arabia)**

Household Goods — Specific Information

CDs, DVDs, LDs, VCDs: Only a small number permitted duty-free. Large quantities will incur charges. DVDs and magazines are subject to inspection by the Ministry of Interior for banned content.

100% inspection: All shipments are subject to 100% inspection at the port or airport. This is systematic, not risk-based.

GCC customs union: Bahrain is part of the GCC Unified Customs Union. The standard import duty rate is 5% on most commodities from outside the GCC. Alcohol is assessed at 125% duty and tobacco at 100% duty. Goods from within the GCC that have already had duties paid at the first point of entry are duty-free within the union.

US-Bahrain FTA: Under the Free Trade Agreement, bilateral trade in industrial and consumer products (apart from some agricultural items) is duty-free between the US and Bahrain. This may benefit US-origin items within household shipments that do not qualify for the personal effects exemption.

Temporary admission: Incoming passengers can bring personal goods subject to customs duties under a temporary import regime for 6 months (extendable). A financial deposit may be required, recoverable when the goods are re-exported.

OFOQ system: Bahrain uses the OFOQ automated customs clearance system for declarations.

Prohibited / Restricted Items

Prohibited Items

- **Illegal drugs** — Strictly prohibited; severe penalties
- **Weapons, explosives, and ammunition** — Prohibited without permit
- **Knives and deadly weapons** — Prohibited
- **Live swine** — Prohibited
- **Indian Paan and derivatives** — Prohibited
- **Advertisement material for all types of cigarettes** — Prohibited
- **Children's toy guns capable of firing projectiles** — Prohibited
- **Goods of Israeli origin** — Prohibited (confirm current enforcement)
- **Printed publications, photographs, pictures, books, or magazines** that conflict with Islamic teachings or Bahraini morality — Prohibited
- **Pornographic material** — Prohibited
- **Material promoting violence or terrorism** — Prohibited
- **Counterfeit goods** — Prohibited
- **All types of lithium batteries** (UN3090, UN3091, UN3480, UN3481, UN3536) — Banned whether classified as dangerous goods or not
- **Hazardous goods** classes 5.1, 5.2, 4.2, and 4, and most class 2.1 and 2.3 materials — Prohibited (except UN1950 in limited quantities)

Restricted / Dutiable Items

Duty-Free Traveller Allowances (per customs.gov.bh)

- 8 oz of perfume
- Personal gifts not exceeding BHD 250 (not subject to regular duty)
- Personal belongings exempt from duty
- Video and still cameras with accessories
- CD/DVD players in non-commercial quantities
- Telescopes, mobile phones, computers/laptops in non-commercial quantities

- Sports equipment, baby strollers, portable music equipment, disabled wheelchairs

Restricted Items

- **Alcohol** — 125% duty; restricted quantities
- **Tobacco** — 100% duty
- **Cats, dogs, and other animals** `PERMIT REQUIRED` — Valid import permit from the Ministry of Agriculture required
- **Plants and plant products** `PERMIT REQUIRED` — Subject to agricultural controls
- **Animal and animal products** `PERMIT REQUIRED` — Subject to veterinary controls
- **Medicines** — May require Ministry of Health approval
- **Printed publications, photographs, pictures, books** — Subject to Ministry of Interior review for content
- **Telecommunications equipment** — May require regulatory approval
- **Currency:** Travellers must disclose local or foreign currencies exceeding certain amounts upon request by customs/security authorities

Goods of Israeli Origin

Per VisaHQ and the GCC boycott regulations, goods of Israeli origin or bearing Israeli trademarks or logos are prohibited. Confirm current enforcement status with the destination agent, as this is subject to evolving regional politics.

Vehicles

Vehicle Documents

- **Commercial invoice (for new vehicles)**

Required documents include:

- **Original bill of lading or express bill of lading**

Required documents include:

- **Original certificate of ownership, title, or export certificate from country of origin**

Required documents include:

- **Car condition report**

Required documents include:

- **Proof of insurance**

Required documents include:

Specific Information

Customs process: The vehicle is directed to an X-ray unit for inspection. A form is issued with all vehicle information, then submitted to the operations office for registration in the OFOQ system. The clearing agent prepares the customs declaration. The vehicle undergoes technical inspection by the Traffic and Licenses Department. Customs values the vehicle and reviews documents. After payment, inspection plates are issued by the Traffic Department. A vehicle customs card and exit permit are issued.

Duties: Vehicles are subject to 5% customs duty on CIF value (GCC common rate) plus VAT. The US-Bahrain FTA may reduce or eliminate duty on US-origin vehicles.

Diplomatic vehicles: Cleared through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs franchise.

Driving: Driving is on the RIGHT-hand side of the road.

Pets

Requirements

- **ISO 15-digit microchip (ISO 11784/11785 compliant; 10-digit US microchips are NOT accepted — an additional ISO chip may be needed)**

Based on NSA Bahrain Veterinary Treatment Facility guidance (May 2025), PetTravel.com, and Bahrain Customs:

- **Proof of at least two series of all required vaccinations during the pet's lifetime:**

Based on NSA Bahrain Veterinary Treatment Facility guidance (May 2025), PetTravel.com, and Bahrain Customs:

- ****Dogs:** Rabies, DA2PP (distemper/adenovirus/parainfluenza/parvovirus), and Leptospirosis (two doses recommended: primary and booster)**

Based on NSA Bahrain Veterinary Treatment Facility guidance (May 2025), PetTravel.com, and Bahrain Customs:

- ****Cats:** Rabies and FVRCP (feline viral rhinotracheitis/calicivirus/panleukopenia)**

Based on NSA Bahrain Veterinary Treatment Facility guidance (May 2025), PetTravel.com, and Bahrain Customs:

- **Passing FAVN rabies titer test (rabies neutralising antibody titre test) within 1 year of entry into Bahrain. Pets from Japan may be exempt, but a FAVN is still advised.**

Based on NSA Bahrain Veterinary Treatment Facility guidance (May 2025), PetTravel.com, and Bahrain Customs:

- **Health certificate (APHIS Form 7001 for US-origin pets) issued within 10 days of travel**

Based on NSA Bahrain Veterinary Treatment Facility guidance (May 2025), PetTravel.com, and Bahrain Customs:

- **Import memorandum prepared by the veterinary authority and taken to the Kingdom of Bahrain Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Wealth Directorate Veterinary Quarantine**

Office for the Animal Import Certificate (valid 30 days)

Based on NSA Bahrain Veterinary Treatment Facility guidance (May 2025), PetTravel.com, and Bahrain Customs:

- **Import permit — the sponsor/representative in Bahrain must collect this before the pet arrives**

Based on NSA Bahrain Veterinary Treatment Facility guidance (May 2025), PetTravel.com, and Bahrain Customs:

Specific Information

Bahrain considers itself rabies-free. This drives the strict FAVN requirement and vaccination standards. There are NO exceptions to these requirements.

No quarantine facilities for privately owned animals. Per the NSA Bahrain guidance, all animals arriving without meeting the requirements will be returned to the point of origin at the owner's expense. However, a 30-day in-home quarantine applies upon arrival — pets cannot come into contact with any other animals during this period.

Some older sources indicate a 30-day facility quarantine for pets from the US and Canada even with proper vaccinations. The more current 2024-2025 NSA guidance indicates in-home quarantine rather than facility quarantine. Confirm current policy with the destination agent.

Minimum age: Pets must be at least 4 months old upon entry (vaccinated at 12 weeks, plus 4-week post-vaccination wait).

Pets must arrive via manifest cargo (not as accompanied baggage according to some sources; confirm with the airline and destination agent).

Sponsor must meet the pet at the airport with the original import permit. Without this, the pet cannot clear customs.

Registration: After arrival, pets must be registered at a veterinary clinic within one week.

Banned breeds: Not specifically published by Bahrain customs, though GCC countries generally restrict certain breeds. Confirm with the destination agent.

Common mistakes: Not having two series of all required vaccinations (Bahrain requires proof of previous AND current vaccinations). Using a 10-digit US microchip instead of a 15-digit ISO chip. Not having the FAVN test completed. Failing to have the sponsor collect the import permit before the pet's arrival.

Consignment Instructions

Recommended: Contact the destination agent to ensure all requirements have been met prior to import, especially for differences regarding air / sea / land shipments.

100% inspection: All household goods shipments are subject to complete physical inspection at the port or airport. Plan for additional time and handling costs.

Customs declaration: May be completed electronically via the OFOQ system. The importer, representative, or authorised customs broker submits the declaration with all required documents.

Routing / ports of entry: Khalifa Bin Salman Port (sea freight). Bahrain International Airport (air freight). King Fahd Causeway (land freight from Saudi Arabia). Bahrain is an island nation in the Persian Gulf connected to Saudi Arabia by the King Fahd Causeway.

Clearance agent: It is strongly recommended to use a registered, licensed clearing agent (per trade.gov).

Currency: Bahraini dinar (BHD). Pegged to the US dollar at approximately BHD 0.376 = USD 1. The Bahraini dinar is one of the highest-valued currencies in the world.

Cultural & Other Information

- **OpenFactBook (replaces CIA World Factbook):** <https://www.openfactbook.org/countries/bahrain/>
- **Wikipedia:** <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bahrain>
- **Bahrain Customs Affairs:** <https://www.customs.gov.bh/en/default>
- **trade.gov — Bahrain Import Tariffs:** <https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/bahrain-import-tariffs>
- **trade.gov — Bahrain Import Requirements:** <https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/bahrain-import-requirements-and-documentation>

Key country facts: Bahrain is an archipelago of 33 islands in the Persian Gulf, connected to Saudi Arabia by the King Fahd Causeway. The capital is Manama. The official language is Arabic; English is widely spoken in business. The currency is the Bahraini dinar (BHD). Bahrain is a member of the GCC. The 5% standard GCC customs duty applies to most non-GCC imports. VAT was introduced at 5% in 2019 and increased to 10% in 2022. The US-Bahrain FTA provides duty-free access for most US industrial and consumer goods. Driving is on the right-hand side.

Important notes for movers: The 100% inspection rate is the defining practical feature — every shipment will be opened and examined. DVDs, magazines, books, and media content are screened by the Ministry of Interior. The lithium battery ban is strict and affects items commonly found in household shipments (laptops, tablets, power tools with battery packs). Movers must advise customers to remove all lithium batteries from devices before shipping. The pet import process requires a local sponsor to physically collect the import permit from the Ministry of Agriculture

before the pet arrives — this cannot be done remotely.

Regulatory Updates

- **September 2024:** Documentation requirements updated, including the 10% VAT rate and 100% inspection policy.
- **2022:** VAT increased from 5% to 10%.
- **2017:** GCC Unified Customs Tariff entered into force. Unified Selective Tax Agreement ratified.
- **US-Bahrain FTA:** Continues to provide duty-free bilateral trade in most industrial and consumer products.
- **2025:** NSA Bahrain Veterinary Treatment Facility updated pet import memorandum (May 2025) clarifying FAVN requirement and vaccination proof standards.

Quick Links & Resources

- [Find Movers in Bahrain](https://iamovers.mobilityex.com/index.html#/search?loc=Bahrain&lat=26.0667&lng=50.5577&range=50&assoc_s=800&fvw=c&ctry=Bahrain)
https://iamovers.mobilityex.com/index.html#/search?loc=Bahrain&lat=26.0667&lng=50.5577&range=50&assoc_s=800&fvw=c&ctry=Bahrain
- [Foreign Embassies in Bahrain](https://www.embassypages.com/bahrain)
<https://www.embassypages.com/bahrain>
- [Bahrain's Embassies Abroad](https://www.mofa.gov.bh/)
<https://www.mofa.gov.bh/>
- [OpenFactBook \(replaces CIA World Factbook\)](https://www.openfactbook.org/countries/bahrain/)
<https://www.openfactbook.org/countries/bahrain/>
- [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bahrain)
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bahrain>
- [Bahrain Customs Affairs](https://www.customs.gov.bh/en/default)
<https://www.customs.gov.bh/en/default>
- [Bahrain Customs — Duty-Free Allowances](https://www.customs.gov.bh/en/duty-free-purchases)
<https://www.customs.gov.bh/en/duty-free-purchases>
- [Bahrain Customs — Importing](https://www.customs.gov.bh/en/importing)
<https://www.customs.gov.bh/en/importing>
- [Bahrain Customs — FAQ](https://www.customs.gov.bh/en/faq)
<https://www.customs.gov.bh/en/faq>

- [trade.gov — Bahrain Import Tariffs](https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/bahrain-import-tariffs)

<https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/bahrain-import-tariffs>

- [trade.gov — Bahrain Import Requirements](https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/bahrain-import-requirements-and-documentation)

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