



Benin

CAPITAL

Porto-Novo

OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

French

CURRENCYthe West African CFA franc
(XOF)**Last verified:** June 2026 | **Guide version:** 2.0**Disclaimer**

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Overview

Duty-Free Eligibility

Duty-free conditions: Household goods are allowed into Benin duty-free if they have been in the owner's possession for at least 6 months.

Import taxes (not waived even for duty-free shipments):

- Diplomatic shipments: 0.15% import tax based on declared value
- Non-diplomatic shipments: 3.15% import tax based on declared value

Diplomatic exemption: A diplomatic exemption certificate must be obtained before the goods arrive to avoid storage charges.

Documents

Required Documents

- **Packing list**
- **Copy of passport**
- **Original bill of lading (OBL) — no express release accepted — or air waybill (AWB); 2 originals required**
- **Bordereau de Suivi de Cargaisons (BSC) / Cargo Tracking Note (CTN)**
- **Original valued inventory in French, dated and signed by the owner of the goods**
- **Invoice for all electrical items less than 6 months old**
- **Resident permit / work permit / letter of employment**
- **Certificate for change of residence**
- **Non-sale certificate**
- **Diplomatic exemption certificate (diplomats only)**

Household Goods — Specific Information

OBL requirements: The original bill of lading must clearly indicate the weight in kilograms, the number of items, and state "personal belongings." Express release is not accepted. The weight of a vehicle (if applicable) must be shown separately from the weight of personal effects.

BSC / Cargo Tracking Note: The BSC must be attached to the OBL. If the BSC is not available, a penalty of EUR 200 must be paid in Benin.

Non-sale certificate: Must state that the owner will not sell personal effects in Benin.

Certificate for change of residence: Must be obtained in the country of origin by the owner from either the city hall or the embassy of their passport country (if the owner is not a citizen of the country from which they are moving).

Letter of employment: Must explain that the owner is starting a new contract in Benin.

Document lead time (critical): Documents must be provided to the agent 3 weeks prior to the arrival of the shipment to obtain duty-free clearance.

All shipments inspected: All import shipments are subject to customs inspection.

Document language: The valued inventory must be in French.

SEGUB one-stop-shop: Benin uses the SEGUB system for customs clearance. SEGUB issues a receipt (Bordereau de Frais Unique / BFU) to the clearing agent once documents are submitted. The BFU enables cargo removal from the port within 24 hours.

ECOWAS / CET: Benin is a member of ECOWAS. The Common External Tariff (CET) applies to imported goods from outside the ECOWAS region. Tariff rates range from 0% to 35% depending on the nature and origin of goods.

VAT: 18% VAT is levied on most imported goods at the point of entry.

Prohibited / Restricted Items

Prohibited Items

- **Illegal drugs and narcotics** — Strictly prohibited
- **Firearms and ammunition** without authorisation — Prohibited
- **Hazardous materials** — Prohibited
- **Animals and pets** without proper documentation — Prohibited
- **Asbestos** — Prohibited
- **Precious metals and stones** — Prohibited in shipments
- **Ivory** — Prohibited `CITES`
- **Furs** — Prohibited
- **Gambling devices** — Prohibited
- **Counterfeit money and goods** — Prohibited
- **Pornographic materials** — Prohibited

Restricted / Dutiable Items

Duty-Free Traveller Allowances

- 200 cigarettes, or 25 cigars, or 100 cigarillos, or 250g tobacco
- 1 bottle of wine and 1 bottle of spirits
- 500ml eau de toilette
- 250ml perfume

Restricted Items

- **Alcohol within household shipments** — Only "Fond de Cave" is acceptable and duty-free, maximum 12 bottles
- **Firearms and ammunition** `PERMIT REQUIRED` — Authorisation from the territorial administration required
- **Knives and deadly weapons** `PERMIT REQUIRED` — Authorisation required
- **Plant and plant products** `PERMIT REQUIRED` — Permission from the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Fisheries required
- **Meat and meat products** `PERMIT REQUIRED` — Permission from the Ministry of Agriculture required
- **Pets and animals** `PERMIT REQUIRED` — Veterinary health certificate and rabies certificate required; permission from the Ministry of Agriculture
- **Electrical items less than 6 months old** — Invoice required; may be subject to duties

Vehicles

Vehicle Documents

- **Original registration card**
- **Original bill of lading / freight invoice**
- **Non-sale certificate**
- **Certificate of origin**

Specific Information

Duties on vehicles: Taxes depend on vehicle age, power, and other factors. Approximately 50% of CIF value if no exemption applies. Diplomatic rate: 0.85%.

Vehicle weight: Must be shown separately from personal effects weight on the bill of lading.

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

Pets

Requirements

- **Veterinary health certificate from the country of origin**
- **Rabies vaccination certificate from the country of origin**

Specific Information

Documents must be received by the agent prior to import.

Health certificate: Must be issued by a licensed veterinarian in the country of origin. Should confirm the animal is free from rabies and other infectious diseases.

Rabies vaccination: Must be current and administered before departure.

Import permit: All cats and dogs require permission from the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Fisheries (per VisaHQ). Contact the destination agent for the current permit process.

Quarantine: Not specified in available sources. Contact the destination agent.

Official authority: Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Fisheries.

Consignment Instructions

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

Document lead time: 3 weeks before shipment arrival. This is critical for obtaining duty-free clearance.

BSC / CTN: Must be obtained before shipping and attached to the OBL. EUR 200 penalty if missing.

Express release: Not accepted for Benin. Original bills of lading required (2 originals).

Inspection: All shipments are subject to customs inspection.

SEGUB clearance: Once documents are submitted via SEGUB and the BFU is issued, cargo can be removed from the port within 24 hours.

Routing / port of entry: Port of Cotonou (primary seaport; Cotonou is the economic capital and largest city). Cadjehoun Airport (Cotonou) for air freight. Benin also serves as a transit country for landlocked neighbours (Niger, Burkina Faso).

Currency: West African CFA franc (XOF). Pegged to the euro at XOF 655.957 = EUR 1. Benin is a member of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU/UEMOA) and uses the common CFA franc.

Cultural & Other Information

- **OpenFactBook (replaces CIA World Factbook):** <https://www.openfactbook.org/countries/benin/>
- **Wikipedia:** <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benin>
- **Benin Customs:** <https://douanes.gouv.bj/>
- **SEGUB:** <https://www.segub.bj/>
- **trade.gov — Benin Customs Regulations:** <https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/benin-customs-regulations>
- **trade.gov — Benin Import Tariffs:** <https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/benin-import-tariffs>

Key country facts: Benin is located in West Africa, bordered by Togo, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Nigeria, with a coastline on the Gulf of Guinea. The capital is Porto-Novo; the seat of government and economic capital is Cotonou. The official language is French; all customs documents must be in French. The currency is the West African CFA franc (XOF). Benin is a member of ECOWAS and WAEMU/UEMOA. The ECOWAS Common External Tariff (0-35%) applies. VAT is 18%. Driving is on the right-hand side.

Important notes for movers: The 3-week document lead time is the most critical practical requirement. Documents must reach the agent well before the shipment arrives; otherwise, duty-free clearance cannot be obtained and storage charges accumulate. The BSC/Cargo Tracking Note must be obtained before shipping and attached to the OBL — the EUR 200 penalty for a missing BSC is avoidable. Express release bills of lading are not accepted; only original OBLs (2 originals). Even duty-free shipments are subject to the 3.15% import tax (0.15% for diplomats). The valued inventory must be in French. Vehicle duties are approximately 50% of CIF value without an exemption.

Regulatory Updates

- **2015:** ECOWAS Common External Tariff (CET) implementation began, standardising tariff rates across member states (0-35%).

- **2011:** SEGUB one-stop-shop for customs clearance became operational, significantly improving clearance efficiency.
- **Ongoing:** BSC/CTN requirement continues as mandatory documentation for all sea freight.

Quick Links & Resources

- [Find Movers in Benin](https://iamovers.mobilityex.com/index.html#/search?loc=Benin&lat=6.3703&lng=2.3912&range=50&assocs=800&fvw=c&ctry=Benin)
<https://iamovers.mobilityex.com/index.html#/search?loc=Benin&lat=6.3703&lng=2.3912&range=50&assocs=800&fvw=c&ctry=Benin>
- [Foreign Embassies in Benin](https://www.embassypages.com/benin)
<https://www.embassypages.com/benin>
- [Benin's Embassies Abroad](https://www.gouv.bj/)
<https://www.gouv.bj/>
- [OpenFactBook \(replaces CIA World Factbook\)](https://www.openfactbook.org/countries/benin/)
<https://www.openfactbook.org/countries/benin/>
- [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benin)
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benin>
- [Benin Customs \(Direction Generale des Douanes\)](https://douanes.gouv.bj/)
<https://douanes.gouv.bj/>
- [SEGUB \(One-Stop-Shop for Customs Clearance\)](https://www.segub.bj/)
<https://www.segub.bj/>
- [Ministry of Economy and Finance](https://finances.bj/)
<https://finances.bj/>
- [trade.gov — Benin Customs Regulations](https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/benin-customs-regulations)
<https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/benin-customs-regulations>
- [trade.gov — Benin Import Tariffs](https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/benin-import-tariffs)
<https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/benin-import-tariffs>