



Gabon

CAPITAL Libreville	OFFICIAL LANGUAGE French	CURRENCY the Central African CFA franc (XAF), issued by the Bank of Central African States (BEAC) and pegged to the euro
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Last verified: June 2026 | **Guide version:** 2.0 (original IAM guide August 2016; updated and expanded)

Disclaimer

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: Household goods and personal effects may be imported duty-free provided a certificate for free entry is obtained from the Customs head office (Direction Générale des Douanes) prior to the shipment's arrival. The application process typically takes several weeks.

New items subject to tax: All new items less than 6 months old included in the shipment are subject to full customs duties and taxes, even when the rest of the shipment qualifies for duty-free entry. These items must be declared separately with purchase invoices.

Documents

Required Documents

- **Copy of passport**
- **Original bill of lading (OBL) / air waybill (AWB). No express release or sea waybill accepted.**
- **Electronic cargo tracking note (BIETC -- Bordereau d'Identification Electronique de Traçabilité des Cargaisons)**
- **Original valued inventory in French, dated and signed by the owner of the goods**
- **Invoice for all electrical items less than 6 months old**
- **Change of residence certificate (available from the shipper's home country embassy)**
- **End of employment letter from previous employer**
- **Resident permit / work permit / letter of employment in Gabon (for expatriates)**
- **Exemption certificate and letter from the Gabon embassy (for diplomats)**
- **Non-sale certificate (attestation de non-vente)**

Household Goods — Specific Information

Document submission deadline: All documents must be provided to the destination agent at least 2 weeks before the shipment arrives, to allow time to apply for and obtain the duty-free clearance certificate.

RUSID tax: Even with duty-free clearance, all owners must pay a tax on imported items of approximately 3% to 4% of the CIF (cost, insurance, and freight) value. This is the RUSID tax (Redevance d'Utilisation du Système Informatique Douanier) and applies to all shipments regardless of exemption status.

Diplomat exemptions: Diplomats do not need to be physically present in Gabon to apply for their exemption certificate. The diplomatic mission can process the application on their behalf.

CEMAC membership: Gabon is a member of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC). The common external tariff (CET) applies to imports from outside the CEMAC zone. Goods originating from other CEMAC member states (Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo-Brazzaville, Equatorial Guinea) may be subject to reduced or zero tariffs.

Currency: CFA franc (XAF), pegged to the euro at a fixed rate of 655.957 XAF per 1 EUR.

ISPM 15: Wood packaging materials (pallets, crates, dunnage) must comply with ISPM 15 standards (heat-treated and marked). Non-compliant wood packaging may be refused entry or require fumigation at the port, causing delays and additional costs.

Language requirement: The inventory and all supporting documents must be in French. Gabon is a Francophone country and customs officers typically do not process documents in other languages.

Prohibited / Restricted Items

Prohibited Items

- Illegal drugs
- Firearms and ammunition without authorization from the territorial administration (PERMIT REQUIRED)
- Counterfeit goods
- Pornographic materials
- Plants and plant materials (PERMIT REQUIRED -- phytosanitary certificate required from the Ministry of Agriculture for any authorized plant imports)
- Knives and deadly weapons

Restricted / Dutiable Items

Traveller allowances (persons aged 17 and over):

Per the IAM guide and VisaHQ:

- 200 cigarettes OR 50 cigars OR 200 cigarillos OR 250 grams of tobacco (note: VisaHQ states women may only import cigarettes, though this restriction's current enforcement status is unverified)
- 2 litres of alcoholic drinks
- 50 grams of perfume
- 2 cameras
- Other gifts up to XAF 5,000 in value

Alcohol within shipments: Only "Fond de Cave" (personal wine collection) is acceptable within a household goods shipment. Limit: 20 bottles, duty-free.

Firearms and ammunition: Authorization from the territorial administration (Ministère de l'Intérieur) is required before import. Import without prior authorization is prohibited.

Currency export limits: Holiday trips allow export of up to XAF 200,000 in local currency or the equivalent in foreign currency. Business trips allow up to XAF 25,000 per day with a maximum of XAF 500,000, or foreign currency equivalent.

Vehicles

Vehicle Documents

- **Original registration card**
- **Proof of ownership**
- **Original certificate of title and registration**
- **Purchase invoice**
- **Original bill of lading / air waybill**
- **Interpol authorization (certificat d'interpol, confirming the vehicle is not stolen)**
- **Cargo tracking note (BIETC)**
- **Roadworthy certificate issued in the country of origin**

Specific Information

No duty-free import for vehicles: Unlike household goods, vehicles are not eligible for duty-free import. Tax is payable on all vehicle shipments at approximately 53.4% of the CIF value. This is among the highest vehicle import duty rates in Central Africa.

OBL specifications: The original bill of lading must identify the chassis number, engine number, cubic capacity, year of manufacture, brand, and model.

Age restriction: Vehicles must not be older than 3 years at the time of import. Vehicles older than 3 years will be refused entry. This is strictly enforced.

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

Port of entry: The primary port is Owendo (near Libreville). Port Gentil also handles some cargo. Processing times can be unpredictable.

Pets

Requirements

- **Rabies vaccination certificate (vaccination administered between 30 days and 12 months before arrival)**

Per the IAM guide and PetTravel.com (February 2026):

- **Veterinary health certificate, completed by a licensed veterinarian in the origin country within 10 days of transport**

Per the IAM guide and PetTravel.com (February 2026):

- **Government endorsement of the health certificate is recommended but not required by Gabon. However, it may be required as part of export procedures in the origin country.**

Per the IAM guide and PetTravel.com (February 2026):

Specific Information

No microchip required: Gabon does not require a microchip for pet entry. However, PetTravel.com strongly recommends ISO 11784/11785 microchipping for identification purposes, as it will be needed if the pet later travels to a country that requires it.

No import permit required: An import permit is not needed when entering Gabon with a personal pet.

No quarantine: Gabon does not quarantine pets that meet all documentation requirements. Pets that do not conform to requirements may be quarantined (if facilities are available), returned to the origin country, or euthanized at the importer's expense.

No rabies titer test required: A rabies titer test is not required for entry into Gabon from any country.

No banned breeds: Gabon does not publish a list of banned dog breeds.

Puppies and kittens under 3 months: Can enter Gabon without rabies vaccination.

CDC high-risk rabies country: Gabon IS on the U.S. CDC's list of high-risk countries for dog rabies. This affects anyone returning to the U.S. with a dog. U.S.-vaccinated dogs must have a Certification of U.S.-Issued Rabies Vaccination form completed before departing the U.S. Source: [CDC High-Risk Countries List](#) -- verified, Gabon listed.

Veterinary inspection on arrival: All pets are subject to inspection by a veterinary officer at the port of entry (typically Libreville International Airport). Importers will need to pay for further

veterinary testing if the health of the pet is not acceptable upon inspection.

Common mistakes: Not having the veterinary health certificate issued within 10 days of travel.
Not getting the rabies vaccination within the correct window (30 days to 12 months before arrival).
Not planning for the CDC requirements when returning a dog to the U.S. from Gabon.

Consignment Instructions

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

Document lead time is critical: The 2-week minimum for document submission to the destination agent is essential. The duty-free exemption certificate from Customs headquarters cannot be obtained quickly, and shipments arriving before the exemption is granted will be subject to full duties or held at the port incurring storage charges.

Inventory requirements: Original valued inventory in French, signed and dated by the owner. Must include detailed descriptions of all items. Electrical items require serial numbers and purchase dates.

Electronic cargo tracking: The BIETC (Bordereau d'Identification Electronique de Traçabilité des Cargaisons) is mandatory for all shipments to Gabon. This must be arranged before the shipment departs the origin port. Shipments without a valid BIETC will not clear customs.

Port congestion and unpredictable costs: The port at Owendo can experience congestion. Demurrage and storage charges can accumulate rapidly. Advise clients to budget for potential delays and additional port-related expenses.

Language: All customs interactions are conducted in French. The destination agent must be fluent in French for customs processing.

Cultural & Other Information

- **OpenFactBook (replaces CIA World Factbook):** [Gabon](#) -- verified 200
- **Wikipedia:** [Gabon](#) -- verified 403 to bots, works in browser
- **Gabonese Customs Authority (Direction Générale des Douanes):** [douanes.ga](#) -- now confirmed Active (200), title "Direction générale des douanes et droits indirects" -- re-checked June 2026; the May 2026 outage has been resolved
- **Gabonese Ministry of Foreign Affairs:** [diplomatie.gouv.ga](#) -- verified 200

- **Gabonese Ministry of Agriculture:** agriculture.gouv.ga -- verified 200 (for pet/phytosanitary inquiries)
- **CEMAC (Central African Economic and Monetary Community):** cemac.int -- verified 200

Key country facts: Gabon is a Central African country on the Atlantic coast, bordered by Equatorial Guinea, Cameroon, and the Republic of the Congo. The capital is Libreville. The official language is French. The currency is the Central African CFA franc (XAF), issued by the Bank of Central African States (BEAC) and pegged to the euro. Gabon is a member of CEMAC and OPEC. The economy is heavily dependent on oil, timber, and manganese. The population is approximately 2.4 million. VAT is 18%. Driving is on the right-hand side.

Important notes for movers: The RUSID tax (3-4% CIF) is the most commonly overlooked cost in Gabon quotes. Even with a duty-free exemption, this tax applies to every shipment. The 2-week document submission lead time is not a guideline but a practical minimum; the exemption process can take longer, and the destination agent should begin processing as early as possible. The 3-year vehicle age limit is strictly enforced and is a deal-breaker for older vehicles. The BIETC cargo tracking note is mandatory and must be arranged before the shipment leaves origin. Gabon's customs authority website (douanes.ga) was unreachable in May 2026 but has been restored and confirmed active as of June 2026. For any queries not covered by the destination agent, the Direction Générale des Douanes can now be reached at that site.

Quick Links & Resources

- [Find Movers in Gabon](https://iamovers.mobilityex.com/index.html#/search?loc=Gabon&lat=-0.803689&lng=11.609444&range=50&assocs=800&fvw=c&ctry=Gabon)
<https://iamovers.mobilityex.com/index.html#/search?loc=Gabon&lat=-0.803689&lng=11.609444&range=50&assocs=800&fvw=c&ctry=Gabon>
- [Foreign Embassies in Gabon](https://www.embassypages.com/gabon)
<https://www.embassypages.com/gabon>
- [Gabon's Embassies Abroad](https://www.diplomatie.gouv.ga)
<https://www.diplomatie.gouv.ga>
- [OpenFactBook \(replaces CIA World Factbook\)](https://www.openfactbook.org/countries/gabon/)
<https://www.openfactbook.org/countries/gabon/>
- [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gabon)
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gabon>