



**Think!** before you import food. All imported food must comply with a number of rules to make sure it is safe to eat. If you import food, you need to know what these rules are. The law says you are responsible for the products you import.

For further information check out our website:

**food.gov.uk/imports**  
or call **020 7276 8018**

# Advice for food importers

All imported food must comply with a number of rules to make sure it is safe to eat. If you import food, you need to know what these rules are. The law says you are responsible for the products you import.

## Imported food

- 'Imported' food means food coming straight into the UK from countries outside the European Union (EU)\*.
- All food imported into the UK and on sale here must comply with hygiene and safety rules. Local authority officers may carry out checks at the port or in shops or catering establishments. Food that doesn't comply with these rules may be taken and destroyed.
- For certain products where there are known health risks, there are special controls in place. Checks will need to be carried out at the port to make sure that the import rules have been met. For food imported through another EU member state, import checks should take place in the country where it comes into the EU.

\* The EU includes these following 27 member states: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and the UK.

## Food safety

### Important points to remember:

- You should make sure that the goods are legal before you buy them – you could include having the foods tested. If you do not follow the rules, this could lead to delays, costs and even fines or prosecution. Goods at ports may even be stopped from coming into the UK. If you are not sure about any food, get it checked!

### You must think about food safety when you import food

- Suppliers must be honest and reliable, and you should know their names and addresses.
- If you feel any food is not safe, report it to your local authority. Do not sell it.
- If you are asked to take any action by the authorities you should co-operate with them.

## Latest rules

### Always check the latest rules before importing food: [food.gov.uk/imports](http://food.gov.uk/imports)

- Some foods can only be imported from places and countries approved by the EU. You may need a Health Certificate for them.
- Certain foods can only be imported through certain ports.
- Animal products (such as meat, dairy foods and fish) can only come into the EU through a port with a Border Inspection Post.
- Also check what the law says about contaminant levels and labelling. Make sure your goods follow the rules.



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These are some of the foods that have specific rules for importing

## Further information

More information can be found at [food.gov.uk/imports](http://food.gov.uk/imports)

The Imported Food Helpline number is 020 7276 8018. The team will do their best to help you. Sometimes they may need to pass you to another team member or another Government department.

Or you could speak to your local authority. To find the contact details of your nearest environmental health or trading standards department, you could use our online search facility at:

[food.gov.uk/yourarea](http://food.gov.uk/yourarea)