

Restricted and Prohibited Items

from India to the USA

A complete guide to food items,
regulated products and non-acceptable
items for shipping to the United States.



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USA Prohibited & Restricted Shipment Items from India

1. U.S. Customs and Duty Rules

- **De Minimis:** The de minimis treatment, which allows shipments under USD 800 to enter duty-free, is suspended. Commercial shipments, including e-commerce shipments, must comply with regular procedures for entry into the United States and payment of duty. But the actual duty payable can be zero or lower based on the HTS classification and exemptions.
- **Gifts:** Personal, bona fide gifts that cost USD 100 or less can be imported duty-free subject to certain CBP conditions. Commercial/ promotional shipments cannot be classified as gifts.
- **India Origin Duty:** The regular MFN duty rate is levied based on the HTS classification. An additional 10% Section 301 duty applies to covered items from India under the action of July 2026.
- **Invoice/classification:** Your invoice/classification should include an accurate description, country of origin, value, and the 10-digit US HTS number (and the 8-digit ITC-HS code in the Indian shipping bill). Choose before shipping whether you or the recipient will pay the duty – DDP or DAP.
- **Food:** All foodstuffs that are imported, including food gifts and samples, require FDA Prior Notice. Food gifts sent by individuals from their home as personal items not for business purposes alone qualify as an exception. Prior Notice must be issued for food products that are prepared, such as sweets, snacks, or spices. Ayurvedic products could be either food or dietary supplements or drugs.

2. Food Items - U.S. Regulatory Treatment

Food item	Treatment	Notes
Fresh fruits and vegetables	Restricted / often prohibited	For India-origin produce, "often prohibited" understates it for C2C senders. Even approved items need commercial treatment. For example, Indian mangoes must be irradiated in India, jointly inspected by APHIS and India's plant protection organization, and shipped with a phytosanitary certificate. Say plainly that personal parcels of fresh produce are not practical.
Meat and meat products	Restricted	Imported meat, poultry and egg products must come from countries FSIS has found eligible. India does not appear as an import-eligible country for meat in the FSIS Import Library (confirm the current listing before publishing). For readers, this means "Do not ship."
Ghee, butter, hard cheese	Generally acceptable	Most dairy from India is restricted, but ghee, butter, and cheese (not soaked in liquid) are exceptions. They still count as food, so FDA Prior Notice applies unless it's homemade and sent as a personal gift.
Homemade foods	Restricted - C2C only	Only dry, shelf-stable homemade sweets are accepted for personal (C2C) shipments. Milk-based sweets follow dairy rules, and no meat is allowed. Homemade food sent by you as a personal gift does not need FDA Prior Notice.
Plants and seeds	Restricted / permit-dependent	Many need APHIS permits or phytosanitary certificates; some are prohibited.
Rice and chickpeas	Restricted in personal shipments	APHIS khapra beetle rule. Commercial imports need a phytosanitary certificate.
Dry spices (seed-free)	Generally acceptable	Commercially packed, seed-free spices are generally lower-risk.
Packaged snacks	Generally acceptable	Commercially packed snacks without restricted animal-origin

Food item	Treatment	Notes
		ingredients are generally acceptable, subject to FDA requirements including Prior Notice where applicable.
Tea (dried leaves)	Generally acceptable	Dried tea is generally admissible subject to normal food/import requirements.
Coffee (roasted beans)	Generally acceptable	Roasted coffee is generally admissible subject to normal food/import requirements.
Milk powder, condensed milk, paneer in liquid	Restricted / permit-dependent	Most need APHIS permission or approved processing. Heat-sealed, shelf-stable concentrated milk is allowed.
Processed dry fruits and nuts	Generally acceptable	Processed/package products are generally lower-risk.

3. ShipGlobal / General Courier Non-Acceptable Items

The items below are presented as ShipGlobal/general-courier acceptance restrictions, not as a claim that U.S. law universally prohibits every form of import. Specialist licensed channels may have different rules.

Item	ShipGlobal / carrier treatment
Prescription medicine	Not accepted through standard general courier. U.S. import of prescription drugs is subject to FDA and other legal requirements; specialist pharma logistics may be required.
OTC allopathic medicine	Not accepted.
Cough syrup	Not accepted unless an approved specialist channel specifically permits it; ingredients such as codeine or alcohol can trigger additional controls.
Standalone/loose batteries	Not accepted through the standard service. Battery treatment varies by chemistry, configuration, packaging, and carrier dangerous-goods rules.
Lithium-ion batteries/power banks	Power banks and loose lithium batteries are not acceptable under the stated carrier policy. Batteries packed in or with equipment require carrier-specific confirmation.
Gold jewellery	Not acceptable. This is not presented as a universal U.S. import ban.
Bullion / raw precious metals	Not acceptable via standard general courier; specialist customs/financial controls may apply.
Loose precious/semi-precious stones	Not acceptable via standard general courier.
Flammable liquids / alcohol-based perfume	Dangerous goods (Class 3). Not accepted through standard service unless an approved DG service specifically permits the commodity.
Alcoholic beverages	Not accepted through ShipGlobal/general courier. Commercial U.S. importation is subject to TTB licensing and other federal/state requirements.
Cash / currency	Not acceptable via standard courier.
Vape/e-cigarette	Not acceptable under the carrier policy; U.S. postal/import restrictions also apply.

4. Restricted Items - Branded / Commercial Shipments

The quantities below are ShipGlobal/carrier operational acceptance limits for the USA route, not U.S. legal thresholds. Regulatory compliance still applies.

Restricted item	limit	Condition/scope
Herbal medicine & supplement	60 kg	Non-allopathic only; excludes allopathic medicine and Viagra. If regulated as food/dietary supplement, FDA food rules including Prior Notice may apply. Products making drug claims may be subject to FDA drug requirements and detention/refusal.
Ayurvedic/homeopathic products (non-allopathic)	60 kg	Non-allopathic only. Regulatory treatment depends on composition, intended use, and claims.
Ghee	5 kg	Shipment eligibility may be subject to operational limits, while all applicable U.S. food and import requirements must still be met.
Pickles, papad & preserved/fermented foods	5 kg	No meat/fish pickles under this general acceptance rule. Food/import requirements still apply.
Spices	5 kg	Commercially packed/seed-free preferred; food/import requirements still apply.
Perfumes - non-alcoholic	2 kg	Non-alcoholic only. Alcohol-based perfumes may be Class 3 dangerous goods and are not accepted under standard service.
Artificial / fashion jewellery (non-precious metal)	60 kg	Non-precious metal only.
Edible oils	60 kg	Shipment eligibility may be subject to operational limits, while all applicable U.S. food and import requirements must still be met.
Essential oils	60 kg	Operational limit only. Many essential oils may be flammable; dangerous-goods classification depends on composition and flash point.
Toiletries (liquid & non-liquid)	20 kg	Operational limit. Cosmetic products may be subject to FDA MoCRA facility-registration and product-listing requirements, subject to applicable exemptions.

Silver jewellery: The previously supplied policy data conflicts between “silver-coated”, “92.5 sterling”, 500 g and 1 kg. This item has been intentionally removed from the public limit table until ShipGlobal confirms the exact product type and one approved limit.

5. Unbranded / C2C Items - ShipGlobal USA Limits

Unbranded / C2C item	ShipGlobal limit	Status/note
Herbal medicine & supplement	Not Allowed	Not permitted for unbranded/C2C shipment.
Homemade sweets	5 kg	Dry, shelf-stable, no meat. FDA Prior Notice exemption applies when the food is made in the sender's personal residence and sent by that individual as a personal gift; other non-commercial gift shipments can fall under FDA enforcement discretion rather than a blanket legal exemption.
Ghee	2 kg	Shipment eligibility may be subject to operational limits, while all applicable U.S. food and import requirements must still be met.
Spices	2 kg	Shipment eligibility may be subject to operational limits, while all applicable U.S. food and import requirements must still be met.
Toiletries (liquid & non-liquid)	Not Allowed	Not permitted for unbranded/C2C shipment under ShipGlobal policy.

Gift duty note: Qualifying bona fide person-to-person gifts valued at USD 100 or less may enter duty-free subject to CBP conditions/exclusions. This is separate from FDA/USDA admissibility and does not make a restricted commodity acceptable.

6. High-Risk / Prohibited Categories

Treat these as prohibited or specialist-channel commodities unless a licensed carrier/service explicitly accepts the exact item and all legal requirements are met.

Illegal drugs and narcotics

Marijuana, heroin, cocaine, LSD, methamphetamine and other banned drugs; controlled substances under applicable Indian/U.S. law. Severe legal consequences can apply.

Hazardous chemicals and toxic substances

Corrosives, industrial solvents/fuels, radioactive materials, toxic gases and similar hazardous substances require specialist handling and may be prohibited.

Explosives, weapons and firearms

Firearms, ammunition, gunpowder, explosives, firecrackers, grenades and dynamite are not general-courier commodities and are subject to strict legal controls.

Biological substances and human/animal remains

Human remains/body parts, blood samples, lab cultures, biological toxins and regulated wildlife/animal products require specialist/legal handling and are not accepted through standard service.

Counterfeit goods / IP violations

Fake branded goods, pirated media/software, fake currency and forged documents may be seized and can trigger legal action.

Currency, precious metals and valuables

Cash, bullion and loose gemstones are not acceptable through standard ShipGlobal/general courier under the stated policy.

Other regulated goods

Obscene material, lithium batteries, plants, seeds and agricultural products can be prohibited, restricted or permit-dependent depending on the exact commodity and carrier service.

7. Quick Reference Summary

Category	General treatment	Examples/notes
U.S. duty treatment	No USD 800 de minimis treatment; normal entry/duty rules apply	MFN duty according to HTS; Section 301 10% duty applies to products originating from India that fall under

Category	General treatment	Examples/notes
		exceptions. Gifts valued at up to USD 100 or less can be processed as gift entry.
Not accepted (carrier policy)	Do not ship via standard service	Prescriptions and over-the-counter drugs, power banks and loose batteries, gold jewellery, precious metals, stones, cash, e-cigarettes and vapes, and many more listed products.
Restricted branded/commercial	Allowed within limits + U.S. rules	60kg herbal/ Ayurvedic; 5kg ghee; 5kg pickles/papad; 5kg spices; 2kg non-alcoholic perfume; 20kg toiletries
Unbranded / C2C	Tighter restrictions	5kg homemade sweets (shelf-stable only); 2kg ghee; 2kg spices. No herbal products or toiletries permitted.
Food basics	Commodity-specific U.S. rules apply	Regulations: Commercially sealed, shelf-stable foods should be acceptable. Prohibited in personal shipments: fresh fruit & veg, meat, rice, chickpeas. All dairy products prohibited but ghee, butter, and cheese exempted. Plants & seeds require USDA clearance. Prior Notice required for food shipments except in case of homemade products sent as personal gifts.

Before shipping: Check the commodity, components/materials, brand of the product, packaging, country of origin, HTS number, invoice value, mode of duty payment, prior notice requirement for food products if applicable, destination zip code, hazardous material policy of the carrier, as well as USDA, FDA, CBP, and TTB regulations. Relying just on the amount is not sufficient.