

Shipping from China to Ali Sabieh

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Africa

China → Ali Sabieh · via JIB air / Doraleh sea · clearance by Djibouti Customs and Indirect Taxation Administration



Cargo handling on the China-Ali Sabieh lane.

Freight from China into Ali Sabieh clears through JIB air / Doraleh sea. Ali Sabieh is inland town on the Ethiopian rail corridor, and allow +1 day for the inland leg on top of clearance.

Clearance itself is handled by Djibouti Customs and Indirect Taxation Administration, and typical dwell at the gateway runs 3-8 days.

Routing and transit on this lane

Djibouti's economy is built around being Ethiopia's port, and the Djibouti International Free Trade Zone exists precisely to stage that transit cargo. If the real destination is Addis Ababa, structuring the move as a free-zone entry and then a separate Ethiopian

import is often cleaner and cheaper than a single through-movement.

Air gateways used	JIB (Djibouti Ambouli)
Air transit, China to gateway	4-7 business days
Sea gateways used	Doraleh Multipurpose Port, Port of Djibouti
Sea transit, China to gateway	20-28 calendar days
Gateway serving Ali Sabieh	JIB air / Doraleh sea
Inland leg to Ali Sabieh	+1 day from the gateway
Typical clearance / dwell	3-8 days
Peak season to plan around	Sep-Nov

What you will pay on arrival in Djibouti

Imports into Djibouti are cleared by Djibouti Customs and Indirect Taxation Administration. The headline position is: VAT 10%; duty generally low, with free-zone exemption for transit and re-export cargo. The de-minimis threshold is No practical de-minimis for commercial cargo.

Conformity is the part most first-time importers underestimate: Conformity requirements for regulated goods; free-zone registration for transit operations. Getting this wrong is expensive because it usually cannot be fixed after the cargo has landed.

Restrictions and known friction points for Djibouti: Distinguish clearly between Djibouti domestic import and free-zone transit to Ethiopia — the duty and documentation differ completely. Corridor trucking capacity tightens with Ethiopian demand.



Handling on the JIB air / Doraleh sea routing serving Ali Sabieh.

Air, sea or overland into Ali Sabieh?

Mode	Transit to gateway	Best suited to
→ Air Freight	4-7 business days	time-critical, high-value and low-volume cargo
□ Sea Freight	20-28 calendar days	volume cargo where cost per kilo matters more than speed

Transit shown is China departure to the Djibouti gateway and excludes the +1 day inland leg to Ali Sabieh and 3-8 days of clearance.

What to sort out before the cargo leaves China

- Check the de-minimis position (No practical de-minimis for commercial cargo) against your invoice value before you decide how to split the shipment.
- Use ISPM-15 treated pallets. Untreated wood is the most common reason otherwise-clean cargo gets held.
- Ask for the HS code in writing from your supplier and verify the Djibouti duty rate against it yourself.
- Plan around the China-side windows too: Chinese New Year and Golden Week both compress capacity on the Djibouti lane.
- Compare gross weight against volumetric weight ($L \times W \times H \div 6000$) — the higher figure is what gets billed on air and express.
- Budget for the inland leg: +1 day beyond gateway clearance to reach Ali Sabieh.

Mode guides for Ali Sabieh

- [✈ Air Freight to Ali Sabieh](#)
- [🚢 Sea Freight to Ali Sabieh](#)

Frequently asked questions

How long does shipping from China to Ali Sabieh take?

China to the Djibouti gateway is 4-7 business days by air, 20-28 calendar days by sea. On top of that, allow 3-8 days of clearance with Djibouti Customs and Indirect Taxation Administration and a +1 day inland leg to Ali Sabieh.

What duty and tax will I pay importing into Ali Sabieh?

Djibouti Customs and Indirect Taxation Administration applies: VAT 10%; duty generally low, with free-zone exemption for transit and re-export cargo. The de-minimis position is No practical de-minimis for commercial cargo. Under a DDP arrangement these are pre-paid, so nothing is collected on arrival in Ali Sabieh.

Can you deliver door-to-door in Ali Sabieh?

Yes. Delivery to a Ali Sabieh address is quoted as one figure covering freight, duty and tax owed to Djibouti Customs and Indirect Taxation Administration, and the +1 day inland leg. Confirm whether your consignee wants the goods at a warehouse, a marketplace fulfillment center or a shop front, because the last-mile requirement differs.

When is the busiest time on the China-Djibouti lane?

Space and rates tighten around Sep-Nov, plus the China-side windows of Chinese New Year in January or February and Golden Week in early October. Book one to two weeks earlier in those periods.

Can you ship batteries or sensitive cargo to Ali Sabieh?

Yes. Battery cargo by air follows IATA PI 965-970 depending on how the cells are packed, and moves on certified channels via JIB (Djibouti Ambouli). Surcharges apply and the declaration has to be made before booking.

What documents does Djibouti Customs and Indirect Taxation Administration require?

A commercial invoice with HS codes, a packing list, the bill of lading or air waybill, a certificate of origin where it lowers duty, and any product certification (Conformity requirements for regulated goods; free-zone registration for transit operations). We prepare and file these as part of the service.

Other delivery cities in Djibouti

- [China to Djibouti](#)
- [China to Djibouti City](#)
- [China to Doraleh](#)

[All Djibouti freight information →](#)

References & official sources

Duty rates, thresholds and conformity requirements for Djibouti change by ministerial decision, sometimes mid-year. The figures on this page are buyer-planning references, not a customs ruling — confirm the current position for your own HS code with Djibouti Customs and Indirect Taxation Administration or your broker before you ship.

- [Djibouti Ports and Free Zones Authority](#)
- [WTO — Tariff Profiles \(applied MFN duty by country\)](#)
- [World Bank — Logistics Performance Index](#)
- [ICC — Incoterms 2020 rules \(DDP, DAP, FOB definitions\)](#)
- [IPPC — ISPM 15 wood packaging standard](#)
- [WCO — Harmonized System nomenclature](#)

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Shipping by industry

This page covers the route and clearance picture for the destination. Packing, classification and the compliance step that actually holds a shipment depend on what you are sending — these guides cover that by commodity.

- [Exhibition Display Equipment Retail, Display & Commercial Fixtures](#)
- [Educational Toys Toys, Sports, Outdoor & Leisure](#)
- [Stationery Consumer Goods & Gifts](#)
- [E-commerce E-commerce & Retail Channels](#)
- [Aluminum Coils Steel & Metal Materials](#)
- [Pipe Fittings Metal Products & Industrial Components](#)
- [Assembly Line Equipment General Machinery & Industrial Equipment](#)
- [Semiconductor Equipment Specialised Production Machinery](#)
- [Transformers New Energy, Power & Electrical](#)
- [Brake Parts Automotive & Vehicles](#)
- [Ceramic Tiles Building Materials & Construction Products](#)
- [Bathroom Products Building Materials & Construction Products](#)

[All 139 industry guides →](#)

Checking the Djibouti duty position yourself

Duty and tax figures on this page are planning estimates. The binding assessment is made by Djibouti Customs and Indirect Taxation Administration against your declared HS code at the time of entry; where the amount is material, verify the current rate through [ITC Market Access Map](#) before committing to an order.

If you want to sanity-check a duty figure yourself, start from the heading rather than the product name — [the WCO Harmonized System](#) is the underlying nomenclature, and [the WTO Tariff & Trade Data portal](#) holds the applied rates by country pair.

For ocean cargo, restricted commodities move under [the IMO's IMDG Code](#), and the container has to be declared and stowed accordingly. Batteries, flammables and corrosives all have a compliant ocean path; what causes rolled bookings is finding out about them after the container is packed.

On the origin side, export declaration and any commodity inspection requirement fall under [China Customs \(GACC\)](#); we handle that filing as part of the service, but the requirement is theirs, not ours.

Watch: the process behind this route

This guide covers routing and clearance for Ali Sabieh. The video below covers the wider shipping process that sits around it.

Ocean Freight 101 - What Is LCL Ocean Freight — Flexport. Published on YouTube by a third party; we link it because it explains the process well, not because we produced it or endorse the provider.

Get a rate for Ali Sabieh

This lane is quoted per shipment rather than from a published rate card, because the landed cost depends on the commodity, its density, the conformity requirements above and the delivery point. Send the cargo details and we will come back with a full DDP figure.

[Request a quote → See the Djibouti route page →](#)

Freight Rates to Djibouti

☞ Cargo Weight (KG)

☐ Enter the actual gross weight of your shipment in kilograms. If you're unsure, fill in the volume fields below and we'll calculate it for you.

☐ Or enter volume (cm) — volumetric weight ÷ 6000

× ×

Non-integers rounded up. Larger of actual vs volumetric is used.

☐ Number of Boxes

Total chargeable weight = weight per box × number of boxes.

⚠ When you have not filled in the volume information, our prices may be inaccurate.

Ali Sabieh, Djibouti Import Freight: Gateway, Duty & Time

What it takes to land cargo in Ali Sabieh, Djibouti — JIB air / Doraleh sea gateway, Djibouti Customs and Indirect Taxation Administration clearance, +1 day onward. Sea and air both covered.

Get a Quote

Send the cargo details and we respond within one business day with a full DDP figure for Ali Sabieh.

[WhatsApp Us Send Inquiry →](#)

Ali Sabieh by Mode

- [All modes — Ali Sabieh](#)
- [✈ Air Freight](#)
- [🚢 Sea Freight](#)

Other Cities in Djibouti

- [China to Djibouti](#)
- [China to Djibouti City](#)
- [China to Doraleh](#)

Other Africa Destinations

- [Shipping to Algeria](#)
- [Shipping to Burundi](#)
- [Shipping to Cape Verde](#)
- [Shipping to Comoros](#)
- [Shipping to Congo \(Brazzaville\)](#)
- [Shipping to Egypt](#)
- [Shipping to Eswatini](#)
- [Shipping to Ethiopia](#)

Route Page

- [Djibouti DDP route details →](#)
- [All freight destinations →](#)

Customs clearance in Djibouti

Duty and tax position, certification, typical port dwell and what actually holds shipments at this border — plus who files the entry.

[Djibouti clearance requirements →](#)

Priced routes to Djibouti

- [Ningbo to Djibouti Container Shipping — 20GP Rates](#)
- [Ship Shanghai to Djibouti — FCL Container Cost from China](#)