

Sea Freight from China to Djibouti City

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□□ Sea Freight

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



Cargo handling on the China–Djibouti City lane.

Djibouti City is capital, port and free-zone hub, and it is served through JIB air / Doraleh sea. That combination is what actually sets your delivery date on this lane — the inland leg is same-day, so the clearance date is effectively the delivery date.

The clearing authority is Djibouti Customs and Indirect Taxation Administration. Historical dwell on this gateway is around 3–8 days, and it lengthens in Sep–Nov.

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.

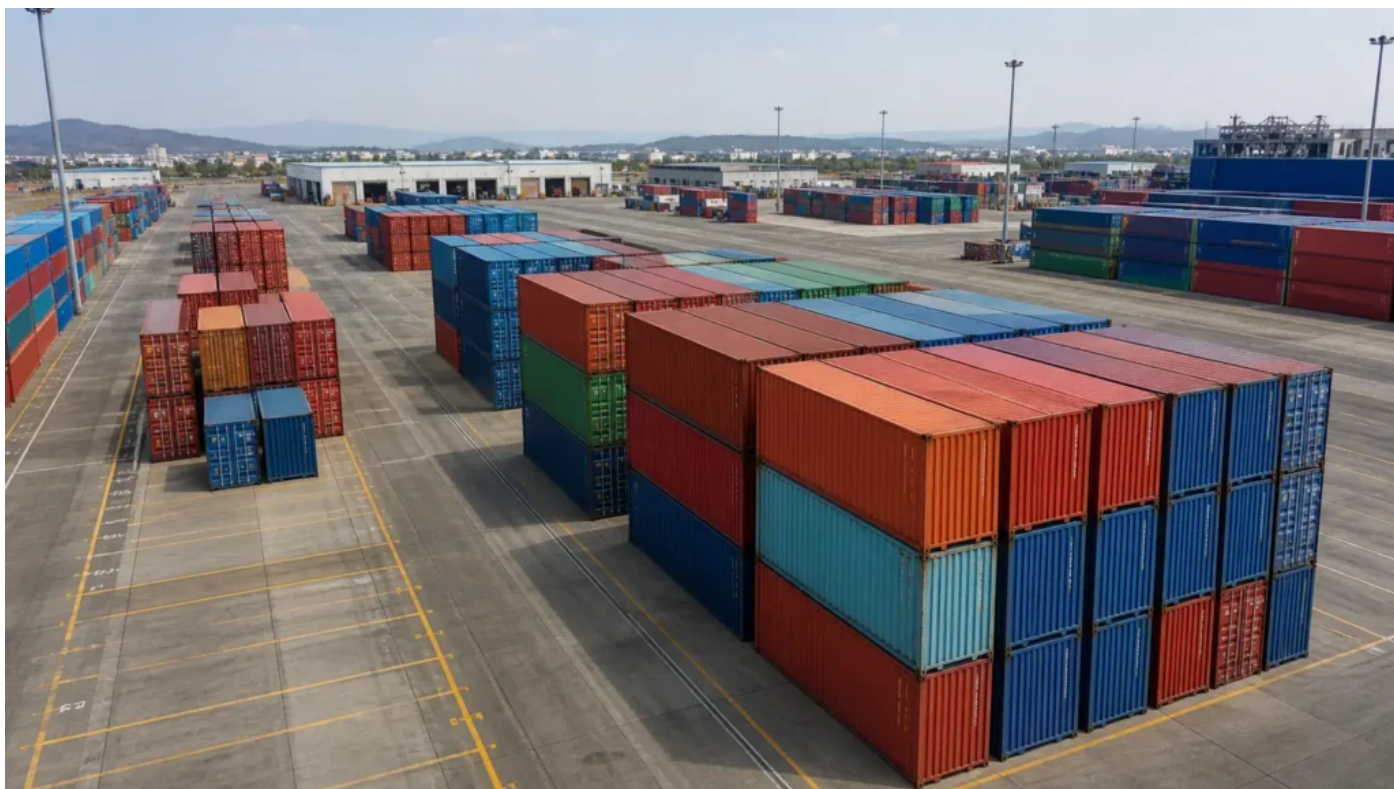
Sea gateways used	Doraleh Multipurpose Port, Port of Djibouti
Sea transit, China to gateway	20-28 calendar days
Gateway serving Djibouti City	JIB air / Doraleh sea
Inland leg to Djibouti City	Same day from the gateway
Typical clearance / dwell	3-8 days
Peak season to plan around	Sep-Nov

What you will pay on arrival in Djibouti

Djibouti Customs and Indirect Taxation Administration assesses duty and tax on cargo arriving for Djibouti City consignees. Current regime: VAT 10%; duty generally low, with free-zone exemption for transit and re-export cargo, with a de-minimis position of 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 Djibouti City.

What to sort out before the cargo leaves China

- 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: same-day delivery beyond gateway clearance to reach Djibouti City.
- Check the de-minimis position (No practical de-minimis for commercial cargo) against your invoice value before you decide how to split the shipment.
- Ask for the HS code in writing from your supplier and verify the Djibouti duty rate against it yourself.
- Declare lithium batteries, magnets, liquids and powders up front — retro-declaring after booking usually means re-planning the whole shipment.
- Book earlier than the transit time suggests during Sep–Nov, when space on this lane tightens.

Frequently asked questions

How long does shipping from China to Djibouti City take?

China to the Djibouti gateway is 20–28 calendar days. On top of that, allow 3–8 days of clearance with Djibouti Customs and Indirect Taxation Administration and a same-day inland leg to Djibouti City.

What duty and tax will I pay importing into Djibouti City?

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 Djibouti City.

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.

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.

Can you ship batteries or sensitive cargo to Djibouti City?

Yes. Battery cargo by sea moves under UN3480/UN3481 with an MSDS, and the dangerous-goods documentation is prepared as part of the booking into Doraleh Multipurpose Port, Port of Djibouti. Surcharges apply and space is more limited than for general cargo.

Is sea freight cheaper than air freight into Djibouti City?

Per kilo, yes — usually by a wide margin. The trade-off is time: 20–28 calendar days by sea versus 4–7 business days by air to the Djibouti gateway, before clearance and the same-day inland leg. The crossover point is normally somewhere between 100 and 300 kg depending on the density of your cargo.

Other delivery cities in Djibouti

- [China to Djibouti](#)
- [China to Doraleh](#)
- [China to Ali Sabieh](#)

[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.

- [Textiles Textiles, Apparel, Footwear & Leather](#)
- [Bags Textiles, Apparel, Footwear & Leather](#)
- [Medical Consumables Medical, Laboratory & Precision Instruments](#)
- [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](#)

[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.

Classification drives everything downstream: the same carton can attract very different duty depending on the heading it lands in, and the structure those headings come from is [the World Customs Organization Harmonized System](#). If your product sits near a boundary between two headings, resolve it before shipping rather than at the border.

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.

Watch: the process behind this route

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

FCL vs LCL Shipping: When to Switch (Break-Even Point Explained) — Max Antonov. 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 Djibouti City

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.

Sea Freight to Djibouti City, Djibouti: Transit Time, Duty & Clearance

Sea Freight from China to Djibouti City, Djibouti. Transit 20-28 calendar days to the gateway, 3-8 days dwell, same day inland.

Duty, documents and packing.

Get a Quote

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

[WhatsApp Us Send Inquiry](#) →

Djibouti City by Mode

- [All modes — Djibouti City](#)
- [→ Air Freight](#)

Other Cities in Djibouti

- [China to Djibouti](#)
- [China to Doraleh](#)
- [China to Ali Sabieh](#)

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](#)