

Sea Freight from China to Doraleh

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☐ Sea Freight

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



Cargo handling on the China-Doraleh lane.

For buyers shipping into Doraleh, the practical question is not the ocean or flight time but what happens after arrival. Doraleh is the container terminal and free trade zone; cargo enters through JIB air / Doraleh sea, and the inland leg is same-day, so the clearance date is effectively the delivery date.

On the destination side, Djibouti Customs and Indirect Taxation Administration handles clearance; budget 3–8 days of dwell before the cargo is released.

How this lane actually runs

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 Doraleh	JIB air / Doraleh sea
Inland leg to Doraleh	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 Doraleh 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 Doraleh.

Before you book: Doraleh checklist

- 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.
- Compare gross weight against volumetric weight ($L \times W \times H \div 6000$) — the higher figure is what gets billed on air and express.
- Use ISPM-15 treated pallets. Untreated wood is the most common reason otherwise-clean cargo gets held.
- Get the conformity paperwork moving early: Conformity requirements for regulated goods; free-zone registration for transit operations.
- Declare lithium batteries, magnets, liquids and powders up front — retro-declaring after booking usually means re-planning the whole shipment.

Frequently asked questions

How long does shipping from China to Doraleh 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 Doraleh.

What duty and tax will I pay importing into Doraleh?

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 Doraleh.

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.

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 certification do I need for Djibouti?

For regulated goods, plan for: Conformity requirements for regulated goods; free-zone registration for transit operations. Missing conformity paperwork is the single most common cause of a hold, and in most cases it cannot be remedied once the cargo has arrived.

Which port or airport does cargo for Doraleh clear through?

Cargo for Doraleh is routed via JIB air / Doraleh sea. Sea gateways for Djibouti are Doraleh Multipurpose Port, Port of Djibouti; air gateways are JIB (Djibouti Ambouli). We pick whichever gives the shortest total door time for your address.

Other delivery cities in Djibouti

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

- [Cutting Tools Metal Products & Industrial Components](#)
- [Compressors General Machinery & Industrial Equipment](#)
- [Automated Storage Equipment Construction, Mining & Material Handling](#)
- [Electrical Cabinets New Energy, Power & Electrical](#)
- [Automotive Glass Automotive & Vehicles](#)
- [Doors & Windows Building Materials & Construction Products](#)
- [Paper Packaging Wood, Bamboo & Paper Products](#)
- [Packaging Materials Plastics, Rubber & Packaging](#)
- [Connectors Electronic Components & Semiconductors](#)
- [Consumer Electronics Consumer Electronics & Smart Devices](#)
- [Air Conditioning Equipment Home Appliances, HVAC & Commercial](#)
- [Kitchenware Furniture & Home 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.

Most landed-cost surprises trace back to classification rather than freight. [the WCO Harmonized System](#) defines the heading structure every customs administration builds on, and [ITC Market Access Map](#) will show you the duty a given heading attracts in this destination.

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 Doraleh. The video below covers the wider shipping process that sits around it.

Sea Freight from China: How to import from China to your country via Ocean Shipping — SINO Shipping. 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 Doraleh

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.

Doraleh Sea Freight, Djibouti: Cost, Transit & Customs

Sea Freight to Doraleh: 20–28 calendar days in transit, cleared by Djibouti Customs and Indirect Taxation Administration, same day to the door. What the rate covers and what it does not.

Get a Quote

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

[WhatsApp Us Send Inquiry](#) →

Doraleh by Mode

- [All modes — Doraleh](#)
- [✈ Air Freight](#)

Other Cities in Djibouti

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