

Air Freight from China to Sandakan

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→ Air Freight

China → Sandakan · via SDK air / Sandakan sea · clearance by Royal Malaysian Customs Department (JKDM)



Cargo handling on the China-Sandakan lane.

Freight from China into Sandakan clears through SDK air / Sandakan sea. Sandakan is east Sabah commercial port, and allow +1 day for the inland leg on top of clearance.

The clearing authority is Royal Malaysian Customs Department (JKDM). Historical dwell on this gateway is around 2-4 days, and it lengthens in Sep-Nov.

Routing and transit on this lane

Peninsular Malaysia is served through Port Klang and Tanjung Pelepas with very frequent South China sailings. East Malaysia (Sarawak and Sabah) is a separate customs territory in practice — cargo transships at Klang or Singapore and adds 5–8 days plus a second clearance step, so quote Kuching and Kota Kinabalu separately.

Air gateways used	KUL (Kuala Lumpur), PEN (Penang), BKI (Kota Kinabalu)
Air transit, China to gateway	3–5 business days
Gateway serving Sandakan	SDK air / Sandakan sea
Inland leg to Sandakan	+1 day from the gateway
Typical clearance / dwell	2–4 days
Peak season to plan around	Sep–Nov

What you will pay on arrival in Malaysia

Imports into Malaysia are cleared by Royal Malaysian Customs Department (JKDM). The headline position is: Sales tax 5–10% plus 10% low-value-goods tax on online orders under MYR 500; duty 0–30%, largely 0% under ACFTA. The de-minimis threshold is MYR 500 (low-value goods sold online are taxed regardless).

Conformity is the part most first-time importers underestimate: SIRIM certification and MCMC label for electrical and radio products; halal certification for food ingredients. Getting this wrong is expensive because it usually cannot be fixed after the cargo has landed.

Restrictions and known friction points for Malaysia: Electrical goods without a SIRIM label are routinely detained. Alcohol, e-cigarettes and vape liquid are restricted. Direct-to-consumer parcels are subject to the low-value goods tax collected at the point of sale.



Handling on the SDK air / Sandakan sea routing serving Sandakan.

Pre-shipment checklist for Sandakan

- Check the de-minimis position (MYR 500 (low-value goods sold online are taxed regardless)) against your invoice value before you decide how to split the shipment.
- Compare gross weight against volumetric weight ($L \times W \times H \div 6000$) — the higher figure is what gets billed on air and express.
- Ask for the HS code in writing from your supplier and verify the Malaysia 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.
- Plan around the China-side windows too: Chinese New Year and Golden Week both compress capacity on the Malaysia lane.
- Photograph carton markings and seal numbers before departure — it makes any claim far easier to settle.

Frequently asked questions

How long does shipping from China to Sandakan take?

China to the Malaysia gateway is 3–5 business days. On top of that, allow 2–4 days of clearance with Royal Malaysian Customs Department (JKDM) and a +1 day inland leg to Sandakan.

What duty and tax will I pay importing into Sandakan?

Royal Malaysian Customs Department (JKDM) applies: Sales tax 5–10% plus 10% low-value-goods tax on online orders under MYR 500; duty 0–30%, largely 0% under ACFTA. The de-minimis position is MYR 500 (low-value goods sold online are taxed regardless). Under a DDP arrangement these are pre-paid, so nothing is collected on arrival in Sandakan.

What documents does Royal Malaysian Customs Department (JKDM) 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 (SIRIM certification and MCMC label for electrical and radio products; halal certification for food ingredients). We prepare and file these as part of the service.

When is the busiest time on the China–Malaysia 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.

How is the chargeable weight calculated for Sandakan?

We compare actual gross weight against volumetric weight — length × width × height in centimeters divided by 6000 for air — and bill the greater of the two, rounded up to the next kilogram. Light, bulky cargo is almost always billed on volume.

Is sea freight cheaper than air freight into Sandakan?

Per kilo, yes — usually by a wide margin. The trade-off is time: 5–9 calendar days by sea versus 3–5 business days by air to the Malaysia gateway, before clearance and the +1 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 Malaysia

- [China to Pasir Gudang](#)
- [China to Bintulu](#)
- [China to Samalaju](#)
- [China to Lahad Datu](#)
- [China to Sibul](#)
- [China to Tawau](#)
- [China to Kuala Lumpur](#)
- [China to Shah Alam](#)
- [China to Klang](#)
- [China to Johor Bahru](#)
- [China to Penang](#)
- [China to Ipoh](#)

[All Malaysia freight information →](#)

References & official sources

Duty rates, thresholds and conformity requirements for Malaysia 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 Royal Malaysian Customs Department (JKDM) or your broker before you ship.

- [Royal Malaysian Customs Department](#)

- [SIRIM QAS International](#)
- [Port Klang Authority](#)
- [WTO — Tariff Profiles](#) (applied MFN duty by country)
- [IATA — Lithium battery shipping guidance](#) (PI 965–970)
- [World Bank — Logistics Performance Index](#)
- [ICC — Incoterms 2020 rules](#) (DDP, DAP, FOB definitions)

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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.

- [Industrial Boilers General Machinery & Industrial Equipment](#)
- [Solar Panel New Energy, Power & Electrical](#)
- [Lithium Battery New Energy, Power & Electrical](#)
- [Bicycle Parts Automotive & Vehicles](#)
- [Wall Panels Building Materials & Construction Products](#)
- [Corrugated Packaging Wood, Bamboo & Paper Products](#)
- [Glass Packaging Plastics, Rubber & Packaging](#)
- [Electronic Switches Electronic Components & Semiconductors](#)
- [IoT Devices Consumer Electronics & Smart Devices](#)
- [Furniture Furniture & Home Products](#)
- [Home Storage Products Furniture & Home Products](#)
- [Fashion Textiles, Apparel, Footwear & Leather](#)

[All 139 industry guides →](#)

Checking the Malaysia duty position yourself

Every duty and tax figure quoted on this page is our working estimate for planning, not a ruling. The binding rate for your consignment is whatever [Royal Malaysian Customs Department](#) applies against your declared HS code on the day of entry, and their published guidance is the source to check before you commit stock.

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.

On the air side, anything with a cell or a battery in it, plus liquids, powders, magnets and aerosols, is governed by [the IATA Dangerous Goods Regulations](#). Those articles are not refused outright, but they need to be declared at booking so the shipment is

built correctly — declaring them late is the single most common cause of an air consignment being offloaded.

If this is your first shipment into Malaysia, the [Malaysia Country Commercial Guide](#) covers the practical import environment in more depth than a rate page reasonably can, and it is written by a party with no stake in your booking.

Watch: the process behind this route

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

What Is Chargeable Weight in Air Freight? — Smart Logistics Network. 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 Sandakan

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 Malaysia route page](#) →

Freight Rates to Malaysia

☞ 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.

Sandakan Air Freight, Malaysia: Cost, Transit & Customs

Air Freight to Sandakan: 3-5 business days in transit, cleared by Royal Malaysian Customs Department (JKDM), +1 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 Sandakan.

[WhatsApp Us Send Inquiry](#) →

Sandakan by Mode

- [All modes — Sandakan](#)

- [Sea Freight](#)

Other Cities in Malaysia

- [China to Pasir Gudang](#)
- [China to Bintulu](#)
- [China to Samalaju](#)
- [China to Lahad Datu](#)
- [China to Sibu](#)
- [China to Tawau](#)
- [China to Kuala Lumpur](#)
- [China to Shah Alam](#)

Other Asia Pacific Destinations

- [Shipping to Brunei](#)
- [Shipping to Cambodia](#)
- [Shipping to Hong Kong](#)
- [Shipping to Indonesia](#)
- [Shipping to Japan](#)
- [Shipping to Laos](#)
- [Shipping to Mongolia](#)
- [Shipping to Myanmar](#)

Route Page

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

Customs clearance in Malaysia

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

[Malaysia clearance requirements →](#)

Priced routes to Malaysia

- [Shekou-Lahad Datu Sea Freight: Container Rates and Schedule](#)
- [Shekou-Pasir Gudang Sea Freight: Container Rates and Schedule](#)

- [Shekou-Samalaju Sea Freight: Container Rates and Schedule](#)
- [Shekou-Sandakan Sea Freight: Container Rates and Schedule](#)
- [Ship Nansha to Lahad Datu — FCL Container Cost from China](#)
- [Ship Nansha to Tawau — FCL Container Cost from China](#)