

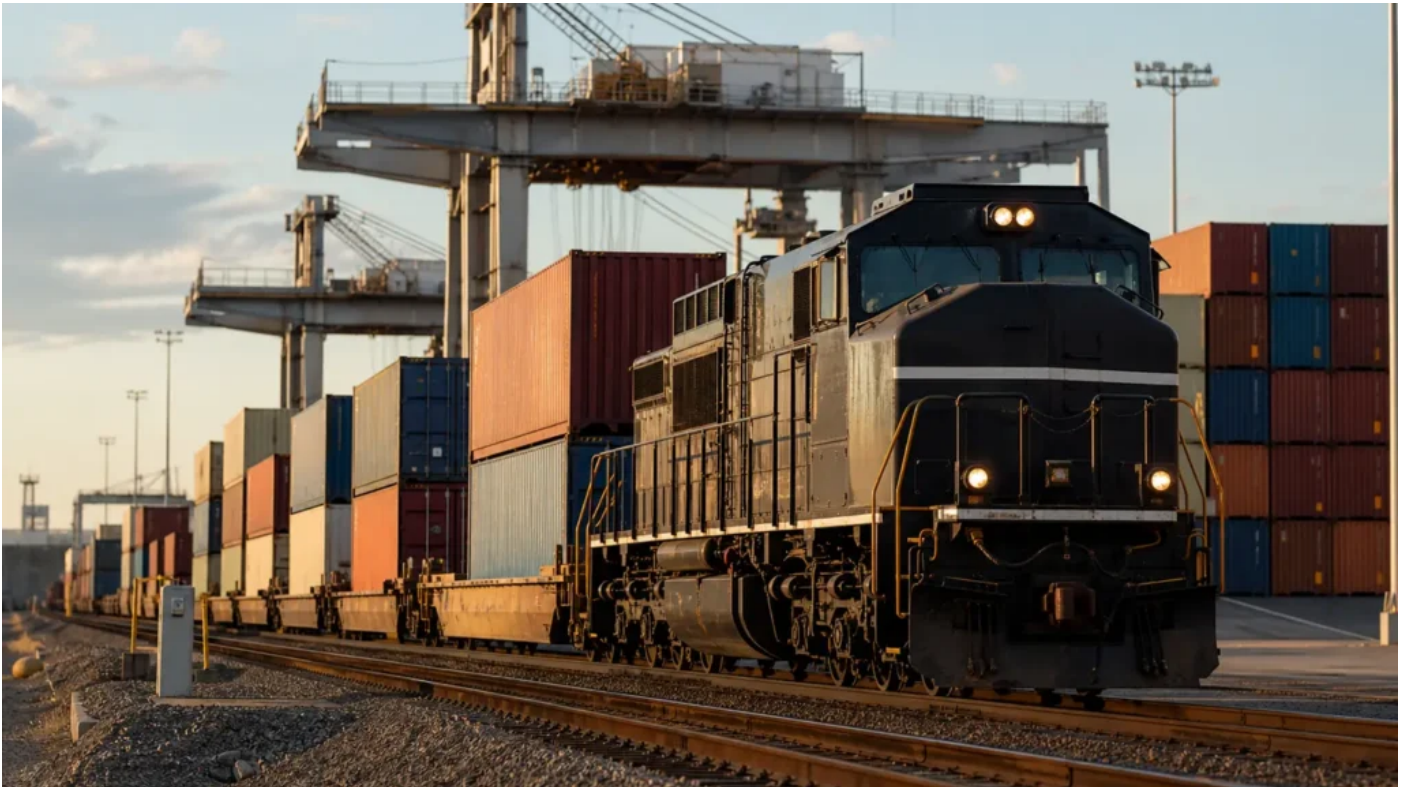
Sea Freight from China to Balboa

China Ocean Freight · chinaoceanfreight.com/china-freight-to-panama/balboa/sea-freight

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China → Balboa · via PTY air / Balboa sea · clearance by Autoridad Nacional de Aduanas de Panamá



Cargo handling on the China–Balboa lane.

We move sea freight cargo from South China into Balboa through PTY air / Balboa sea. Balboa is the Pacific end of the canal and the region's transshipment hub, which shapes the kind of cargo that moves on this lane and how it should be packed.

On the destination side, Autoridad Nacional de Aduanas de Panamá handles clearance; budget 2–5 days of dwell before the cargo is released.

Duty, tax and clearance into Balboa

Imports into Panama are cleared by Autoridad Nacional de Aduanas de Panamá. The headline position is: ITBMS 7%; duty 0–15%, with 0% inside the Colón Free Zone. The de-minimis threshold is USD 100 for courier consignments.

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

Restrictions and known friction points for Panama: Free Zone re-export and Panamanian domestic import are different regimes — clarify which applies. Canal transit conditions can affect Atlantic-side schedules during low-water periods.

Routing and transit on this lane

The Colón Free Zone is the largest free port in the Americas and the natural staging point for Chinese goods distributed across Central America, the Caribbean and northern South America. Cargo can sit in the zone duty-free and be re-exported in smaller lots, which is a far more efficient structure than shipping direct to a dozen small markets.

Sea gateways used	Balboa (Pacific), Colón / Manzanillo (Atlantic)
Sea transit, China to gateway	22-30 calendar days
Gateway serving Balboa	PTY air / Balboa sea
Inland leg to Balboa	Same day from the gateway
Typical clearance / dwell	2-5 days
Peak season to plan around	Sep-Nov



Handling on the PTY air / Balboa sea routing serving Balboa.

Before you book: Balboa checklist

- Put the Balboa delivery address, contact name and phone number on the invoice, not just the packing list.
- Get the conformity paperwork moving early: Conformity requirements for regulated goods; health registration for food and cosmetics.
- Use ISPM-15 treated pallets. Untreated wood is the most common reason otherwise-clean cargo gets held.
- Compare gross weight against volumetric weight ($L \times W \times H \div 6000$) — the higher figure is what gets billed on air and express.
- Book earlier than the transit time suggests during Sep–Nov, when space on this lane tightens.
- Ask for the HS code in writing from your supplier and verify the Panama duty rate against it yourself.

Frequently asked questions

How long does shipping from China to Balboa take?

China to the Panama gateway is 22–30 calendar days. On top of that, allow 2–5 days of clearance with Autoridad Nacional de Aduanas de Panamá and a same-day inland leg to Balboa.

What duty and tax will I pay importing into Balboa?

Autoridad Nacional de Aduanas de Panamá applies: ITBMS 7%; duty 0–15%, with 0% inside the Colón Free Zone. The de-minimis position is USD 100 for courier consignments. Under a DDP arrangement these are pre-paid, so nothing is collected on arrival in Balboa.

Which port or airport does cargo for Balboa clear through?

Cargo for Balboa is routed via PTY air / Balboa sea. Sea gateways for Panama are Balboa (Pacific), Colón / Manzanillo (Atlantic); air gateways are PTY (Panama City Tocumen). We pick whichever gives the shortest total door time for your address.

How is the chargeable weight calculated for Balboa?

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.

Can you ship batteries or sensitive cargo to Balboa?

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 Balboa (Pacific), Colón / Manzanillo (Atlantic). Surcharges apply and space is more limited than for general cargo.

Is sea freight cheaper than air freight into Balboa?

Per kilo, yes — usually by a wide margin. The trade-off is time: 22–30 calendar days by sea versus 4–6 business days by air to the Panama 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 Panama

- [China to Panama City](#)
- [China to Colon](#)
- [China to David](#)
- [China to Santiago](#)
- [China to Tocumen](#)

[All Panama freight information →](#)

References & official sources

Duty rates, thresholds and conformity requirements for Panama 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 Autoridad Nacional de Aduanas de Panamá or your broker before you ship.

- [Autoridad Nacional de Aduanas](#)
- [WTO — Tariff Profiles \(applied MFN duty by country\)](#)
- [IPPC — ISPM 15 wood packaging standard](#)
- [WCO — Harmonized System nomenclature](#)
- [IMO — IMDG Code for dangerous goods by sea](#)

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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.

- [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](#)
- [Home Textiles Textiles, Apparel, Footwear & Leather](#)
- [Medical Device Medical, Laboratory & Precision Instruments](#)
- [Personal Protective Equipment Fire, Safety & Traffic Products](#)
- [Beauty Equipment Beauty, Personal Care & Wellness](#)

- [Inflatable Products Toys, Sports, Outdoor & Leisure](#)
- [Artificial Flowers Consumer Goods & Gifts](#)

[All 139 industry guides →](#)

Checking the Panama duty position yourself

Duty and tax figures on this page are planning estimates. The binding assessment is made by Autoridad Nacional de Aduanas de Panamá 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.

For a wider view of how importing into Panama actually works — documentation norms, inspection behavior, the paperwork that tends to hold shipments — the [U.S. ITA guide to Panama customs regulations](#) is a useful independent read alongside our own lane notes.

Watch: the process behind this route

This guide covers routing and clearance for Balboa. 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 Balboa

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 Panama route page →](#)

Freight Rates to Panama

📦 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.

China to Balboa Sea Freight: Rates, Transit and Clearance

Moving cargo to Balboa by sea freight — 22-30 calendar days transit, 2-5 days port dwell, duty assessed by Autoridad Nacional de Aduanas de Panamá.

Get a Quote

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

[WhatsApp Us Send Inquiry →](#)

Balboa by Mode

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

Other Cities in Panama

- [China to Panama City](#)
- [China to Colon](#)
- [China to David](#)
- [China to Santiago](#)
- [China to Tocumen](#)

Other Americas Destinations

- [Shipping to Argentina](#)
- [Shipping to Bolivia](#)
- [Shipping to Brazil](#)
- [Shipping to Chile](#)
- [Shipping to Colombia](#)
- [Shipping to Costa Rica](#)
- [Shipping to Dominican Republic](#)
- [Shipping to Ecuador](#)

Route Page

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

Customs clearance in Panama

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

[Panama clearance requirements →](#)

Priced routes to Panama

- [Ningbo to Balboa Container Shipping — 40NOR Rates](#)
- [Ningbo-Colon Sea Freight: Container Rates and Schedule](#)
- [Shanghai to Balboa Container Shipping — 40NOR Rates](#)
- [Shanghai-Colon Sea Freight: Container Rates and Schedule](#)
- [Yantian to Balboa FCL Ocean Freight Rates | 20GP & 40HQ](#)
- [Yantian to Colon FCL Ocean Freight Rates | 20GP & 40HQ](#)