

Sea Freight from China to Istanbul

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□□ Sea Freight

China → Istanbul · via IST air / Ambarli sea · clearance by Ministry of Trade — Turkish Customs



Cargo handling on the China-Istanbul lane.

We move sea freight cargo from South China into Istanbul through IST air / Ambarli sea. Istanbul is the country's commercial capital and largest market, which shapes the kind of cargo that moves on this lane and how it should be packed.

On the destination side, Ministry of Trade — Turkish Customs handles clearance; budget 3–8 days of dwell before the cargo is released.

How this lane actually runs

Turkey applies the EU common external tariff through its customs union with the EU, and then layers additional duties on a long list of Chinese-origin goods — textiles, footwear, small electronics and some machinery. Those extras, not the base tariff, are what break landed-cost models. Turkey is also served by China-Europe rail via the Middle Corridor into Kars, which sits between air and sea on both cost and transit.

Sea gateways used	Ambarlı (Istanbul), Mersin, Izmir (Aliağa)
Sea transit, China to gateway	22-30 calendar days
Gateway serving Istanbul	IST air / Ambarli sea
Inland leg to Istanbul	Same day from the gateway
Typical clearance / dwell	3-8 days
Peak season to plan around	Sep-Nov

Import duty and tax position for Istanbul

Imports into Turkey are cleared by Ministry of Trade — Turkish Customs. The headline position is: VAT 20%; the EU-Turkey customs union tariff applies, plus additional and anti-dumping duties on many Chinese-origin textiles, footwear and electronics. The de-minimis threshold is EUR 30 on personal parcels, with a simplified flat rate applied to low-value consignments.

Conformity is the part most first-time importers underestimate: CE marking under EU-aligned rules; TSE conformity and TAREKS import inspection for regulated goods. Getting this wrong is expensive because it usually cannot be fixed after the cargo has landed.

Restrictions and known friction points for Turkey: Additional and anti-dumping duties on Chinese-origin goods are common and can exceed the base tariff. TAREKS registration is required for controlled products. Verify the current additional duty rate for your HS code before quoting.



Handling on the IST air / Ambarli sea routing serving Istanbul.

Before you book: Istanbul checklist

- 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.
- Budget for the inland leg: same-day delivery beyond gateway clearance to reach Istanbul.
- Get the conformity paperwork moving early: CE marking under EU-aligned rules; TSE conformity and TAREKS import inspection for regulated goods.
- Declare lithium batteries, magnets, liquids and powders up front — retro-declaring after booking usually means re-planning the whole shipment.
- Confirm the consignee in Istanbul can act as importer of record — Ministry of Trade — Turkish Customs will not release cargo to an unregistered party.

Frequently asked questions

How long does shipping from China to Istanbul take?

China to the Turkey gateway is 22–30 calendar days. On top of that, allow 3–8 days of clearance with Ministry of Trade — Turkish Customs and a same-day inland leg to Istanbul.

What duty and tax will I pay importing into Istanbul?

Ministry of Trade — Turkish Customs applies: VAT 20%; the EU-Turkey customs union tariff applies, plus additional and anti-dumping duties on many Chinese-origin textiles, footwear and electronics. The de-minimis position is EUR 30 on personal parcels,

with a simplified flat rate applied to low-value consignments. Under a DDP arrangement these are pre-paid, so nothing is collected on arrival in Istanbul.

What documents does Ministry of Trade — Turkish Customs 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 (CE marking under EU-aligned rules; TSE conformity and TAREKS import inspection for regulated goods). We prepare and file these as part of the service.

How is the chargeable weight calculated for Istanbul?

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.

When is the busiest time on the China-Turkey 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.

Is sea freight cheaper than air freight into Istanbul?

Per kilo, yes — usually by a wide margin. The trade-off is time: 22–30 calendar days by sea versus 3–5 business days by air to the Turkey 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 Turkey

- [China to Ankara](#)
- [China to Izmir](#)
- [China to Bursa](#)
- [China to Kocaeli](#)
- [China to Gaziantep](#)
- [China to Mersin](#)
- [China to Antalya](#)
- [China to Konya](#)
- [China to Adana](#)

[All Turkey freight information →](#)

References & official sources

Duty rates, thresholds and conformity requirements for Turkey 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 Ministry of Trade — Turkish Customs or your broker before you ship.

- [Ministry of Trade — Customs](#)

- [Turkish Standards Institution \(TSE\)](#)
- [WTO — Tariff Profiles](#) (applied MFN duty by country)
- [ICC — Incoterms 2020 rules](#) (DDP, DAP, FOB definitions)
- [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.

- [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](#)
- [Laboratory Equipment Medical, Laboratory & Precision Instruments](#)
- [Locks & Safes Fire, Safety & Traffic Products](#)
- [Salon Furniture Beauty, Personal Care & Wellness](#)
- [Pet Products Consumer Goods & Gifts](#)

[All 139 industry guides →](#)

Checking the Turkey duty position yourself

Duty and tax figures on this page are planning estimates. The binding assessment is made by Ministry of Trade — Turkish Customs 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.

If this is your first shipment into Turkey, the [Turkey 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 Istanbul. 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 Istanbul

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 Turkey route page](#) →

Freight Rates to Turkey

☞ 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 Istanbul, Turkey: Transit Time, Duty & Clearance

Sea Freight from China to Istanbul, Turkey. Transit 22–30 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 Istanbul.

[WhatsApp Us Send Inquiry](#) →

Istanbul by Mode

- [All modes — Istanbul](#)
- [✈ Air Freight](#)
- [🚂 Rail Freight](#)

Other Cities in Turkey

- [China to Ankara](#)
- [China to Izmir](#)
- [China to Bursa](#)
- [China to Kocaeli](#)
- [China to Gaziantep](#)
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Other Middle East Destinations

- [Shipping to Bahrain](#)
- [Shipping to Iraq](#)
- [Shipping to Israel](#)
- [Shipping to Jordan](#)
- [Shipping to Kuwait](#)
- [Shipping to Lebanon](#)
- [Shipping to Oman](#)
- [Shipping to Qatar](#)

Route Page

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

Customs clearance in Turkey

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

[Turkey clearance requirements →](#)

Priced routes to Turkey

- [Ningbo-Mersin Sea Freight: Container Rates and Schedule](#)
- [Ship Ningbo to Istanbul — FCL Container Cost from China](#)
- [Ship Shanghai to Istanbul — FCL Container Cost from China](#)
- [Ship Shanghai to Mersin — FCL Container Cost from China](#)