



Benin

CAPITAL

Porto-Novo

OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

French

CURRENCYthe West African CFA franc
(XOF)**Last verified:** June 2026 | **Guide version:** 2.0**Disclaimer**

This Country Guide reflects information believed to be correct at the time of publication. Regulations, procedures and charges are subject to change. IAM does not accept liability for errors, omissions, inaccuracies or misinterpretations in this guide. The information provided should not be considered as having been provided or sanctioned by the customs authorities of the country or territory concerned.

Overview

Duty-Free Eligibility

Duty-free conditions: Household goods are allowed into Benin duty-free if they have been in the owner's possession for at least 6 months.

Import taxes (not waived even for duty-free shipments):

- Diplomatic shipments: 0.15% import tax based on declared value
- Non-diplomatic shipments: 3.15% import tax based on declared value

Diplomatic exemption: A diplomatic exemption certificate must be obtained before the goods arrive to avoid storage charges.

VAT: 18% VAT is levied on most imported goods at the point of entry.

Documents

Required Documents

- **Packing list**
- **Copy of passport**
- **Original bill of lading (OBL) — no express release accepted — or air waybill (AWB); 2 originals required**
- **Bordereau de Suivi de Cargaisons (BSC) / Cargo Tracking Note (CTN)**
- **Original valued inventory in French, dated and signed by the owner of the goods**
- **Invoice for all electrical items less than 6 months old**
- **Resident permit / work permit / letter of employment**
- **Certificate for change of residence**
- **Non-sale certificate**
- **Diplomatic exemption certificate (diplomats only)**

Household Goods — Specific Information

OBL requirements: The original bill of lading must clearly indicate the weight in kilograms, the number of items, and state "personal belongings." Express release is not accepted. The weight of a vehicle (if applicable) must be shown separately from the weight of personal effects.

BSC / Cargo Tracking Note: The BSC must be attached to the OBL. If the BSC is not available, a penalty of EUR 200 must be paid in Benin.

Non-sale certificate: Must state that the owner will not sell personal effects in Benin.

Certificate for change of residence: Must be obtained in the country of origin by the owner from either the city hall or the embassy of their passport country (if the owner is not a citizen of the country from which they are moving).

Letter of employment: Must explain that the owner is starting a new contract in Benin.

Document lead time (critical): Documents must be provided to the agent 3 weeks prior to the arrival of the shipment to obtain duty-free clearance.

All shipments inspected: All import shipments are subject to customs inspection.

Document language: The valued inventory must be in French.

SEGUB one-stop-shop: Benin uses the SEGUB system for customs clearance. SEGUB issues a receipt (Bordereau de Frais Unique / BFU) to the clearing agent once documents are submitted. The BFU enables cargo removal from the port within 24 hours.

ECOWAS / CET: Benin is a member of ECOWAS. The Common External Tariff (CET) applies to imported goods from outside the ECOWAS region. Tariff rates range from 0% to 35% depending on the nature and origin of goods.

Prohibited / Restricted Items

Prohibited Items

- **Illegal drugs and narcotics** — Strictly prohibited
- **Firearms and ammunition** without authorisation — Prohibited
- **Hazardous materials** — Prohibited
- **Animals and pets** without proper documentation — Prohibited
- **Asbestos** — Prohibited
- **Precious metals and stones** — Prohibited in shipments
- **Ivory** — Prohibited `CITES`
- **Furs** — Prohibited
- **Gambling devices** — Prohibited
- **Counterfeit money and goods** — Prohibited
- **Pornographic materials** — Prohibited

Restricted / Dutiable Items

Duty-Free Traveller Allowances

- 200 cigarettes, or 25 cigars, or 100 cigarillos, or 250g tobacco
- 1 bottle of wine and 1 bottle of spirits
- 500ml eau de toilette
- 250ml perfume

Restricted Items

- **Alcohol within household shipments** — Only "Fond de Cave" is acceptable and duty-free, maximum 12 bottles

- **Firearms and ammunition** `PERMIT REQUIRED` — Authorisation from the territorial administration required
- **Knives and deadly weapons** `PERMIT REQUIRED` — Authorisation required
- **Plant and plant products** `PERMIT REQUIRED` — Permission from the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Fisheries required
- **Meat and meat products** `PERMIT REQUIRED` — Permission from the Ministry of Agriculture required
- **Pets and animals** `PERMIT REQUIRED` — Veterinary health certificate and rabies certificate required; permission from the Ministry of Agriculture
- **Electrical items less than 6 months old** — Invoice required; may be subject to duties

Vehicles

Vehicle Documents

- **Original registration card**
- **Original bill of lading / freight invoice**
- **Non-sale certificate**
- **Certificate of origin**

Specific Information

Duties on vehicles: Taxes depend on vehicle age, power, and other factors. Approximately 50% of CIF value if no exemption applies. Diplomatic rate: 0.85%.

Vehicle weight: Must be shown separately from personal effects weight on the bill of lading.

Driving: Driving is on the RIGHT-hand side of the road.

Pets

Requirements

- **Veterinary health certificate from the country of origin**
- **Rabies vaccination certificate from the country of origin**

Specific Information

Documents must be received by the agent prior to import.

Health certificate: Must be issued by a licensed veterinarian in the country of origin. Should confirm the animal is free from rabies and other infectious diseases.

Rabies vaccination: Must be current and administered before departure.

Import permit: All cats and dogs require permission from the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Fisheries (per VisaHQ). Contact the destination agent for the current permit process.

Quarantine: Not specified in available sources. Contact the destination agent.

Official authority: Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Fisheries.

Consignment Instructions

Recommended: Contact the destination agent to ensure all requirements have been met prior to import, especially for differences regarding air / sea shipments.

Document lead time: 3 weeks before shipment arrival. This is critical for obtaining duty-free clearance.

BSC / CTN: Must be obtained before shipping and attached to the OBL. EUR 200 penalty if missing.

Express release: Not accepted for Benin. Original bills of lading required (2 originals).

Inspection: All shipments are subject to customs inspection.

SEGUB clearance: Once documents are submitted via SEGUB and the BFU is issued, cargo can be removed from the port within 24 hours.

Routing / port of entry: Port of Cotonou (primary seaport; Cotonou is the economic capital and largest city). Cadjehoun Airport (Cotonou) for air freight. Benin also serves as a transit country for landlocked neighbours (Niger, Burkina Faso).

Currency: West African CFA franc (XOF). Pegged to the euro at XOF 655.957 = EUR 1. Benin is a member of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU/UEMOA) and uses the common CFA franc.

Cultural & Other Information

- **OpenFactBook (replaces CIA World Factbook):** <https://www.openfactbook.org/countries/benin/>
- **Wikipedia:** <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benin>
- **Benin Customs:** <https://douanes.gouv.bj/>
- **SEGUB:** <https://www.segub.bj/>
- **trade.gov — Benin Customs Regulations:** <https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/benin-customs-regulations>
- **trade.gov — Benin Import Tariffs:** <https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/benin-import-tariffs>

Key country facts: Benin is located in West Africa, bordered by Togo, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Nigeria, with a coastline on the Gulf of Guinea. The capital is Porto-Novo; the seat of government and economic capital is Cotonou. The official language is French; all customs documents must be in French. The currency is the West African CFA franc (XOF). Benin is a member of ECOWAS and WAEMU/UEMOA. The ECOWAS Common External Tariff (0-35%) applies. VAT is 18%. Driving is on the right-hand side.

Important notes for movers: The 3-week document lead time is the most critical practical requirement. Documents must reach the agent well before the shipment arrives; otherwise, duty-free clearance cannot be obtained and storage charges accumulate. The BSC/Cargo Tracking Note must be obtained before shipping and attached to the OBL — the EUR 200 penalty for a missing BSC is avoidable. Express release bills of lading are not accepted; only original OBLs (2 originals). Even duty-free shipments are subject to the 3.15% import tax (0.15% for diplomats). The valued inventory must be in French. Vehicle duties are approximately 50% of CIF value without an exemption.

Regulatory Updates

- **2015:** ECOWAS Common External Tariff (CET) implementation began, standardising tariff rates across member states (0-35%).
- **2011:** SEGUB one-stop-shop for customs clearance became operational, significantly improving clearance efficiency.
- **Ongoing:** BSC/CTN requirement continues as mandatory documentation for all sea freight.

Quick Links & Resources

- [Find Movers in Benin](#)

<https://iamovers.mobilityex.com/index.html#/search?loc=Benin&lat=6.3703&lng=2.3912&range=50&assocs=800&fvw=c&ctry=Benin>

- [Foreign Embassies in Benin](#)

<https://www.embassypages.com/benin>

- [Benin's Embassies Abroad](#)

<https://www.gouv.bj/>

- [OpenFactBook \(replaces CIA World Factbook\)](#)

<https://www.openfactbook.org/countries/benin/>

- [Wikipedia](#)

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benin>

- [Benin Customs \(Direction Generale des Douanes\)](#)

<https://douanes.gouv.bj/>

- [SEGUB \(One-Stop-Shop for Customs Clearance\)](#)

<https://www.segub.bj/>

- [Ministry of Economy and Finance](#)

<https://finances.bj/>

- [trade.gov — Benin Customs Regulations](#)

<https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/benin-customs-regulations>

- [trade.gov — Benin Import Tariffs](#)

<https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/benin-import-tariffs>