

BEFORE YOU TRAVEL

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT
ANIMALS, FOODS AND SOUVENIRS



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Federal Department of Home Affairs FDHA
Federal Food Safety and
Veterinary Office FSVO

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ARE YOU PLANNING A TRIP ABROAD?

Many travellers are not aware of the risks associated with bringing live animals, certain foods and souvenirs of animal origin into Switzerland. Certain requirements have to be complied with in order to prevent the introduction of animal diseases, to guarantee animal welfare and to protect threatened species of plants and animals. These requirements differ widely depending on where the item is being imported from – i.e. from a country inside or outside the EU (a third country). It is therefore important to find out the conditions that apply to your return trip before you leave, for example, if you plan to travel with a pet.

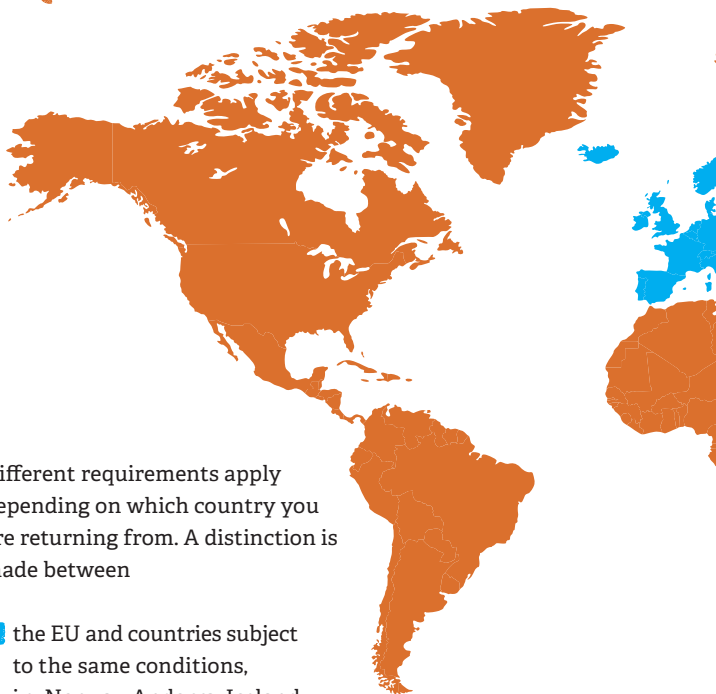
This brochure explains the requirements to bear in mind for your return to Switzerland if you wish to bring back foods or souvenirs of animal origin from another country or if you are travelling with a pet.

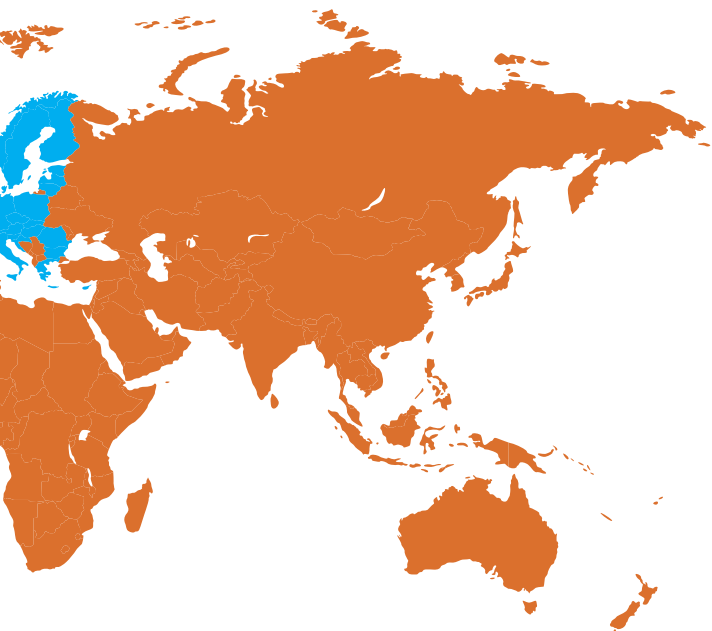


COUNTRY-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

Different requirements apply depending on which country you are returning from. A distinction is made between

- the EU and countries subject to the same conditions, i.e. Norway, Andorra, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Monaco, San Marino and The Vatican;
- third countries.





BREXIT

It is currently unclear what status the United Kingdom will have after it leaves the European Union. For further information, visit www.fsvo.admin.ch > Import and Export > Import



FOODS AND RISK OF ANIMAL DISEASES

Foods of animal origin such as foods containing meat or foods containing dairy products, and also honey, may carry diseases that can be transmitted to animals or even, in some cases, to humans. Animal diseases can often have significant economic consequences. This is why special precautions must be taken when importing foods of animal origin.

Different requirements apply depending on the product and the country of origin. The regulations that apply depend on the animal disease status of the country in question.

Holiday destinations outside Europe may not have the same standards of food and drinking water safety. It is not always possible to tell by the smell, appearance or taste whether something

PERSONAL USE

Foods imported by tourists and travellers must be for personal use only. Personal use refers to use in the private kitchen at home. It makes no difference whether the diners are family members only, or private guests.

is safe. Take special care with raw foods, or with vegetables and fruit that have already been peeled or cut. And pay attention to the hygiene conditions during preparation or at the point of sale. Freshly cooked and heated foods are less of a problem, but crockery and cutlery can be tricky.

ENTRY FROM THE EU

The food safety requirements in the EU are often the same as in Switzerland. For example, hygiene standards or regulations on heavy metal residues are identical. Foods of animal origin can be imported for personal use. They can be imported as personal luggage without an animal health permit or an official health certificate. These foods are not subject to border veterinary checks but their origin must be clearly identifiable (documented).

Note, however, that outbreaks of animal disease may occur at any time within the EU. In such an event, an import ban is a possibility. Please inquire about the current situation before travelling.

ENTRY FROM A THIRD COUNTRY

It is not possible to make general statements about food safety in a third country. However, food safety standards in developing countries in particular need to be viewed with a critical eye. These countries usually have lower hygiene standards. In addition, self-regulation by food producers and food inspections are not as well established as in Switzerland. They do not enable health risks to be ruled out.

NO RESTRICTION ON IMPORTS*

- Bread, cakes, biscuits, chocolate and confectionery
- Pasta not containing meat or mixed with meat
- Concentrated soups and spice extracts packaged for the end consumer

However, an animal disease may break out at any time and might lead to a total ban on imports of foods from the country concerned. Please inquire about the current situation before travelling.

MAY BE IMPORTED SUBJECT TO MAXIMUM QUANTITIES PER PERSON*



Fish, 20 kg**

Fresh, gutted fish or fish products (fresh, dried, cooked, smoked or otherwise preserved), including crustaceans and molluscs (not live)



Honey, 2 kg**



Caviar

Note: Must comply with CITES regulations. Without CITES documents, the maximum quantity is 125 g per person.

** Maximum quantity per person

IMPORT PROHIBITED

- Foods containing meat
- Foods containing dairy products



* For detailed information about other permitted foods, please visit www.fsvo.admin.ch > Food and nutrition > Importing of foods by private travellers

ITEMS BROUGHT BACK FROM ABROAD

Ceramic tableware is a very popular souvenir, but items made in certain countries do not always comply with Swiss food safety standards. Some glazes can contain toxic heavy metals such as lead or cadmium. Acidic foods or beverages coming into contact with these items can become contaminated and cause serious poisoning in users. It is not apparent to the naked eye whether tableware contains such toxic metals and whether they leach out during use. In the case of handmade ceramic tableware of unknown origin, caution is therefore recommended during use in contact with food. Caution is also advised with metal items (teapots, pots, cutlery and jewellery), as alloys may also contain toxic metals.





TRAVELLING WITH PETS

Animals are classed as pets if they are travelling with their owner or a person appointed by the owner. They may not be sold or given to a new owner and they must appear on the following list:

- dogs, cats, ferrets
- birds, with the exception of poultry
- rodents
- reptiles

Certain other animals can also be classed as pets. For more information, please visit www.fsvo.admin.ch > Animals > Travelling with pets.

If you want to travel with your pet, it is best to start planning early. Depending on your destination, pets may require a pet passport, identification and vaccines, among other things. And remember that you may need different documents for your return to Switzerland than you did for the outward journey. It is therefore vital to find out the entry conditions applied by your destination country.

The following pages set out the main points to bear in mind when travelling with pets.

CONSIDER YOUR ANIMAL'S NEEDS

Start by asking yourself if you really want to take your pet on holiday. Holidays that are all about fun for you might mean nothing but stress for your four-legged friend. Animals respond very differently to changes in their environment: the journey itself, an unfamiliar place, an altered daily routine and other factors can be very stressful for them.

TRAVELLING BY CAR

When travelling by car, an animal should be transported in such a way that it cannot endanger the driver, whether behind a dog guard or in a cage. An animal should have sufficient space to stand up and lie down comfortably during transport. Make sure that the temperature in the car – especially around the cage – matches the animal's needs. It should not be too hot or too cold. Break long journeys with stops for short walks, to allow your dog to stretch its legs and relieve itself. Offer it a drink of water.

TRAVELLING BY AIR

For information on air travel with animals, contact IATA (www.iata.org). Register your animal with the airline. Speak to your vet about whether the animal needs medication or food during the trip.




THE HEALTH OF YOUR ANIMAL

Thanks to decades of efficient control and monitoring strategies, Switzerland is free of many major animal diseases. To keep it this way, there are several points to bear in mind when travelling with animals. If in doubt, always contact your vet.

RABIES

Rabies is a fatal disease affecting the nervous system. It can be transmitted to humans through bites and saliva. Worldwide, the disease kills thousands of people and countless pets and wild animals every year. Switzerland is rabies free. Anyone who has been in contact with infected animals should seek medical treatment immediately. Infected animals must be euthanised. Information about the rabies risks in different countries can be found on the Internet at www.fsvo.admin.ch > Animals > Travelling with pets > Dogs, cats and ferrets. An FSVO permit is required if you are





returning to Switzerland from a third country with a high rabies risk via an international airport in Switzerland. Arm yourself with information!

TIP

Some countries have national regimes governing travel within the EU with animals less than three months old which have not yet been vaccinated against rabies. Some countries also require antiparasite treatment. To find out the conditions that apply in your case, consult the competent authorities of your destination country.

OTHER DANGEROUS DISEASES

Many tourist destinations, especially around the Mediterranean, are home to pathogenic agents that are not found in Switzerland. They can cause serious, chronic diseases such as dirofilariasis, leishmaniasis and ehrlichiosis. All animal owners are responsible for protecting their pets as fully as possible against such holiday disease risks. Consult your vet well before you plan to travel.

DOGS, CATS, FERRETS

Dogs, cats and ferrets are subject to special rabies regulations. The minimum requirements for travel are a pet passport, identification (microchip) and valid rabies vaccination (administered at least 21 days before departure). In addition, no more than five animals are permitted to travel under the conditions that apply to pets.

To find out the specific entry requirements at your holiday destination, contact the competent authorities of the country concerned for accurate information about country-specific conditions. Remember that the regulations that apply when you return to Switzerland may differ from the entry requirements (see next page).

NOTE

Dogs with docked ears or tails cannot be imported into Switzerland.

RETURNING FROM THE EU

To return to Switzerland from the EU with your dog, cat or ferret, you will need to comply with the following animal health requirements:

- The animal must be correctly identified, by microchip or tattoo. Tattoos are valid only if they can be proven to have been applied before 3 July 2011.
- An official pet passport must have been properly completed for the animal.
- The animal must have been vaccinated against rabies. Animals must be at least 12 weeks old before they can be given the initial vaccination. Entry into Switzerland is permitted from 21 days after vaccination. If a booster vaccination is given before the vaccine protection expires, the 21-day waiting period does not apply.
- Animals less than 12 weeks old may be imported without rabies vaccination but require a declaration signed by the

owner stating that they have been kept at their place of birth since they were born and have had no contact with wild animals. This also applies to animals between 12 and 16 weeks old which have received initial rabies vaccination that is not yet valid on account of the waiting period.

The declaration is not required if the animals are accompanied by and are still dependent on their mother. Puppies under 8 weeks old may be imported only if they are accompanied by their mother.

Entry into Switzerland from Norway, Andorra, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Monaco, San Marino and The Vatican is subject to the same conditions as entry from the EU.

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For detailed information on travelling with pets, visit www.fsvo.admin.ch > Animals > Travelling with pets

RETURNING FROM A THIRD COUNTRY

To return to Switzerland from a third country with your dog, cat or ferret, you will have to comply with different regulations depending on the rabies status of the country you are returning from. Visit www.fsvo.admin.ch > Animals > Travelling with pets > Dogs, cats and ferrets for rabies status information.

Third country with a low rabies risk: the animal health requirements are the same as when returning from the EU.

Third country with a high rabies risk: in addition to the requirements that apply on returning to Switzerland from the EU, an antibody test must be performed on a blood sample before departure. This test must be performed by an EU-recognised laboratory and confirm antirabies protection. If you are returning to Switzerland from the third country on a direct flight, you should also apply for an FSVO import permit. If returning by a route other than a direct flight, the requirements are the same except that there is no need for an FSVO import permit.

For detailed information on entering Switzerland from a third country, and for the form needed to apply for an import permit, please visit www.fsvo.admin.ch > Animals > Travelling with pets > Dogs, cats and ferrets.

The website www.fsvo.admin.ch > Animals > Travelling with pets > Online tool also contains a travel database where everything you need to know about travelling with your pet is just a few clicks away.



ANIMALS ARE NOT SOUVENIRS

Which holidaymaker hasn't come across an animal they would have liked to take home with them? But it's vital to think carefully before making such a decision.

In some traditional holiday destinations, it can't always be taken for granted that pets have been kept and reared in line with Swiss standards. Dogs may be poorly socialised and not accustomed to living in a flat or house with humans. So think carefully if you are tempted to bring an animal home with you from holiday. Never take on a pet based purely on pity or a moment of holiday madness.

HEALTH RISKS

Steer well clear of any stray animals from a rabies risk country. The importing of dogs and cats from high-risk countries is subject to strict regulations that are rigorously enforced. If the conditions are not met, the animals will either be sent back or, if this is not possible, put down. Young animals from rabies risk countries cannot be imported into Switzerland until they are at least 7 months old, and until 4 months have passed since their initial rabies vaccination. Parasites and other pathogens can cause serious and sometimes chronic health problems. Infection is often impossible to spot at first glance.

Remember that animals bought abroad are subject to different entry requirements than animals which have travelled with you and are being brought back to Switzerland after a holiday.



For further information on entry requirements for animals bought abroad, visit www.fsvo.admin.ch > Import and Export > Import





TRADE IN THREATENED SPECIES OF PLANTS AND ANIMALS

Be on your guard when buying plants and animals! Exploitation and international trade have now reached such an extent that many species of plants and animals are endangered or at risk of becoming so. Trade in these species is permitted only to the extent that their natural populations allow. Species conservation is guaranteed more effectively by continuing, regulated global trade than by a total ban.

CITES

Switzerland is a party to the Washington Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). Within CITES, over 180 states worldwide are committed to the conservation and sustainable exploitation of the planet's animal and plant populations. Some 5,000 species of animal and 30,000 species of plant are protected under the Convention. CITES defines 'trade' as any border crossing, including crossings within the EU. CITES-protected species are classed into several categories which are afforded different levels of protection that reflect the extent of the threat they face. Imports and exports of live specimens or parts and products thereof are either prohibited or require a licence.



TRAVELLING WITH EXOTIC ANIMALS

Are you planning to travel with parrots, turtles or other exotic animals? Many of these exotic species are covered by CITES. This means that every border crossing with such live animals must comply with CITES regulations. CITES provides for a simplified system for multiple border crossings with protected species of pet.

This involves a certificate of ownership, issued by the FSVO for each animal, which allows multiple border crossings into the EU within a three-year period.

CITES AND SOUVENIRS

Be careful when choosing and buying your holiday gifts or souvenirs: many species of plants and animals are protected by CITES or by national legislation. Tourists are often unaware that a holiday souvenir may contain a product derived from a protected species. It makes no difference whether the product was found in the wild (e.g. corals on the beach or feathers in the forest) or was bought in a market. Without the necessary documents, specimens of protected species will be challenged and confiscated at customs. Criminal proceedings may be initiated.

Not all souvenirs containing products of plant or animal origin necessarily pose a problem. If in doubt, however, you are advised to contact the competent authorities of the country concerned or the FSVO.

Imports into Switzerland of CITES-protected products from third countries are also subject to animal health requirements, e.g. in the case of trophies and preparations made from hoofed animals. If the animal health conditions are not fulfilled, the products cannot be accepted for import even if the owner holds valid CITES documents – and will be sent back or confiscated.



For further information, visit www.cites.ch

FURTHER INFORMATION

CUSTOMS

The Swiss customs authorities have devised the 'Travel & Goods' app for travellers. It enables you to check while still abroad which products are permitted for import or can be imported duty-free.

WWF

The WWF advice app 'WWF-Ratgeber' is also a useful aid when travelling. In the 'Souvenirs' section, souvenirs are listed in categories depending on whether they are banned or subject to a permit, or do not require a permit.

CUSTOMS



WWF



Download both apps free
of charge.

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THE MAIN POINTS AT A GLANCE

- ★ Imports of foods of animal origin from countries outside the EU are subject to strict regulations.
- ★ Consider your animal's needs.
- ★ If travelling with a dog or cat, you need a microchip, pet passport, rabies vaccination, and possibly a blood test and a permit.
- ★ Do not bring any animals home with you from abroad.
- ★ Dogs with docked ears or tails cannot be imported.
- ★ Do not bring any souvenirs of/from protected animals and plants with you.

