Made in China Easy
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How to Import from China: A Step-by-Step Plan

Ten clear steps from product idea to goods in your warehouse: research, suppliers, samples, payment, inspection, shipping and customs.

By the Made in China Easy team, Guangzhou · 1 November 2026

Importing from China is a process you can learn. Most problems come from skipping a step, not from the steps themselves. Follow this plan for your first orders.



1. Check the rules for your product

Find your product's customs code (HS code) and ask a customs broker in your country about the duty rate, taxes, labels and any certificates needed. Some products need approval before they can be imported.

2. Work out your landed cost

The factory price is only the start. Add freight, insurance, duty, taxes, clearance and delivery. Our import cost calculator does this in a minute.

3. Write a one-page product brief

Specifications, materials, colours, packaging, quantity, target price and destination. Send the same brief to every supplier so the quotes can be compared.

4. Find and check suppliers

Use trade fairs, B2B platforms and introductions. Check the business licence, the bank account name and the factory address before you go further. Our supplier checklist lists 15 checks.

5. Order and approve samples

Test the samples as your customers would use them. Approve one sample in writing: it becomes the standard for production.

6. Agree the contract and payment terms

A common pattern is a deposit before production and the balance after inspection. Pay only the company account named on the contract.



7. Inspect before you pay the balance

An inspection during or after production finds problems while the goods are still at the factory, when they are cheap to fix.

8. Book shipping and prepare documents

Choose sea or air, full or shared container, and the Incoterm. Check the commercial invoice, packing list and bill of lading against your order.

9. Clear customs at destination

Your customs broker files the import declaration and you pay duties and taxes. Missing or wrong documents are the main cause of delays.

10. Receive, check and learn

Check the goods on arrival, note any issues with photos, and give the supplier clear feedback. Your second order will be easier.

Want a team on the ground?

We do steps 3 to 9 with you, from Guangzhou, in your language. See how sourcing works or book a free consultation.

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