

Government bans personal meat and dairy imports from the EU to safeguard livestock from disease

FAQs for travellers from the EU

General information

Why do personal imports pose a risk for animal disease?

Some animal disease viruses can persist in meat, dairy and other animal products for weeks, and even months. Whilst they do not infect humans or pose a food safety risk, they can remain infectious in animal products or contaminated materials. Susceptible livestock and other animals (e.g. wild boar) may be exposed to infection via illegal feeding, inadvertent disposal of waste food and wild animals raiding bins.

Why is the ban on personal imports of meat and dairy products from the EU still in place?

Personal imports of meat and dairy products continue to pose risks of spreading animal disease to Great Britain. Animal diseases of concern include foot and mouth disease, African swine fever, sheep pox and goat pox, peste des petits ruminants and lumpy skin disease. The EU has reported outbreaks of all these diseases in 2026.

How long will the personal import ban be in force for?

The measures will stay in place while personal imports of affected products pose a significant biosecurity risk to Great Britain.

What products does the measure cover?

All meat, meat products and dairy products of ruminants – such as cows, sheep, goats, deer, camelids – and pigs are prohibited.

Why aren't you banning poultry meat?

Poultry meat does not present a risk of spread of foot and mouth disease, African swine fever, sheep pox and goat pox, peste des petits ruminants and lumpy skin disease.

Are there any exemptions?

Travellers are allowed to bring up to 2kg of powdered infant milk, infant food and special food (including petfood) required for medical reasons, provided they are commercially produced and packaged, shelf-stable and unopened unless in current use.

There are also no restrictions on certain low-risk composite products (including chocolate, confectionery, bread, cakes, biscuits, pasta and food supplements containing less than 20% animal products).

Enforcement and compliance

How will this measure be enforced?

Border Force will check for prohibited goods as part of customs checks. Questions on the specifics of enforcement should be directed to Border Force.

What happens if Border Force find prohibited goods?

Border Force has powers to seize prohibited goods on arrival and destroy them. Offenders could potentially face unlimited fines on successful prosecution in Great Britain or penalties of up to £5,000 in England.

How can travellers dispose of any prohibited goods at ports and airports?

Travellers carrying prohibited goods should surrender them to Border Force via the customs Red Channel.

Travel Scenarios

What happens if I buy an animal product from a foreign airport's duty free? Will it be confiscated when I arrive in Great Britain?

The ban applies to eligible products purchased in a foreign airport's duty free.

Does the ban apply to personal imports from Northern Ireland?

No, there are no restrictions on personal imports from Northern Ireland (or from Jersey, Guernsey and the Isle of Man) to Great Britain.

Do these measures apply for personal imports from the EU into Northern Ireland?

No, they apply only to travellers arriving in Great Britain.

Do these restrictions apply from Republic of Ireland to Great Britain?

The restrictions do apply from Republic of Ireland to Great Britain.

Can airlines serve meat and dairy products on board?

Yes, airlines can serve meat and dairy products for consumption on board.

If a passenger was to buy a meat sandwich on the plane and then take it home with them, would they be breaching the ban?

Yes, they would. If a passenger brings a meat sandwich through customs, they are breaching the ban.

Does the ban mean that cruise ships are not permitted to serve food containing prohibited meat and dairy products while in UK waters or does it mean that their

passengers cannot disembark with these foods for excursions?

Cruise ships can continue to serve food containing meat and dairy products while in UK waters. However, passengers cannot disembark with prohibited meat and dairy products for excursions.

Can travellers bring commercially available freeze-dried meals intended for outdoor use (e.g., hiking meals) even if they may contain milk?

You can bring in commercially packaged and labelled pasta or noodle meals provided they are shelf stable or have been cooked/heat treated, and they contain no meat and less than 50% of dairy products.