

This guide is compiled from the FIDI Customs Guide for reference only. Customs regulations change frequently; please consult your Seapoe relocation consultant for the latest requirements before shipping.

Updated 2026

Removal Goods

Documents Required

- Original or copy of shipper's passport (front page) or ID for Costa Rican citizen.
- Rated original Bill of Lading, A.W.B. or "Carta de Porte".
- Packing List or inventory.
- Translation of the packing list in Spanish (Art. 317 according to Customs' law (RGLA)).
- Detailed packing list indicating brand, serial number and model of all electric appliances and electronics.
- One probative document in order to opt for the personal household goods and merchandise modality. This document may be no more than six months old and, will be related with the importer's category. Types:
- Consular Certification of Residency Abroad or supplementary document (house rental, lease, or purchase agreement), evidencing the place of residence and the period of time spent abroad (at least 6 months), in the case of Costa Rican students or legal age workers returning to live in Costa Rica.
- Work Permit issued by the General Immigration and Alienage General Direction when it is a foreigner coming to work in Costa Rica or copy of the authorization permit request before Immigration and Foreign Service, besides the copy of the labour agreement from the contracting company.
- Residence I.D. in force, when it is a foreigner who was granted the status of permanent resident in the country, reckoned from the date the residence is granted.
- Consular Certification of Resident Abroad or supplementary document, (rent, lease, or purchase housing agreement), evidencing the place of residency and the time he was abroad, in the case of those who were permanent residents outside the country for at least 6 months. Important note: If transferee is a Costa Rican resident who has not lived outside of Costa Rica for longer than 12 months, they cannot import any household goods into the country.
- Property registration certificate of property acquired in Costa Rica or copy of lease or rent agreement in Costa Rica, authenticated by a lawyer.

Customs Prescriptions

- Foreigners will have to pay for import duties. All customers have to pay for duties and taxes.
- Costa Rican citizens who have lived abroad a minimum of 6 months may apply for partial tax exemption. This applies only for one item per type, example: 1 microwave, 1 laundry machine, 1 bed, 1 table, chairs, etc.
- Returning Costa Ricans wanting to apply for partial tax exemption need to bring a certification from the Costa Rican consulate at the origin country, indicating number of years lived abroad.
- Other formalities for this status must be made in Costa Rica.

Remarks

- Customs clearance will take approximately 22 working days once shipment has arrived at the

bonded warehouse in San José.

- A physical inspection, to verify that there will be no differences between the quantities and weights declared on the shipping documents and the real ones is mandatory by Costa Rican customs authorities.
- It is a requirement that the number of pieces and weight reported on the B/L matches with the real number of pieces and weight; otherwise, Customs will apply a fine of 500 USD and there will be a delay in Customs process from 4 to 6 weeks.

Diplomats Removals

Documents Required

- Copy of shipper's passport (front page) and diplomatic ID.
- Rated original Bill of Lading, A.W.B. or "Carta de Porte"
- Packing List or inventory.
- Translation of the packing list in Spanish (Art. 317 according to Customs' law (RGLA)).
- Detailed packing list indicating brand, serial number and model of all electric appliances and electronics.
- Tax exemption.

Customs Prescriptions

- Duty free entry.

Remarks

- Shipper must be registered at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- Tax exemption process must be done directly by the shipper's entity.
- Import of Wine and Alcohol is permitted:
- Quantity will depend on the annual allowance agreed between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and each Embassy.
- Each Embassy must ask the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to check how much bottles or quantity they can bring; this process must be done directly by the shipper's entity.

Wedding trousseaux

Documents Required

- Copy of shipper's passport (front page) or ID for Costa Rican citizen.
- Rated original Bill of Lading, A.W.B. or "Carta de Porte".
- Original commercial invoices.
- Translation of the invoice in Spanish (Art. 317 according to Customs' law (RGLA)).

Customs Prescriptions

- Subject to taxes payment.

Inheritance

Documents Required

- Copy of shipper's passport (front page) or ID for Costa Rican citizen.
- Rated original Bill of Lading, A.W.B. or "Carta de Porte".
- Original commercial invoices.
- Translation of the invoice in Spanish (Art. 317 according to Customs' law (RGLA)).

Customs Prescriptions

- Subject to taxes payment.

New Furniture and Household Goods

Documents Required

- Copy of shipper's passport (front page) or ID for Costa Rican citizen.
- Rated original Bill of Lading, A.W.B. or "Carta de Porte".
- Original commercial invoices.
- Translation of the invoice in Spanish (Art. 317 according to Customs' law (RGLA)).

Customs Prescriptions

- Subject to taxes payment.

Works of Art & Antiques (More than 100 years)

Documents Required

- Copy of shipper's passport (front page) or ID for Costa Rican citizen.
- Rated original Bill of Lading, A.W.B. or "Carta de Porte".
- Original commercial invoices.
- Translation of the invoice in Spanish (Art. 317 according to Customs' law (RGLA)).

Customs Prescriptions

- Subject to taxes payment.

Wooden goods (furniture, ornaments)

Documents Required

- Copy of shipper's passport (front page) or ID for Costa Rican citizen.
- Rated original Bill of Lading, A.W.B. or "Carta de Porte".
- Original commercial invoices.
- Translation of the invoice in Spanish (Art. 317 according to Customs' law (RGLA)).
- Subject to permits from the Ministry of Agriculture. Needed only for wooden crates.
- Wooden ornaments and hangers are not allowed.

Customs Prescriptions

- Subject to taxes payment.
- According to Customs' law (RGLA) wicker and ratan baskets or any product made of those, are not allowed in the country (furniture made with wicker and ratan are allowed).
- Costa Rica Government adopted ISPM-15 (International standards for Phytosanitary Measures Publication 15) Guidelines for Regulating Wood Packaging Material in International Trade (aka NIFM-15) to standardise the treatment of wood packing materials used for the transport of goods.

Machines, appliance, spare parts

Documents Required

- Copy of shipper's passport (front page) or ID for Costa Rican citizen.
- Rated original Bill of Lading, A.W.B. or "Carta de Porte"
- Original commercial invoices.
- Translation of the invoice in Spanish (Art. 317 according to Customs' law (RGLA)).

Customs Prescriptions

- Subject to taxes payment.

Wine, Alcohol

Documents Required

- Copy of shipper's passport (front page) or ID for Costa Rican citizen.
- Rated original Bill of Lading, A.W.B. or "Carta de Porte"
- Original commercial invoices.
- Translation of the invoice in Spanish (Art. 317 according to Customs' law (RGLA)).
- Subject to permits from the Ministry of Health.

Customs Prescriptions

- Subject to taxes payment.
- Prohibited for air and LCL shipments.
- For FCL shipments, a maximum of 5 litres is permitted.

Tins and Food

Documents Required

- Copy of shipper's passport (front page) or ID for Costa Rican citizen.
- Rated original Bill of Lading, A.W.B. or "Carta de Porte"
- Original commercial invoices.
- Translation of the invoice in Spanish (Art. 317 according to Customs' law (RGLA)).
- Subject to permits from the Ministry of Health.

Arms, ammunitions, dangerous objects

Customs Prescriptions

- Importation prohibited.

Medicines, narcotics, drugs, soaps, perfumes, shampoo, creams, cosmetics, and other personal hygiene articles

Documents Required

- Copy of shipper's passport (front page) or ID for Costa Rican citizen.
- Rated original Bill of Lading, A.W.B. or "Carta de Porte"
- Original commercial invoices.
- Translation of the invoice in Spanish (Art. 317 according to Customs' law (RGLA)).
- Subject to permits from the Ministry of Health.

Plants

Documents Required

- Copy of shipper's passport (front page) or ID for Costa Rican citizen.
- Rated original Bill of Lading, A.W.B. or "Carta de Porte"
- Original commercial invoices.
- Translation of the invoice in Spanish (Art. 317 according to Customs' law (RGLA)).
- Subject to permits from the Ministry of Agriculture.

Refrigerators, freezers, air conditioning

Documents Required

- Copy of shipper's passport (front page) or ID for Costa Rican citizen.
- Rated original Bill of Lading, A.W.B. or "Carta de Porte"
- Original commercial invoices.
- Translation of the invoice in Spanish (Art. 317 according to Customs' law (RGLA)).
- Subject to permits from the Ministry of ECA.

Domestic pets (Cats and Dogs)

Documents Required

- Copy of shipper's passport (front page) or ID for Costa Rican citizen.
- Rated original A.W.B.
- Subject to mandatory quarantine.
- Subject to permits from the National Animal Health Service.
- Health Certificate.
- Up to date vaccination cards.
- Invoice or affidavit indicating animal's value and characteristics.
- Exportation veterinary health certificate.

Customs Prescriptions

- Subject to payment of taxes.

Remarks

- Documentation required before animal's arrival.

Pornographic material, subversive material, drugs, item not being part of the normal household

Customs Prescriptions

- Importation prohibited.