

# Sea Freight from China to Tawau

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☐ Sea Freight

China → Tawau · via TWU air / Tawau sea · clearance by Royal Malaysian Customs Department (JKDM)



Cargo handling on the China-Tawau lane.

For buyers shipping into Tawau, the practical question is not the ocean or flight time but what happens after arrival. Tawau is south-east Sabah port near the Indonesian border; cargo enters through TWU air / Tawau sea, and allow +1 day for the inland leg on top of clearance.

On the destination side, Royal Malaysian Customs Department (JKDM) handles clearance; budget 2-4 days of dwell before the cargo is released.

## What you will pay on arrival in Malaysia

Royal Malaysian Customs Department (JKDM) assesses duty and tax on cargo arriving for Tawau consignees. Current regime: Sales tax 5–10% plus 10% low-value-goods tax on online orders under MYR 500; duty 0–30%, largely 0% under ACFTA, with a de-minimis position of MYR 500 (low-value goods sold online are taxed regardless).

Conformity is the part most first-time importers underestimate: SIRIM certification and MCMC label for electrical and radio products; halal certification for food ingredients. Getting this wrong is expensive because it usually cannot be fixed after the cargo has landed.

**Restrictions and known friction points for Malaysia:** Electrical goods without a SIRIM label are routinely detained. Alcohol, e-cigarettes and vape liquid are restricted. Direct-to-consumer parcels are subject to the low-value goods tax collected at the point of sale.

## How this lane actually runs

Peninsular Malaysia is served through Port Klang and Tanjung Pelepas with very frequent South China sailings. East Malaysia (Sarawak and Sabah) is a separate customs territory in practice — cargo transships at Klang or Singapore and adds 5–8 days plus a second clearance step, so quote Kuching and Kota Kinabalu separately.

|                                      |                                     |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Sea gateways used</b>             | Port Klang, Tanjung Pelepas, Penang |
| <b>Sea transit, China to gateway</b> | 5–9 calendar days                   |
| <b>Gateway serving Tawau</b>         | TWU air / Tawau sea                 |
| <b>Inland leg to Tawau</b>           | +1 day from the gateway             |
| <b>Typical clearance / dwell</b>     | 2–4 days                            |
| <b>Peak season to plan around</b>    | Sep–Nov                             |



Handling on the TWU air / Tawau sea routing serving Tawau.

## Before you book: Tawau checklist

- Book earlier than the transit time suggests during Sep-Nov, when space on this lane tightens.
- Put the Tawau delivery address, contact name and phone number on the invoice, not just the packing list.
- Confirm the consignee in Tawau can act as importer of record — Royal Malaysian Customs Department (JKDM) will not release cargo to an unregistered party.
- Declare lithium batteries, magnets, liquids and powders up front — retro-declaring after booking usually means re-planning the whole shipment.
- Get the conformity paperwork moving early: SIRIM certification and MCMC label for electrical and radio products; halal certification for food ingredients.
- Budget for the inland leg: +1 day beyond gateway clearance to reach Tawau.

## Frequently asked questions

How long does shipping from China to Tawau take?

China to the Malaysia gateway is 5-9 calendar days. On top of that, allow 2-4 days of clearance with Royal Malaysian Customs Department (JKDM) and a +1 day inland leg to Tawau.

What duty and tax will I pay importing into Tawau?

Royal Malaysian Customs Department (JKDM) applies: Sales tax 5-10% plus 10% low-value-goods tax on online orders under MYR 500; duty 0-30%, largely 0% under ACFTA. The de-minimis position is MYR 500 (low-value goods sold online are taxed regardless).

Under a DDP arrangement these are pre-paid, so nothing is collected on arrival in Tawau.

Can you ship batteries or sensitive cargo to Tawau?

Yes. Battery cargo by sea moves under UN3480/UN3481 with an MSDS, and the dangerous-goods documentation is prepared as part of the booking into Port Klang, Tanjung Pelepas, Penang. Surcharges apply and space is more limited than for general cargo.

Can you deliver door-to-door in Tawau?

Yes. Delivery to a Tawau address is quoted as one figure covering freight, duty and tax owed to Royal Malaysian Customs Department (JKDM), and the +1 day inland leg. Confirm whether your consignee wants the goods at a warehouse, a marketplace fulfilment centre or a shop front, because the last-mile requirement differs.

What documents does Royal Malaysian Customs Department (JKDM) require?

A commercial invoice with HS codes, a packing list, the bill of lading or air waybill, a certificate of origin where it lowers duty, and any product certification (SIRIM certification and MCMC label for electrical and radio products; halal certification for food ingredients). We prepare and file these as part of the service.

How is the chargeable weight calculated for Tawau?

We compare actual gross weight against volumetric weight — length × width × height in centimetres divided by 6000 for air — and bill the greater of the two, rounded up to the next kilogram. Light, bulky cargo is almost always billed on volume.

## Other delivery cities in Malaysia

- [China to Bintulu](#)
- [China to Samalaju](#)
- [China to Lahad Datu](#)
- [China to Sibul](#)
- [China to Sandakan](#)
- [China to Kuala Lumpur](#)
- [China to Shah Alam](#)
- [China to Klang](#)
- [China to Johor Bahru](#)
- [China to Penang](#)
- [China to Ipoh](#)
- [China to Melaka](#)

[All Malaysia freight information →](#)

## References & official sources

Duty rates, thresholds and conformity requirements for Malaysia change by ministerial decision, sometimes mid-year. The figures on this page are buyer-planning references, not a customs ruling — confirm the current position for your own HS code with Royal Malaysian Customs Department (JKDM) or your broker before you ship.

- [Royal Malaysian Customs Department](#)
- [SIRIM QAS International](#)
- [Port Klang Authority](#)
- [WTO — Tariff Profiles \(applied MFN duty by country\)](#)
- [IATA — Lithium battery shipping guidance \(PI 965–970\)](#)
- [World Bank — Logistics Performance Index](#)
- [ICC — Incoterms 2020 rules \(DDP, DAP, FOB definitions\)](#)

Page data last reviewed: August 2026.

## Shipping by industry

This page covers the route and clearance picture for the destination. Packing, classification and the compliance step that actually holds a shipment depend on what you are sending — these guides cover that by commodity.

- [Switchgear New Energy, Power & Electrical](#)
- [Automotive Electronics Automotive & Vehicles](#)
- [Sanitary Ware Building Materials & Construction Products](#)
- [Pallet Wood, Bamboo & Paper Products](#)
- [Conveyor Belts Plastics, Rubber & Packaging](#)
- [Electronic Components Electronic Components & Semiconductors](#)
- [Computer Hardware Telecom, Computing & Data Centre](#)
- [Kitchen Appliances Home Appliances, HVAC & Commercial](#)
- [Home Decor Furniture & Home Products](#)
- [Technical Textiles Textiles, Apparel, Footwear & Leather](#)
- [Wigs & Hair Products Textiles, Apparel, Footwear & Leather](#)
- [Fire Alarm Equipment Fire, Safety & Traffic Products](#)

[All 139 industry guides →](#)

## FCL Container Rates — China to Tawau

Live port-to-port ocean freight for a full container into Tawau, by origin port. Ocean freight only — origin haulage, customs clearance and destination delivery are quoted separately.

## Shekou → Tawau

| Container | Rate (USD) |
|-----------|------------|
| 20GP      | 1,500      |
| 40HQ      | 2,850      |

- Carrier: STIC

[Full route page — Shekou to Tawau →](#)

Spot allocations move week to week — reconfirm the rate against the current sailing before booking.

## Price Trend — Tawau

Live rate for the linked route page, shown here for a quick read before you click through.

## Get a rate for Tawau

This lane is quoted per shipment rather than from a published rate card, because the landed cost depends on the commodity, its density, the conformity requirements above and the delivery point. Send the cargo details and we will come back with a full DDP figure.

[Request a quote → See the Malaysia route page →](#)

## Freight Rates to Malaysia

Current published rates — USD

☐ SEA

Sea · FCL Port-to-Port (Spot)

20GP **USD 1,199.72**

40HQ **USD 2,249.72**

Updated 2026-08-17

☐☐ SEA

Sea · FCL Port-to-Port (Spot)

20GP **USD 1,249.72**

40HQ **USD 2,349.72**

Updated 2026-08-17

☐☐ SEA

Sea · FCL Port-to-Port (Spot)

20GP **USD 949.72**

40HQ **USD 1,749.72**

Updated 2026-08-17

☐☐ SEA

Sea · FCL Port-to-Port (Spot)

20GP **USD 1,249.72**

40HQ **USD 2,349.72**

Updated 2026-08-17

☐☐ SEA

Sea · FCL Port-to-Port (Spot)

20GP **USD 1,349.72**

40HQ **USD 2,549.72**

Updated 2026-08-17

☐☐ SEA

Sea · FCL Port-to-Port (Spot)

20GP **USD 1,499.72**

40HQ **USD 2,849.72**

Updated 2026-08-17

☐☐ SEA

Sea · FCL Port-to-Port (Spot)

20GP **USD 1,349.72**

40HQ **USD 2,549.72**

Updated 2026-08-17

☐☐ SEA

Sea · FCL Port-to-Port (Spot)

20GP **USD 1,499.72**

40HQ **USD 2,849.72**

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Sea · FCL Port-to-Port (Spot)

20GP **USD 1,499.72**

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20GP **USD 1,499.72**

40HQ **USD 2,849.72**

Updated 2026-08-17

 Cargo Weight (KG)

☐ Enter the actual gross weight of your shipment in kilograms. If you're unsure, fill in the volume fields below and we'll calculate it for you.

☐ Or enter volume (cm) — volumetric weight ÷ 6000

× ×

Non-integers rounded up. Larger of actual vs volumetric is used.

☐ Number of Boxes

Total chargeable weight = weight per box × number of boxes.

 When you have not filled in the volume information, our prices may be inaccurate.