

The Guldstreet Packing Guide

Barrels and boxes from New York, New Jersey and Philadelphia to Ghana, Togo and Cote d'Ivoire. How to pack it, what to leave out, and the paperwork that keeps it moving at Tema.

A well-packed barrel arrives intact and gets through customs inspection with fewer questions. Most problems we see come from a short list of avoidable mistakes. This guide walks you through every step, in order. Keep it, print it, and share it with whoever is packing.

1. Start with the right container

- Use a food-grade, heavy-duty plastic drum with a removable lid and a metal ring seal. It stands up to the pressure and moisture of an ocean voyage.
- We ship 55-gallon, 65-gallon and 75 to 77-gallon jumbo barrels, plus boxes, totes and suitcases.
- Never use a cracked or damaged barrel. If you are not sure a barrel is fit to ship, ask us before you pack it.
- Boxes: use double-wall cartons, tape every seam, and do not overfill so the box bulges.

2. What you can ship

- | | |
|--|---|
| - Clothing, new or used (but not used underwear) | - Small household appliances for personal use: blenders, irons, fans, kettles |
| - New shoes | - Baby items: diapers, formula, clothes, toys |
| - Bed sheets, towels and blankets | - Books and printed materials |
| - Sealed, store-bought dry food: rice, pasta, canned goods, cereal, spices | - Hand tools for personal use |
| - Sealed toiletries and cosmetics | - Medications in original packaging, in personal-use quantities |

Personal-use quantities only. Fifty pairs of the same shoe, or boxes of identical new items, will be treated as commercial goods and assessed differently. If you are shipping for a business, ask us for a [commercial freight quote](#).

3. What you cannot ship

Never pack these. A single prohibited item can hold up the whole shipment, and deposits and freight are not refunded for shipments held because of prohibited contents.

- Firearms, ammunition, weapons and weapon parts
- Explosives, fireworks, flammable liquids, aerosols, compressed gases and corrosives
- Illegal drugs and controlled substances
- Counterfeit goods and pirated media
- Fresh fruit, vegetables, meat, perishable or frozen food, soil and plants
- Live animals
- Used fridges, freezers and air conditioners (banned by Ghana)
- Used underwear
- Cash. Send money by bank transfer instead.

Ask us first

- Used shoes and used mattresses (restricted by Ghana at times)
- Prescription medicine (keep it in the original packaging with the prescription)
- Large quantities of food
- Alcohol and tobacco
- Electronics worth more than \$2,500 (cargo insurance required)
- Anything homemade, unsealed or unlabeled

Togo and Cote d'Ivoire have their own lists. If you are shipping to Lome or Abidjan, check with us before you pack anything you are unsure about.

4. Pack it in layers

1. **Bottom: heaviest items.** Shoes, canned goods, pots, books. Spread them evenly so the barrel does not lean when lifted.
2. **Middle: medium weight.** Folded or rolled clothing, linens, packaged food.
3. **Top: lightest and most fragile.** Toiletries, medicines, small electronics.

Protect what can break or leak

- Wrap glass, ceramics and electronics in clothing or bubble wrap, and keep them away from the barrel wall.
- Put every liquid (shampoo, lotion, oil) in a sealed zip-lock bag. Lids loosen at sea.
- Do not use newspaper as padding. In humid conditions the ink can stain clothing.

Use every inch

- Roll clothes instead of folding them.
- Fill shoes, pots and containers with small items.
- Fill every gap with soft items. A tightly packed barrel does not shift, and what does not shift does not break.

5. Write a packing list customs accepts

Every barrel and box must travel with a complete packing list. Ghana customs uses it to verify the contents and decide whether the shipment is personal effects. A clear list means fewer questions at inspection. Understating values or leaving items off is a customs offense.

Do

- Be specific: "15 women's used blouses", not "clothing"
- Give a count for each type of item
- Say new or used
- Give a realistic value in USD
- Add serial numbers for electronics

Don't

- Write "miscellaneous" or "assorted items"
- Under-declare. Officers know market prices.
- Leave anything off. Unlisted items look like smuggling.

Also include: your full name and address, the recipient's full name, phone and address in Ghana, the packing date, and the barrel or box number if you are sending more than one.

Example

Item	Qty	New or used	Value (USD)
Women's clothing	15	Used	45
Children's clothing and shoes	12	Used clothing, new shoes	30
Bed sheets and towels	4 sets	Used	20
Rice 5 kg, pasta 2 kg, canned tomatoes 4 tins	1 lot	New	25
Kitchen pots and utensils	6	Used	20
Total declared value			140

Your packing list

Shipper: _____ Phone: _____ Barrel or box no.: _____

Recipient in Ghana: _____ Phone: _____ City: _____

Date packed: _____

#	Item description	Qty	New / used	Value USD
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				
15				
16				
17				
18				
19				
20				
21				
22				
Total declared value				

Signature: _____

6. Label, photograph, seal

- Write your name and phone, and the recipient's name, phone and city, on the side of the barrel and on the lid, in permanent marker. Do the same on two sides of every box.
- Take photos of the contents in layers as you pack, and one of the full barrel before you close it. Keep them until the barrel is delivered.
- Keep a copy of the packing list and give one to us at pickup.

Before you seal: the checklist

	The barrel is food-grade, heavy-duty and undamaged
	Heavy items are at the bottom and the load is balanced
	Fragile items are wrapped and not touching the barrel wall
	Every liquid is sealed in a zip-lock bag
	Gaps are filled, nothing shifts when you rock the barrel
	Nothing from the "cannot ship" list is inside
	The packing list is complete, with a copy set aside
	Name, phone and destination are written on the barrel and the lid
	Photos taken
	Lid closed and the metal ring seal locked

7. Pickup day and what happens next

1. **Deposit.** A 30% deposit confirms your pickup.
2. **Pickup.** Our driver collects at your door in New York City, New Jersey or Philadelphia. Hand over your packing list and keep your receipt.
3. **Sailing.** We confirm the vessel and estimated arrival when your cargo sails, and keep you updated on WhatsApp.
4. **Tema and delivery.** Customs clearance at Tema, then delivery. Your recipient should keep their phone on and their ID ready.

Christmas 2026. For arrival in time for the holidays, book and pay your deposit by November 28 for New York City and New Jersey pickups, or by November 25 for Philadelphia pickups. Estimated arrival is December 20 to 24.

Questions before you pack? Ask us first. It is easier to take an item out before pickup than to fix a problem at Tema.

WhatsApp and phone: +1 (551) 800-2125 | hello@guldstreetshipping.com | guldstreetshipping.com

Guldstreet Shipping LLC, 3242 Bronx Blvd, Bronx, NY 10467. Accurate as of October 2026. Customs rules change; when in doubt, ask.