



Singapore Customs Media Release

PAY FINE OR TAX AT CUSTOMS?

Travellers Reminded to Declare Taxable Goods upon Return from Holiday Weekend

Fancy paying just \$30 in taxes when you declare your bottle of liquor¹ brought back from your holiday? Or 10 times more in fine if you fail to declare? It makes better sense to declare your taxable liquor and pay the required taxes to Customs, isn't it?

2 Many Singaporeans and travellers will be using the coming Good Friday and Labour Day long weekends to take overseas breaks. Singapore Customs would like to remind holidaymakers and other travellers arriving at Changi Airport and other checkpoints to make customs declarations at the Red Channel if they have any cigarettes or tobacco products, liquors exceeding their duty-free allowance and/or taxable items with values beyond their Good & Services Tax (GST) reliefs.

Declaration at Checkpoints

3 Upon arrival at the checkpoints, travellers carrying taxable products exceeding their duty-free allowance or GST relief are required to make a declaration in person to the checking officers at the Red Channel. Alternatively, they can proceed to make payment for duty and GST at Singapore Customs' self-service Tax Payment Kiosks at Changi Airport or at its Tax Payment Offices at all checkpoints. They should produce the invoices or receipts of their overseas purchases to facilitate computation of the required taxes.

¹ Example is based on a bottle of spirit with 40% alcoholic strength purchased at \$50. Assuming the duty-free allowance for liquor has been exceeded, the traveller would need to pay \$28 for the duty and \$5.46 for the GST on the bottle of spirit. The duty rate for wine and spirit is \$70 per litre of alcohol and the GST rate is 7% of the taxable value (which includes the purchase price and the duty amount).

Cigarettes and Tobacco Products

4 All cigarettes, including those with ‘SDPC’ markings, and tobacco products are subject to duty and GST. There is no duty-free concession on these products. In 2010, a total of 24,738 persons were fined for bringing in loose packets of cigarettes without declaring them at the Red Channel for payment of required duty and GST. This is 33% up from 2009 at 18,642 persons fined for similar offences.

Liquors Exceeding Duty-Free Allowance

5 A traveller bringing in or purchasing liquor on arrival in Singapore is entitled to duty-free allowance for spirits, wine and beer if he/she meets all of the following conditions:

- (a) 18 years old or above;
- (b) Has spent 48 hours or more outside Singapore immediately before his/her arrival;
- (c) Has not arrived from Malaysia; and
- (d) The liquors are not prohibited from import into Singapore.

6 The traveller can choose any of the three options indicated in the table below for the duty-free allowance (Table 1).

Table 1: Duty-free Concession Options for Liquor

Option	Spirits	Wine	Beer
A	1 Litre	1 Litre	1 Litre
B	No allowance	2 Litres	1 Litre
C	No allowance	1 Litre	2 Litres

7 Travellers are to note that beverages with alcoholic content exceeding 0.5% such as *Shandy* and bottled alcoholic cocktail drinks are dutiable. Likewise, liquors commonly consumed for health reasons and used for cooking purposes such as D.O.M., Yomeishu, samsoo and cooking wine are also dutiable. The duty-free allowance shown in Table 1 applies to these types of liquor. If travellers bring these types of liquor upon returning home, and where the duty-free allowance has been exceeded, duty and GST must be paid.

8 There is NO duty-free concession on liquors for persons arriving from Malaysia. Travellers of all nationality arriving from Malaysia will have to pay the relevant duties and GST on their liquors.

Taxable Goods beyond GST Reliefs

9 In general, all goods, both dutiable and non-dutiable, brought into Singapore for local consumption are subject to GST of 7%. To minimise inconveniences to travellers bringing small amounts of goods into Singapore for personal consumption, travellers (except for pass and permit holders) are granted the following reliefs on the value of the goods (Table 2):

Table 2: GST Reliefs (based on the value of goods)

Period away from Singapore	Below 18 years old	18 years old and above
Less than 24 hours	No relief	S\$50
24 to less than 48 hours	S\$ 50	S\$150
48 hours or more	S\$100	S\$300

10 Such goods include new articles, souvenirs, gifts and food preparations which are for traveller's personal use and not meant for sale.

New Customs Notices Installed! Advisory from Singapore Customs

11 Arriving travellers and returning Singaporeans should acquaint themselves with Singapore's customs regulations. While it is the responsibility of travellers to make an accurate and complete declaration of the dutiable and taxable items in their possession, compliance with these regulations will help travellers enjoy a smoother customs clearance upon arrival. Since October 2010, Singapore Customs has revamped the signages at the arrival halls of the checkpoints to highlight the customs regulations that travellers should comply with. These new signages come in clear headlines and pictorials and are prominently sited before customs clearance.



Lighted customs notices installed at airport arrival halls



A huge customs notice board placed prominently at one of the land checkpoints.

12 Failure to make a declaration is an offence under the Customs Act and the GST Act. Offenders may be prosecuted in court and fined up to \$10,000 and imprisonment for up to three years. The fine for out-of-court settlement for first time offence is 10 times the duty amount subject to a minimum of \$50. To avoid the hefty penalties, travellers are advised to consult Singapore Customs officers at the Tax Payment Office if they are unsure of the duty-free allowance or GST relief entitlement. Members of the public can seek assistance or

obtain more information by calling Singapore Customs at 6355 2000, email to customs.feedback@customs.gov.sg or visit the Customs website at www.customs.gov.sg.

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