

THE ULTIMATE CHECKLIST (INTERNATIONAL MOVE)



Your international to-do list for a smooth departure

Disclaimer: This checklist is informational and not legal/tax advice. Always verify country-specific rules (visas, customs, insurance). No rights can be derived from this document.

A – Timeline (from planning to arrival)

6–12 months before – also see the Before you move Checklist!

- Define move goals, target city/visa route, budget & runway (3–6 months living costs)
- Visa pathway & work rights confirmed (company sponsorship, student, partner, freelancer, etc.)
- Check degree/diploma translations, notarisations, apostilles
- Research neighbourhoods, commute, schools/childcare, pet rules, car rules
- Decide Ship vs. Buy vs. Store vs. Sell (weight/volume, replacement cost, voltage)
- Map customs restrictions & duty-free allowances
- Vaccinations (incl. travel & region-specific)

3–6 months before

- Book movers (compare sea vs. air freight, insurance, door-to-door vs. port)
- Temporary housing for arrival (serviced apt/Airbnb with kitchen & pet policy)
- School admissions/records, daycare waitlists
- Open multi-currency/transfer account; plan proof-of-address for local bank
- Order birth/marriage certificates, police/background checks if needed
- Start decluttering + selling/donating; list big items early
- Pet import plan: microchip (ISO), rabies vax/titer, health certificate, airline crate

1–3 months before

- Confirm visa approval window & entry deadlines; book flights
- Finalize move inventory + photographs for insurance
- Line up employer letters (income, role) & rental references

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- Pre-book utilities at destination (if allowed): internet, electricity, gas, water
- Book airport transfer; consider excess baggage vs. air cargo
- Medical: refill 3–6 months of prescriptions; doctor letters with generic names
- Digital life: password manager, 2FA backup codes, eSIM, number retention/porting
- File tax and residency admin plan (not advice): notify agencies, mail forwarding/virtual mailbox

2 weeks before

- Pack First-Night & First-Week Kits (see Section M)
- Final clean, meter readings, photos; keys/entry fob return plan
- Freeze/cancel memberships & subscriptions, redirect mail
- Export phone contacts, banking tokens; print boarding passes/QRs
- Confirm pet travel documents within validity windows

Move week / Travel day

- Carry-on: documents, meds, electronics, valuables, change of clothes
- Backup of all docs on encrypted drive; share emergency contacts
- Check airline rules (lithium batteries, power banks, special baggage)

Arrival week

- SIM/eSIM activation, transport card, basic groceries & water
- Local registration (city hall/immigration) & residence card biometrics appointment
- Bank account (proof of address), GP/dentist registration
- Unpack by rooms + urgency; schedule utility installs
- Register with embassy/consulate; learn emergency number(s)

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B. Documents & Legal (carry-on originals + copies)

Always seek advice from a legal counsellor/attorney

- Passport(s) + extra photos
- Visa/permit letters, entry documents, employment/student contracts
- Birth/marriage certificates, custody/guardianship letters
- Degree certificates, transcripts, translations/apostilles
- Police/background checks (if required)
- Medical records, vaccination cards, prescriptions list (generic names)
- Driver's license(s), International Driving Permit, driving record/No-Claims letter
- Insurance policies: health, travel, shipping, renters/liability, auto, pet
- Tax IDs & prior returns (as needed), pension/social security info
- Property docs (lease, inventory, deposit receipts)
- Pet import docs: microchip, vaccines, titer, health cert, airline approvals
- Digital set: encrypted cloud + hardware key/USB + printed copy list

C. Finance, Banking & Admin

- Budget (move, setup, deposits, furniture, transport, buffer)
- Multi-currency account (IBAN/SWIFT), low-fee transfers
- Credit: get reports, consider secured card in new country; keep a long-history card open
- Proof of funds/income letters; 3–6 months payslips/bank statements
- Update billing addresses; cancel or port subscriptions
- Mail forwarding or virtual mailbox
- Notify tax/social agencies of departure/arrival (country-specific)
- Keep emergency cash + two cards stored separately

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D. Housing (leaving & arriving)

Leaving

- Notice to landlord/HOA; confirm penalties & deposit timeline
- Pre-move inspection; photo/video of condition; meter readings
- Professional clean; handover checklist; keys/fobs/parking permit

Arriving

- Rental application pack: ID, visa, income letter, references, bank statements
- Understand credit substitutes (higher deposit, guarantor, upfront rent)
- Furniture plan: buy used/marketplace/short-term rentals
- Measure rooms; check voltage/sockets; order essentials to arrive Day 1–3

E. Work, Career & Study

- Updated CV in local format; local language version if relevant
- LinkedIn headline: see tips in the blog posts
- Employer letters (role, salary), relocation docs, expense policy & receipt system
- Certifications: syllabi, CPD records, professional body memberships (transfer/reciprocity)
- Students: I-20/DS-2019/CAS, acceptance letter, tuition plan, immunisation forms, orientation details
- Time-zone plan & calendar blocks for remote meetings

F. Kids & Family

- School records, report cards, immunisations, special education plans
- Birth certificates, custody/consent letters for travel
- Childcare contacts & waitlist applications
- Car seat standards (country-specific), stroller, baby meds
- Favourite comfort items for first nights

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G. Pet Relocation (dogs/cats)

- ISO microchip, rabies vaccination + titer if required
- Vet health certificate within airline/country validity window
- Airline-approved IATA crate (size, water bowls, absorbent pad, name tag)
- No sedation (airline/vet guidance); crate acclimation schedule
- Import permit/quarantine bookings if applicable
- Arrival plan: pet-friendly transport, first vet visit, local registration, flea/tick/heartworm meds

H. Shipping, Customs & Insurance

- Compare sea vs. air (cost, speed, climate risk); hybrid plan
- Full inventory list with values; photos; serial numbers; receipts where possible
- Prohibited/restricted items list per country (aerosols, alcohol, plants, soil, lithium, knives)
- Shipping insurance (named perils vs. all-risk); high-value riders
- Customs forms (unaccompanied baggage/household goods), tax-free thresholds, arrival deadlines
- Clean and dry outdoor gear (no soil) to avoid quarantine fines
- Track & trace; broker contact saved; delivery access booked (elevators/permits)

I. Packing Strategy

- Colour-coded labels by room + priority (Unpack Day 1 / Week 1 / Later)
- Packing cubes + zip bags for categories
- Heavy items in small boxes; light items in large boxes
- Fragile: double wrap, dish barrels, corner protectors, "Top Load Only"
- Vacuum bags for bulky textiles (watch humidity for long sea transit)
- Keep tools set & box cutter in the First-Week Kit
- Weigh boxes (air freight limits); photograph contents before sealing

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J. Electronics & Power

- Voltage & plug type check; decide converter vs. replace
- Universal adapters, power strips with surge protection
- Laptop/phone/tablet + chargers, e-reader, headphones
- External SSD/HDD backups (encrypted)
- Router/hotspot (region-compatible), travel plug for airplane
- Smart home devices region check (apps & standards)

K. Health, Meds & Well-being

- Prescriptions (3–6 months), doctor letters, generic names
- Glasses/contacts + duplicate prescriptions
- First-aid kit: pain/fever meds, antihistamines, bandages, ORS, thermometer
- Travel/health insurance cards + claims app
- Mental health plan (telehealth provider, emergency contacts)
- Vaccinations for destination; insect repellent, sunscreen
- Fitness gear for routine continuity (bands, small accessories)

L. Clothing by Scenario

- Workwear (seasons), casual, lounge, sleepwear
- Activewear, swimwear, outerwear (rain/winter), thermal layers
- Shoes: work, casual, running, hiking, weather-proof, house slippers
- Accessories: belts, hats, gloves, scarves
- Laundry kit: travel detergent, stain remover, foldable hamper

M. First-Night / First-Week Kits

Carry-on First-Night

- Passport/visa binder, wallet, keys, phone + charger, power bank
- Meds, toiletries, spare underwear & T-shirt, light sweater
- Snacks, water bottle, pen, eye mask, earplugs

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First-Week Box (open first)

- Bedding (sheet, pillowcases), towels, basic toiletries & TP
- Multi-tool, scissors/box cutter, screwdriver set, duct tape, measuring tape
- Kettle/french press, 1 pot/pan, knives/cutting board, 2 plates/bowls/cups/cutlery
- Dish soap, sponge, trash bags, paper towels, basic spices/oil
- Multi-plug, bulbs, small extension cord, night light
- Surface cleaner, wipes, laundry pods
- Small first-aid kit, thermometer

N. Kitchen & Home Essentials (ship or buy there)

- Cookware basics, baking tray, utensils, tupperware
- Linens: sheets/duvet, towels, kitchen towels
- Hangers, storage bins, shoe rack, doormat
- Cleaning set: broom/mop, vacuum (voltage), cleaners
- Starter pantry list (salt, pepper, oil, coffee/tea, rice, pasta, canned items)

O. Utilities, Services & Local Setup

- Internet install booked; router compatibility
- Electricity/gas/water set up; meter photos on day 1
- Waste/recycling schedule; buy trash stickers/bags if required
- Parking permit/toll account; bike/scooter rules & helmet laws
- TV license (countries like UK), postbox/doorbell name tag

P. Digital Life & Security

- Password manager; 2FA app + backup codes printed if necessary – be careful
- Update phone number on banks, email, cloud, social, tax portals
- eSIM or roaming plan; keep old number active (bank OTP)
- App store/region settings; streaming/VPN legality check
- Cloud backups (photos/docs) verified; hardware security key if used

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Q. Vehicle (optional)

- Ship or buy? Compliance checks (emissions/safety), speedometer units
- Clean to “biosecurity standard” (no soil/plant matter)
- Title/registration/export permits; proof of ownership
- International insurance/green card; roadside assistance
- Driver’s license exchange rules & tests; parking and toll systems

R. Sustainability & Cost Savers

- Sell heavy/cheap-to-replace items; buy local used (marketplace/second-hand)
- Reuse boxes, share/sell packing materials at arrival
- Offset long-haul flights; choose energy-efficient appliances
- Donate duplicates; recycle e-waste responsibly

S. Community, Language & Life Admin

- Join expat/local groups (Meetup, sports clubs, volunteering)
- Enrol in language class/apps
- Cultural basics & public holiday calendar
- Emergency numbers saved; nearest clinic, ER, 24/7 pharmacy
- Create “Who to call” card for wallet & fridge

T. Master Packing Lists

Carry-on (each traveler)

- Travel wallet (passports, visas, cards, cash in small amounts)
- Phone + charger + power bank, headphones
- Meds, glasses/contacts, hand sanitizer, wipes
- Laptop/tablet + chargers, adapter
- Change of clothes, light jacket, snacks, water bottle (empty through security)

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Checked luggage

- Clothing capsules by season, shoes in dust bags
- Toiletries (leak-proof), tools (voltage-safe and airline approved)
- Foldable duffel for overflow on return trips
- Gifts/food only if allowed by customs

Air freight / Unaccompanied baggage

- Extra clothing/linens, compact kitchen set, desk setup basics
- Non-perishable pantry starters, small decor for “home” feeling
- Label with name, phone, email, destination address; include inventory inside

Sea freight

- Furniture worth shipping, large rugs, artwork (crated), bikes
- Dehumidifier packs; moisture-safe packing; insurance value list

Storage (in home country)

- Climate-controlled unit if storing electronics/wood
- Inventory + photos, auto-pay set, contact person with spare key

U. Final Move-Out Checklist

- Deep clean booked; patch nail holes if required
- Meter readings with timestamps & photos
- Handover form signed; keys/fobs/garage remotes returned
- Address changes complete; mail redirection active
- Deposit claim submitted with evidence

Feeling overwhelmed by the move? You don't have to do it alone. Find free resources + a global community at yourinternationaljourney.com and join the conversation on Instagram @[borderlessdiariescommunity](https://www.instagram.com/borderlessdiariescommunity).

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