

Moving Abroad: International Relocation Checklist & Timeline

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Description:

Moving Abroad: International Relocation Checklist & Timeline Moving to a new country is thrilling and complex. Customs, shipping timelines, visa requirements, and cultural adjustment all intersect ...

Details:

Moving to a new country is thrilling and complex. Customs, shipping timelines, visa requirements, and cultural adjustment all intersect with logistics. This guide prepares you for an international move, from planning to unpacking abroad.

Before You Commit: Early Research (4–6 Months)

****1. Visa & Immigration Requirements**** Different countries have different timelines: - ****UK/EU****: Visa can take 4–12 weeks - ****Australia****: Skilled migration visas take 6–12 months - ****USA****: Work visa approval takes 1–3 months - ****Canada****: Provincial nominee or work permit varies (2–6 months)

Check embassy websites and budget time accordingly.

****2. Cost of International Removal**** Expect to pay 2–3× the cost of a domestic move: - ****Air freight**** (fast): \$4,000–\$12,000 (depending on volume) - ****Sea freight**** (economical): \$2,000–\$6,000 (4–8 weeks transit) - ****Customs clearance****: \$500–\$1,500 per shipment - ****Insurance****: 2–3% of shipment value - ****Destination city delivery****: \$400–\$1,000

Budget early; get three international removal quotes.

****3. What Can You Actually Take?**** Every country has restricted items: - ***Australia***: electronics need approval, some foods prohibited - ***UK***: no restrictions for EU citizens; varies for others - ***USA***: some foods, plants, electronics restricted - ***Canada***: weapons, certain plants, some cosmetics prohibited

Research your destination's customs website **before** packing.

****4. Should You Ship Everything or Sell & Rebuy?**** For large moves (especially from Australia), compare: - ****Ship everything****: high cost but familiar items, sentimental value preserved - ****Sell & rebuy****: expensive upfront, but modern electronics/furniture cheaper locally, lighter shipping

Reality check: shipping a Sydney sofa to London costs \$2,500+. A comparable sofa in London costs \$1,000. Many international movers sell 40–60% of items locally.

4–5 Months Before: Planning Phase

****Lock Your Visa Status**** No ship-date is certain until visa approval. Once approved (or nearly certain), book removal company and schedule shipment.

****Choose Your Removal Method****

| Method | Timeline | Best For | Cost | |-----|-----|-----|-----| | Air freight | 7–14 days | urgent moves, expensive items | \$\$\$ | | Sea freight | 4–8 weeks | large volumes, lower budget | \$\$ | | Door-to-door service | 4–10 weeks | hassle-free, premium service | \$\$\$ | | Freight forwarder + local pickup | Variable | technical items, customs expertise | \$\$ |

Most first-time international movers choose sea freight (balance of cost and timeline).

****Book Your Removal Company**** International moves require specialist companies experienced with: - Customs documentation (HS codes, manifests) - Insurance across borders - Destination country regulations - Packing for 4–8 week sea transit (humidity, pressure changes)

Fragile Removals coordinates with international partners for end-to-end service.

****Notify Your Current Landlord/Employer**** International moves typically require 8–12 weeks' notice. Give formal notice immediately.

3 Months Before: Detailed Prep

****Get Quotes from 3+ International Removal Companies**** Ask specifically: - What's included? (packing, insurance, customs) - What's excluded? (storage, delivery delay, customs clearance) - Cancellation terms? (visa delays happen) - Any past-customer references?

****Inventory Everything You're Shipping**** Create a detailed list with: - Item description - Approximate value (for insurance) - Room destination - Any special handling needs

This prevents disputes later and helps customs processing.

****Arrange Housing Abroad**** Secure accommodation **before** shipping: - Short-term rental (first month) while you find permanent place - Temporary housing through employer (if corporate move) - With friends/family initially

Your belongings will arrive; you need a place to store them if your final address isn't ready.

****Get Medical & Administrative Records**** Before you go, collect: - Prescription copies (for foreign pharmacy) - Vaccination records - Medical summary from your GP - Tax records (for international tax filing) - Diploma/qualifications (for employment verification)

These are harder to retrieve after you've left.

2 Months Before: Logistics

****Arrange Temporary Storage (If Needed)**** If your new accommodation isn't ready: - Store items in destination city during customs clearance - Fragile arranges this with international partners - Cost: typically \$30–80/day depending on volume and location

****Finalize Insurance**** Your household insurance almost certainly **does not** cover international transit. Options: 1. ****All-risk insurance**** from the removal company (10–15% of shipment value) 2.

****Standalone transit insurance**** (sometimes cheaper; compare quotes) 3. ****Destination country insurance**** (covers items once arrived)

Don't skip this; claims abroad are complex without proper coverage.

****Plan Your Shipping Timeline Backwards**** - ****Visa approval date****: X - ****Removal booking****: X + 1 week - ****Packing/collection****: X + 2 weeks - ****Shipment departure****: X + 3 weeks - ****Transit (sea)****: add 4–8 weeks - ****Customs clearance****: add 1–2 weeks - ****Delivery to new address****: X + 12–14 weeks (sea freight)

Sea freight to Europe/UK: often 8–10 weeks total door-to-door.

6 Weeks Before: Execution

****Start Decluttering Aggressively**** Every kilogram costs money. Sell, donate, or discard: - Clothes (destination climate may be different) - Books (heavy; cheaper to rebuy locally) - Bulky furniture (shipping cost vs. local rebuy often favors rebuy) - Electronics (voltage/plug incompatibility; local standards vary)

****Begin Packing**** Use sturdy boxes; international transit is rough: - Heavy items in small boxes - Fragile items wrapped individually - Electronics in original boxes (or equivalent) - Liquids & hazardous materials in separate, sealed containers

****Update Key Services**** - Bank: notify of international move (fraud alerts often trigger) - Insurance: confirm coverage during transit - Employer: finalize relocation arrangements - Mobile phone: arrange international plan or local SIM for destination - Subscriptions: cancel or pause (some don't work abroad)

1 Month Before: Final Prep

****Complete All Administrative Tasks**** - Redirect mail (Australia Post: international forwarding takes time) - Close local utilities (provide final meter readings) - Settle any outstanding debts or accounts - Update address with all financial institutions - Cancel or transfer insurance (don't forget car/home)

****Confirm All Dates**** - Removal collection date - Shipment departure date (air/sea freight schedule) - Estimated arrival date at destination - Your own travel date (don't arrive before your belongings!)

****Prepare "Essentials Box" to Ship First**** In case your main shipment delays: - Medications (2-month supply) - Phone chargers & adapters - Important documents (passport, visa, medical records) - Change of clothes (1–2 weeks) - Toiletries & personal care items - Valuables (jewelry, electronics you can't replace quickly)

Ship this **before** your main shipment so it arrives first.

2 Weeks Before: Countdown

****Organize Utilities Disconnection**** - Electricity: schedule final reading and disconnection - Gas: arrange technician visit if needed - Water: close account and get final bill - Internet: return modem; confirm end date - Phone: port number if keeping it; cancel contract if not

****Document Your Current Property**** - Photograph every room (for bond return if renting) - Note any pre-existing damage - Take meter readings (gas, electricity, water) - Confirm lease end date and final walkthrough time

****Pack Remaining Items**** Label every box with: - Room destination (in destination country language if helpful) - Box number (e.g., "Bedroom — Box 1 of 5") - Contents list - Fragile warning (if applicable)

****Inform Neighbors & Landlord**** If renting, give 24-hour notice of removal van arrival. Arrange: - Building access if needed - Parking permission - Loading dock or elevator booking

Moving Week

****Oversee the Collection**** - Be home during packing/loading - Verify all items loaded - Get a signed inventory from the removal company - Take photos of the loaded van

****Final Walkthrough**** - Check every room, closet, cupboard, garage - Look for forgotten items - Photograph empty property (condition) - Confirm utilities disconnected - Return keys to landlord/agent

****Travel Preparation**** - Confirm flight details - Arrange airport parking or transport - Pack carry-on luggage with documents & valuables - Leave emergency contact number with family

After Arrival in Your New Country

****Track Your Shipment**** Most removal companies provide tracking. Check: - Shipment departure from origin - Transit status - Expected arrival at customs - Customs clearance timeline

****Clear Customs**** The removal company typically handles this, but: - Provide custom paperwork (invoice, insurance details) - Be prepared for customs inspection (may open boxes) - Budget 1–2 weeks for clearance - Pay any customs duty due (varies by country, item type)

****Receive & Unload**** - Confirm all items received - Inspect for damage **before** unloading - Report damage within 24 hours - Take photos of any damaged items

****Start Your New Adventure**** Set up utilities, update address, register with local services, and let your old life fade into memory.

Cost Breakdown: Real Example

Mark moved from Sydney to London (sea freight): - Removal & packing: \$3,200 - Sea freight (4 weeks): \$2,100 - Customs clearance: \$680 - Temporary storage (2 weeks): \$400 - Insurance (all-risk): \$340 - ****Total: \$6,720**** (for a 2-bedroom apartment's contents) - **What he didn't move**: sofas, bed frame, books, winter clothes (sold locally, rebought in London for net \$2,000 less than shipping would cost)

Common International Move Mistakes

- Starting planning less than 3 months before visa approval - Shipping everything (many items cheaper to rebuy) - Not insuring the shipment - Ignoring destination country customs restrictions - Arriving before belongings (nowhere to put things) - Forgetting mail redirection (bills arrive in old country) - Not confirming new accommodation **before** shipment arrives

Next Steps

Planning an international move? Fragile Removals coordinates with international partners to handle: - Expert packing for long transit - Customs documentation - Damage insurance - Destination delivery & temporary storage

Contact us for an international relocation quote and timeline plan.