

Arriving in Australia – Dealing with Customs

- Customs Officer:** Hello. Welcome to Australia. Your passport and customs declaration please. Where have you just come from?
- Visitor:** Singapore.
- Customs Officer:** What is the purpose of your stay?
- Visitor:** I'm visiting relatives in Melbourne.
- Customs Officer:** So you're continuing on a domestic flight to Melbourne, are you?
- Visitor:** That's correct.
- Customs Officer:** Do you have any plant materials like seeds, dried flowers or any fruit or other food with you?
- Visitor:** I have some oranges I bought in Singapore. Is that a problem?
- Customs Officer:** Yes it is. Unfortunately you are not allowed to bring any fruit into the country.
- Visitor:** Why is that?
- Customs Officer:** Because they may contain pests which could cause a problem for our native plants or our agricultural industry.
- Visitor:** Oh, I see.
- Customs Officer:** Do you have any other food items with you?
- Visitor:** Yes, a jar of Indian pickles and a sandwich from the plane.
- Customs Officer:** I'm sorry, but you'll have to hand over the sandwich. Import of any open food items is not allowed.
- Visitor:** Oh, OK. It's just in my handbag. Here it is.
- Customs Officer:** Thank you. Do you have any other food items?
- Visitor:** No, I don't think so.
- Customs Officer:** Could you please open your suitcase?
- Visitor:** OK.

Customs Officer: Right! What's this?

Visitor: Oh, it's a packet of coriander seeds. Is it a problem?

Customs Officer: Where did you buy it?

Visitor: In Singapore.

Customs Officer: This is a one kilo packet of seeds. It's rather a lot, isn't it?

Visitor: In my culture, we eat a lot of them.

Customs Officer: Hmm, did you declare this?

Visitor: No, I didn't think it would be an issue.

Customs Officer: Normally you should declare all foodstuffs, regardless of whether you think it's an issue or not. I'll let it pass this time, because the item is vacuum sealed, but next time, please declare all food items on your person.

Visitor: OK, thank you!

Customs Officer: Have a nice stay in Australia

Vocabulary

Customs declaration a card all visitors to Australia need to fill out and hand in on arrival

to declare something to tell something, particularly to police, customs or immigrations authorities

Rellies Australian slang for relatives

Domestic flight inland flight

Pests insects or other animals that could cause a problem to humans or nature.

Native plants plants that grow only in Australia

Pickles fruit or vegetables that have been kept in vinegar and spices (usually in a jar)

to hand over to give to someone

Right! In this case: an exclamation like 'a-ha!'.

to be an issue to be a problem

foodstuffs anything that can be considered as food or used to make food.

on your person with you

to let something pass to accept something; not to take any action