

South Africa → Portugal

Dog Import Checklist & Quick Guide | TailHarbor | Updated April 2026

KEY INFORMATION

COMPLEX ROUTE: Titer test + 90-day wait required

Preparation Time:	4-6 months
Microchip:	ISO 11784/11785 (must be implanted BEFORE rabies vaccination)
Rabies Vaccination:	Required. Minimum 21 days before travel (primary). Keep boosters current.
Titer Test (FAVN):	REQUIRED. Blood draw 30+ days after vaccination. 90-day wait from draw date.
Documentation:	Animal Health Certificate (AHC) issued max 10 days before arrival. Single-use.
Breed Restrictions:	7 breeds restricted under Decree 315/2009: Pit Bull Terrier, Staffordshire Bull Terrier, American Staffordshire Terrier,...
Cropping/Docking:	Dogs with cropped ears or docked tails may face import restrictions in Portugal
Registration:	Local registration required within 30 days of arrival
Entry Points (BIP):	PEV (Border Inspection Post): Lisbon, Porto, Faro, Funchal (Madeira), Ponta Delgada (Azores)

USEFUL TIPS

- Start the process as early as possible. Delays with lab results or vet appointments can push back your timeline significantly.
- Book your FAVN titer test at an EU-approved lab early. Processing takes 7-14 days, and if results come back below 0.5 IU/ml, you'll need to re-vaccinate and re-test (resetting the 90-day clock).
- Keep your dog's rabies vaccinations current with no gaps. If there's a lapse, the titer test validity may be lost and you'll need to restart the process.
- Research airline pet policies early. Some airlines have limited cargo spots, especially in summer. Temperature embargoes apply above 30C / below -5C at any transit airport.
- Start crate training weeks before travel. A calm, crate-confident dog will have a much less stressful journey.

PRE-TRAVEL CHECKLIST

EARLY PREPARATION

- Confirm your dog's breed is permitted in Portugal
- Research airline pet policies and book cargo/cabin spot
- Purchase IATA-approved travel crate (correct size for your dog)
- Begin crate training

MEDICAL REQUIREMENTS

- Microchip implanted (ISO 11784/11785) -- BEFORE vaccination
- Rabies vaccination administered (min. 21 days before travel)
- Blood draw for FAVN titer test (30+ days after vaccination)
- Titer test result received (minimum 0.5 IU/ml)
- 90-day waiting period completed (from blood draw date)

DOCUMENTATION

- Animal Health Certificate obtained (max 10 days before arrival)
- All vaccination records compiled
- Titer test certificate included
- Copies of all documents made (2 sets)
- Airline booking confirmation printed

TRAVEL DAY

- All original documents in carry-on bag
- Crate labeled with your name, phone, destination, and 'Live Animal'
- Water dish filled and attached inside crate
- Arrive at airport early (3+ hours for international with pet)

AFTER ARRIVAL IN PORTUGAL

- Present documents at Travellers' Point of Entry / Border Control
- Register dog with local municipality within 30 days
- Register with local veterinarian
- Obtain pet liability insurance (recommended)