

# AQIS Fact Sheet

## Traditional Diwali gifts and quarantine risks



Australian Government

Australian Quarantine  
and Inspection Service

### Why is AQIS interested in items mailed to Australia during the Diwali festival?

Diwali is an important festival that involves the exchange of gifts. Some gifts that contain quarantine risk items could introduce pests and diseases, having devastating effects for Australia's import and export markets.

AQIS manages quarantine controls at our borders to minimise the risk of exotic pests and diseases entering Australia. Part of AQIS's role is to check passengers' luggage arriving in Australia for anything containing prohibited items.

### What type of items are seized?

During the Diwali festival, typical gifts that could be seized consist of prohibited:

- Indian sweets such as: barfi, ras malai, gulab jamun and pedas
- products containing dairy
- fresh and dried fruit
- nuts, seeds, herbs, spices and tea
- plants, flowers and plant material.

### How can I help reduce the risk of pests and diseases entering Australia?

Before landing in Australia you will be given an Incoming Passenger Card. You must mark 'Yes' if you are carrying any plant material, animal products or food including spices, seeds, nuts or Indian sweets. This is a legal document and there may be penalties if you don't fill this in correctly.

If you have items you don't wish to declare, you can dispose of them in quarantine bins in the airport terminal.

### What happens to items I declare?

Most declared items will be returned to you after inspection. However, anything found to be a quarantine risk will be seized. Depending on the risk, you will be given the option to:

- pay for the item to be treated make it safe
- store the item at the airport for collection when you leave Australia. This is subject to fees and special conditions apply
- pay to re-export the item, or
- have the item destroyed by AQIS.

### What happens if I don't declare items?

At international airports, if you don't declare quarantine risk items, you could receive an on-the-spot fine of up to A\$220. For more serious breaches of Australian Quarantine laws, you could be prosecuted and face a fine of over A\$60 000 or 10 years imprisonment which may result in a criminal record.

### For more information about quarantine:

- Visit [www.aqis.gov.au/travel](http://www.aqis.gov.au/travel)
- Download or request a copy of the What Can't I take into Australia? brochure
- Call AQIS on 1800 020 504 (free call in Australia).