

easyship

What is the Cheapest Way to Ship a Package Internationally in 2020?



What Is The Cheapest Option For Shipping Overseas?

If you do a light Google search, you'll find many articles stating that the cheapest way to ship internationally in 2020 is to use the US Postal Service. What most people don't realize, however, is that this only applies if you plan to ship domestically within the US.

DHL vs. Fedex vs. UPS vs. USPS - 2020 International Shipping Rates Comparison

We decided to do some research and compare prices between USPS international shipping rates and popular express couriers to see who offers the cheapest shipping rates for international routes. Personally, I often send packages from Connecticut, USA to Hong Kong; considering the distance for this route, I figured it would be a good example to use for this article.



Which USPS Service is the Cheapest Way to Ship Internationally?

Researching USPS international shipping rates can feel overwhelming, as there are different services available based on your delivery time frame. You also have to take weight-based pricing and destination into account.

They also have [specific pricing for certain countries](#), while some countries are assigned to a particular pricing group. In my case, I found out that Hong Kong is under "Group 3", while mainland China has its own specific rate. Do keep this in mind if you're brave enough to navigate their complicated [pricing tables](#).

Priority Mail vs Flat Rate Shipping

At first glance, Priority Mail International - Flat Rate service appears to be the cheapest way to mail a package. A small box being sent to Hong Kong from my zip code in Connecticut is priced at \$36.45 with a maximum weight of 4lbs.

Seeing that the box dimensions are 8 11/16" x 5 7/16" x 1 3/4", the caveat here is that if you are a small business shipping out goods across the world, it is unlikely to fit merchandise that is heavier than 2 pounds into a box this size (according to the experienced folks at [My Wife Quit Her Job.](#))

It's more realistic to say that you'd use the medium flat rate box to ship anything that weighs over 2 lbs.



Before we go any further, let's see how the price of the small flat rate box compares to other USPS international shipping services at the 2 lb mark, in addition to express couriers:

Courier	Service	Delivery Time (claim)	Cost (Retail Pricing)
USPS	Priority Mail International - Small Flat Rate Box	6-10 days	\$36.45
USPS	First Class Package International	7-21 days	\$26.75
USPS	Priority Mail International	6-10 days	\$54.15
USPS	Priority Mail Express International	2-5 days	\$70.90
UPS	UPS Worldwide Expedited	2-5 days	\$137.15
UPS	UPS Worldwide Saver	3-5 days	\$137.15
FedEx	International Economy	4-6 days	\$113.69
FedEx	International Priority	1-3 days	\$118.72

It turns out that Priority Mail International - Flat Rate service is the cheapest way to ship internationally, especially if you don't have a business account with express couriers.

It's interesting to see that the retail price for express couriers such as UPS and FedEx international shipping rates can reach 3 figures (!!!) compared to USPS.



Comparing Prices Of Priority Mail International – Flat Rate For Medium Sized Box

Now, let's go back to the assumption that it's more realistic to use the medium flat rate box to ship anything that weighs over 2 lbs. The medium box's dimensions are 14" x 12" x 3 1/2", is priced at \$77.50, and the maximum weight is 20lbs.

After studying the pricing charts, my research shows that the breakeven point for using the international medium flat rate box in this case is 8lbs. So, if the weight of the package is between 8-20 pounds, the medium flat rate box will be the cheapest way to ship.

Let's compare prices of the medium sized Flat Rate box, with a package weight of 8lbs:

Shipping Rates for a 8lb package, 9" x 6" x 2", from Connecticut, USA to Hong Kong

Courier	Service	Delivery Time (claim)	Cost (Retail Pricing)
USPS	Priority Mail International - Medium Flat Rate Box	6-10 days	\$77.50
USPS	Priority Mail International	6-10 days	\$82.15
USPS	Priority Mail Express International	3-5 days	\$101.55
UPS	UPS Worldwide Expedited	2-5 days	\$210.05
UPS	UPS Worldwide Saver	2-3 days	\$222.55
FedEx	International Economy	4-6 days	\$212.95
FedEx	International Priority	1-3 days	\$235.27

But...you WILL get what you pay for.

Now, if we were to base our experience strictly on costs, clearly USPS is the cheapest way to send a package by a long shot.

But considering USPS' not-so-stellar record of delivery times (they do not guarantee or commit to them), paired with spotty tracking service, it may not be worth it if you're running a business and looking to build trust with your overseas customers.

This is where Easyship can help.

Remember how expensive those express courier rates were if you didn't have a business account with special negotiated rates? Let's take a look at the 8lb package rates:

1 To get this figure, Easyship uses past shipments and looks at the median for the min and at the upper .85 percentile for the max.

**These figures are estimates only; rates may vary depending on origin and destination details; additional services such as insurance and tax and duty processing are not included.*



The 8lb rates don't look too bad:

Rates for an 8lb package, 14" x 12" x 4", from Connecticut, USA to Hong Kong

Courier	Service	Delivery Time (claim/Actual ¹)	Cost (Retail Pricing/ Cost Using Easyship [*])
USPS	Priority Mail International	6-10 days / 10-15 days	\$77.50 / \$78.04*
USPS	Priority Mail Express International	3-5 days / 10-15 days	\$101.55 / \$96.31*
UPS	UPS Worldwide Expedited	2-5 days / 2-3 days	\$210.05 / \$112.16*
UPS	UPS Worldwide Saver	2-3 days / 1-2 days	\$222.55 / \$222.55*
FedEx	International Economy	4-6 days / 3-5 days	\$212.95 / \$129.86*
FedEx	International Priority	1-3 days / 1-2 days	\$235.27 / \$134.67*

¹ To get this figure, Easyship uses past shipments and looks at the median for the min and at the upper .85 percentile for the max.

^{*}These figures are estimates only; the least expensive shipping rates may vary depending on origin and destination details; additional services such as insurance and tax and duty processing are not included. Please note that UPS and FedEx currently have limited availability to Hong Kong; their Easyship rates shown here are from 2019.



With Easyship, using express couriers are slightly more affordable for shipping overseas.

But here's a twist: what if I were to tell you that there is a dark horse when it comes to the cheapest courier that'll ship to Hong Kong?

Get a quote

You're shipping from: **New Canaan, Connecticut 06840**

Receiver Information

Country: Hong Kong (dropdown) | Postal Code (Optional): []

Order Summary

Box: Custom Box (dropdown) | Dimensions: 14 x 12 x 4 in | Weight: 8 lb | Item Category: Fashion (dropdown) | Currency: USD (dropdown) | Value: 100

Insurance (Learn more) | Taxes & Duties

No Yes Pre-paid (Sender) Post-paid (Receiver)

GET A QUOTE

Our Pick	Delivery Time	Tracking	Rating	Service Options	Courier	Remarks	Tax & Duty	Total Cost
#1	5 - 8 working days	Regular	3.7 / 5.0 145 votes	Drop-off Free Pickup	SF Express - Economy Express		No taxes	\$38.11
#3	10 - 15 working days	Basic	3.0 / 5.0 < 50 votes	Drop-off Free Pickup	APC - ePMI		No taxes	\$55.03
#5	10 - 15 working days	Regular	3.5 / 5.0 100 votes	Drop-off Free Pickup	Aramex - Parcel		No taxes	\$66.59

Easyship's Get A Quote Feature, showing the most cost-effective shipping rates from the US to Hong Kong



The dark horse turns out to be [SF Express](#), a regional courier that focuses on deliveries to Hong Kong and mainland China!

At \$38.11, it turns out to have the cheapest shipping rates for a courier company, beating out USPS' flat rate at the 8 lb mark.

This goes to show that although USPS does provide competitive international rates, it's possible that their prices can be beat by a regional courier.

To conclude, the cheapest way to ship internationally is:

USPS. Their international shipping rates are cheaper than UPS and FedEx.

- Using UPS and FedEx to ship internationally without a business account can be really costly, with rates almost being 3x higher than USPS.
- With Easyship, you can save up to 40% on express courier rates when shipping internationally.
- The results may surprise you when getting a quote on Easyship's platform - you may find that a regional courier could end up being the cheapest way to ship.

If you want to learn more about shipping internationally, we suggest you start here. [Sign up for Easyship](#) - it's free!

To learn more about the courier services used in the comparisons, check out the following links:

[USPS Priority Mail International](#)

[FedEx International Priority](#)

[FedEx International Economy](#)

Also, if you're interested in more affordable international shipping rates, consider checking out our [hybrid solutions](#). One of these is [Flat Export Rate](#) which is a great budget option for international shipments, and only has two zones, one for Canada, one for the rest of the world which really allows merchants to simplify their shipping estimations.



Additional Resources

- [Shipping Policy Generator](#)
- [A Seller's Guide to eCommerce Domestic Shipping](#)
- [International Shipping Guide](#)
- [Managing eCommerce Returns](#)
- [How to Deal with Damaged Goods Returns](#)
- [12 Tips to Reduce Holiday eCommerce Returns](#)
- [How to Handle Returns for International Orders](#)

