

Explainer: What goods can be sold in Gibraltar after the treaty?

One phrase that appears repeatedly in the UK–EU Gibraltar treaty material is that goods sold in Gibraltar must comply with EU rules when they are “placed on the market in Gibraltar.”

So what does that actually mean?

The basic rule

A product is considered placed on the market when it is imported into Gibraltar or produced locally and then sold, supplied or offered for sale in Gibraltar.

Where EU product safety rules exist for that type of product, those rules must be followed.

This does not mean every product suddenly requires EU certification. Many everyday goods, such as furniture, textiles, stationery and some construction materials, do not have specific EU product regulations.

But where EU rules exist, they must apply.

The CE mark

For many regulated goods, including electronics, toys and machinery, compliance is demonstrated through the “CE” mark.

Products already sold in the EU will normally carry this mark.

Many UK manufacturers also apply the CE mark because UK and EU product standards remain largely aligned. Some products also carry the UKCA mark, the equivalent UK certification.

UK standards often already comply

Many British products follow BS EN standards, which are British standards that are technically identical to EU standards.

This means a large number of UK goods already meet EU safety requirements.

For example:

- British three-pin plugs remain legal in Gibraltar.
- EU countries such as Ireland, Cyprus and Malta also use them.

What about food?

Food is regulated under a separate system known as SPS rules.

SPS stands for Sanitary and Phytosanitary rules, the international framework governing the safety of food, animals and plants crossing borders. These rules exist to prevent animal disease, contaminated food or plant pests entering a territory.

Because Gibraltar will sit inside the EU food-safety perimeter, food imported into Gibraltar will have to comply with EU SPS rules.

The UK–EU SPS agreement

The UK and the EU are currently negotiating a separate SPS agreement covering food, animal and plant products.

On 9 March 2026 the UK Government published guidance for UK businesses on the proposed agreement, explaining how it is expected to simplify the movement of agri-food products between the UK and the EU.

If concluded, the agreement would recognise that UK food-safety standards are broadly equivalent to EU standards and would significantly reduce border checks, paperwork and certification requirements for food exports.

The current expectation is that the agreement could enter into force by summer 2027.

What this means in practice

Until that agreement is in place, some UK food products may require additional veterinary or plant-health certification before entering Gibraltar.

This does not mean UK food disappears from Gibraltar shelves. Many UK exporters already comply with EU SPS rules because they sell into EU markets.

However, products containing fresh meat, dairy or plant products may require additional documentation until the SPS agreement takes effect.

Will British foods still be available?

In practice, products such as:

- Stilton cheese
- Pork pies
- Pigs in blankets

are very unlikely to disappear from Gibraltar shops, although import procedures for suppliers may become more complex until the SPS agreement is finalised.

In short, this is mainly a logistics and certification issue for importers, not a ban on British food.

Local food production

Importantly, the treaty includes a specific derogation for small-scale food preparation within Gibraltar.

This means food prepared locally for example: bakery products, café and restaurant food, butcher-prepared meats and foods repacked by retailers, does not need to comply with EU food production rules, provided the food is sold only within Gibraltar.

Special exemptions

The treaty also contains targeted derogations for certain UK products.

Medicines authorised in the UK can continue to be imported into Gibraltar if labelled “UK only.” This was considered essential because more than 90% of Gibraltar medicines are sourced from the UK.

Certain medical devices authorised only in the UK may also continue to be used by the Gibraltar Health Authority under a specific exemption.

Who checks compliance?

Two authorities will oversee the system:

- EU customs posts will check goods entering Gibraltar.
- Gibraltar Customs and the Office of Fair Trading will monitor goods already on the market.

The key takeaway

The treaty does not mean Gibraltar shops must stop selling UK products.

It simply means that goods sold in Gibraltar must comply with EU safety rules where those rules exist, something many UK products already do.

For most consumers, the changes will mainly affect how goods are imported, not what is available on the shelves.

That's my interpretation. Hope it helps. Do take professional advice if you are importing products. Meanwhile, no need to stock up on pork pies, they are not particularly healthy anyway.

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