

VANUATU

OCEANIA



Travel or Possession Permitted with Moderate Restrictions



Summary

- Cannabis is illegal for recreational use in Vanuatu. Unauthorized possession, sale, cultivation, or import can result in heavy penalties (fines up to VT 100 million, or up to 20 years imprisonment).
- Under the Medical Cannabis and Industrial Hemp Act (2021), licensed cultivation and export of medical cannabis and industrial hemp are legally permitted, but domestic medical use or personal import is not generally allowed.

Background

- Vanuatu's laws treat CBD and THC identically; no distinction exists for medical versus recreational products until strict licensing is granted for export purposes only.
- Licensed cultivation is limited to specified islands (Efate, Santo, Malekula, Tanna, Erromango) and requires significant investment and regulatory oversight per Decision 157/2018 and the Act of 2021.

Non-Medical Cannabis

- Recreational cannabis remains fully prohibited.
- Offenses include:
 - Possession → fines up to 100 million Vatu (~US \$850,000) or up to 20 years imprisonment
 - Cultivation (unauthorized) → up to 7 years in prison
 - Trafficking or large-scale production → up to 14–20 years and fines



Traveling to Vanuatu with Medical Cannabis

Import & Possession — Limited Exemption Possible

- Generally, travelers are prohibited from importing cannabis-based products (THC or CBD), even if prescribed abroad.
- However, an unofficial exemption under Vanuatu's Dangerous Drugs Act permits small, personal medicinal preparations, if:
 - They are of reasonable amount,
 - Accompanied by a letter from a medical practitioner in the traveler's origin country, and
 - Appropriately labelled with correct substance name.

Caution: This exemption relies on internal agency interpretation. It has resulted in successful entry for some travelers, but reception by customs may vary.

Steps to Take Before Departure:

1. Do not assume cannabis import is permitted, unless exemption conditions are clearly met.
2. For potential exemption cases, prepare:
 - A letter from your prescribing doctor stating medical need
 - Your medicine in original labelled packaging
 - Pre-notification or communication with Vanuatu customs or embassy
3. Carry only permitted, non-cannabis prescription medications as needed.
4. Ensure no supplements or cosmetics contain cannabinoids.
5. Be mindful: even trace amounts may trigger scrutiny or enforcement if not documented correctly.

Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Forestry, Fisheries and Biosecurity (MALFFB) Contact Information

- Address: Independence Park Road, Port Vila, Postal Code: 9036, Vanuatu
- Phone: 678-33220
- General Email: info@malffb.gov.vu

Practical Tips

- Licensed cultivation and export are legal, but domestic personal use and import are not standard policy. Do not rely on incomplete or anecdotal permission.
- If importing medical cannabis, contact the Vanuatu Ministry of Health or customs authorities in advance.
- Prefer obtaining treatment in countries with formal, codified medical cannabis frameworks rather than relying on discretionary exemptions in Vanuatu.

The information provided reflects the most current data available; however, as cannabis laws are continually evolving, this content should not be interpreted as legal advice.

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