

Buying from China - A B2C guide for the informed Redditor - u/anitalianguy

Intro	3
General remarks	3
Agents – your best friends when buying from China	4
DHgate and Aliexpress	4
Taobao	7
Start using Taobao	7
Taobao Image search	8
Reviews on Taobao items	10
Understanding the measurements	11
Can I find reviews on Reddit for the items I would like to buy?	12
Once you find all the items you like	12
Purchasing from China using an Agent	12
Adding an item to cart	12
Send the purchase order	14
Receiving the goods	14
Shipping the products from Superbuy to you	15
Is an item too heavy?	19
Yupoo	20
Purchasing a Yupoo article – Superbuy Expert Service	21
Discover more	22

Intro

The goal of this guide is to illustrate all the processes and the steps involved in purchasing products offered for sale in the most common **Chinese B2C marketplaces**. At the same time, I will describe how to deal and negotiate effectively with Chinese sellers, agents.

I have been purchasing from **China** for years and despite the fact that I don't speak Chinese I always had a discreet success at having the latest gadgets and products delivered safely at my place. I don't hide you that I had issues with customs, with defective products, with sellers that didn't ship at all — as I hope none of you will have the headaches that I had, I wrote this guide not as a bible but as a series of heads-up you should consider while buying responsibly.

General remarks

Buying from China is not particularly complicated, but requires you to be careful and consider a few details that may improve your experience and save you from potential disappointments.

First of all, while buying online from websites like Amazon or even eBay may be a process you are already familiar with, there are still some aspects that you could give for granted that don't apply to buying from China. The first one I can think of is that using your credit card, your PayPal account or other cash based payment methods highly influences the price you will be paying for your items. We will see in depth how using **WesterUnion**, **MoneyGram** or **Bitcoins** may lower the price sellers will be asking, but expose you to potential frauds or scams.

Then you should consider that generally there will be **no returns** for the products that you will receive at your house. No 14 days return policy, no exchanges or credits once they cross the ocean. Of course, this may vary depending on where you are based, but in most of the cases returns will be neither allowed nor economically viable. I will show you what to ask and how to approach sellers and be sure you will receive exactly what you were expecting.

Another important aspect is that trust is everything in this business; be respectful, loyal and precise when working with a seller, an agent or another user and you will get better rates, better treatment and better experience.

Last but not least, fakes and reps. If you buy replica item, counterfeited goods or imitations them you are assuming the responsibility of doing so. Check what your government says on this and be informed that if caught buying large quantities, selling reps on luxury marketplaces as originals or scamming people off Reddit, sooner or later you will be found and you will have to pay for it. Enjoy your products, wear them with pride and have fun accessing items you normally would not be able to, just try not to be a dick.

Hereby some **Subreddits** (if you are familiar with Reddit) where you can find reviews, pictures, sources and links where to purchase products:

- www.reddit.com/r/fashionreps
- www.reddit.com/r/designerreps
- www.reddit.com/r/repladies
- www.reddit.com/r/repsneakers
- <u>www.reddit.com/r/rept</u>ime

Agents – your best friends when buying from China

An agent is a third party that positions itself between you and the Chinese seller. He has the role of ensuring your transaction goes as smoothly as possible and you get your products safely and without unexpected surprises.

First of all, register with our preferred agent, Superbuy, by clicking here

Superbuy, as any other Chinese agent, will purchase the good you like on your behalf, store them in their warehouses in China, and send them to you once you decide you reach enough items to justify the shipping costs.

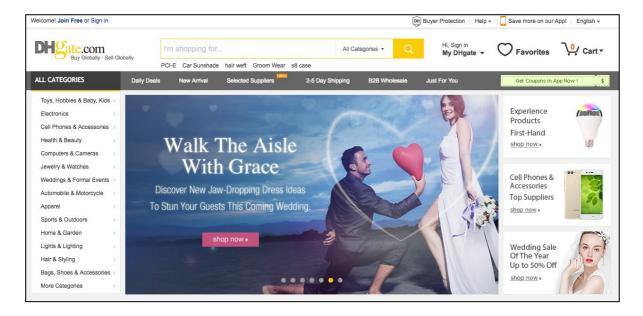
Their income will be a small percentage of your purchases (usually 2-5%) and you would have to pay these fees when you'll give them instructions to buy the items for you. We will see later and in depth how agents work according to what website we will be using.

Superbuy is a large website and company dealing with all aspects of exporting items out of China, they have a legal team on site for larger exporters, 24/7 English speaking customers service, an affiliate program and overall an easy and approachable interface. They also will permit you to see the items once they get received, measure them and return them (in most of the cases) if the product is flawed or does not fit your size.

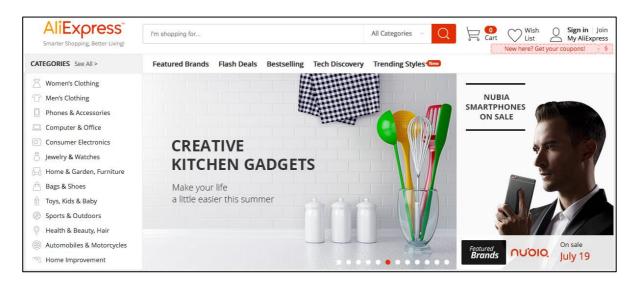
DHgate and Aliexpress

If you already made purchases in Amazon you may be already familiar with the overall structure of first two marketplaces I will be illustrating. DHGate and Aliexpress are B2C marketplaces where hundreds of thousands of sellers showcase their products in an uncomplicated and customer friendly interface. Most of the pages, including the account and the order sections, as well as the homepage and most of the sellers' profiles, are translated in an acceptable English.

www.dhgate.com



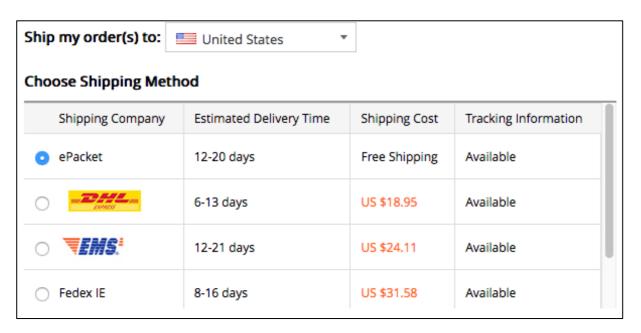
www.aliexpress.com



Sellers have shops just like you may see in Amazon, and list their items in pages where you can check the item details, select the colourway and the size of the item and read the reviews of customers who already completed transactions. Goes without saying that you should be careful when choosing a seller, and the reviews are generally a good indicator of trustworthiness.

I can give you a heads up on the shipping here. Several countries have signed deals with China and are now able to offer reasonably priced, effective shipping methods across the two countries. Called **ePacket**, this shipping method generally costs few Dollars and has a tracking code included in the price. Once you get the tracking code use the website www.17track.com to monitor the package from China to your country. Works with most of the countries and carriers in the world and has a clean interface.

Have a look at what shipping options are usually displayed – and remember that the presence of a certain option or the price highly depends on what seller and what products you may be interested in purchasing.



Other shipping method are of course faster and more reliable but you need to be careful and consider that prices can be hefty for small value items or when making orders from different sellers. It's worth noticing that you will have to pay shipping to **every seller you buy from**.

DHL and Aliexpress let you contact the seller via chat or email and despite not having the guarantee they will reply in a short time it's a good way to clear some of the doubts you may have on the products.

You do not need an agent to purchase from Aliexpress or from DHGate. All you need is a credit card or a Paypal account and you are good to go!

Get free coupons for your shipping from China registering here.

Taobao

Start using Taobao

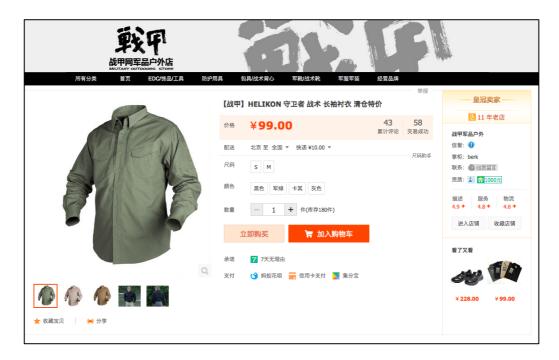
My guide will focus mostly on this marketplace, as in my opinion it offers one of the widest choices and it's the most convenient way to find the products you are looking for, if you already know what you are looking for.

First of all, Taobao is 99% in Chinese and searching for "leather bag" will return you little to no results with questionable quality and unpredictable results. Second point to notice is that most of the sellers do not offer international shipping, therefore you will have to use an agent – Our preferred agent is Superbuy, hereby a link to register. Taobao hardly accepts any payment methods which are not Chinese. If you don't speak Chinese, have a Chinese payment method and delivery address, it will be very hard, albeit not impossible, for you to buy from Taobao. But I am here to help and show you how it takes just a few clicks to buy and receive the goods at home.

If you already follow the Subreddits I highlighted above you may have already seen a Taobao product link. If you didn't, Taobao looks like this:



Bit of a mess, right? Instead a product page looks like this:



There is no need for you to interact with this page to select size or colour as we won't be using Taobao to make an order.

Taobao Image search

One of the most stunning feature of Taobao is the possibility to use an image to find in this endless marketplace the article you are looking for. As searching via traditional terms doesn't usually bring meaningful results, using an image could be the best way to scout for your replicas.

In order to do so you should download an image picturing the item you are looking for. Make sure this is an image that pictures the item in its front, at the centre of the image and with a decent resolution. We are now using this image:



After retrieving your picture, you should go to the Chinese version of Taobao; the version you are usually redirected at is the World version of the website meant at purchasers outside China mainland. But you are buying to have these items shipped to China, and on top of that World version does not have image search.

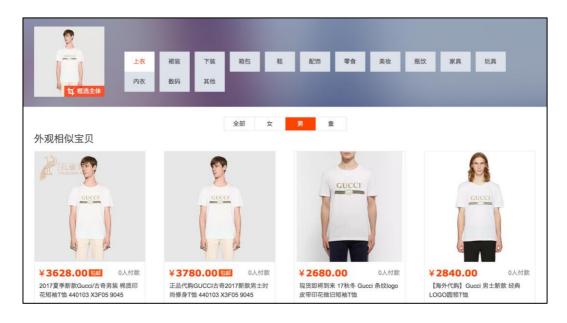
In order to switch you need to go on the top left side of the page, and click here:



This second entry is China Mainland. You will now be able to see a camera in the search bar:

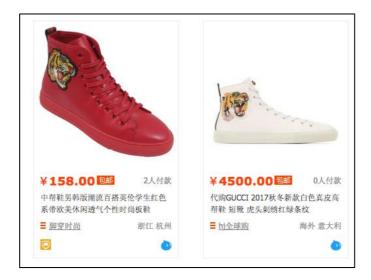


Click on the camera and load the picture you downloaded. What you will now see is something like this (assuming the image you uploaded was used in any listing):



Reviews on Taobao items

After Taobao has identified the sellers offering the product you may be looking for, I recommend you having a look at this little indicator just next to the price:



This little number tells us how many transactions have been already made for this product. While this is no indicator of how good the item is, it could help us in terms of having a look at the real item before we buy – more transactions mean more reviews in most of the cases.

If you instead click on a product, you may see underneath the price and the option to add the article to basket you find this tab:



As you can see, some other customers purchased the item and expressed their satisfaction with the product, as well as posting a few pictures. 389 reviews for this item mean that you may find pictures or reviews from customers who already bought.

If the product convinces you, follow the criteria mentioned above to select your favourite item and proceed to purchase.

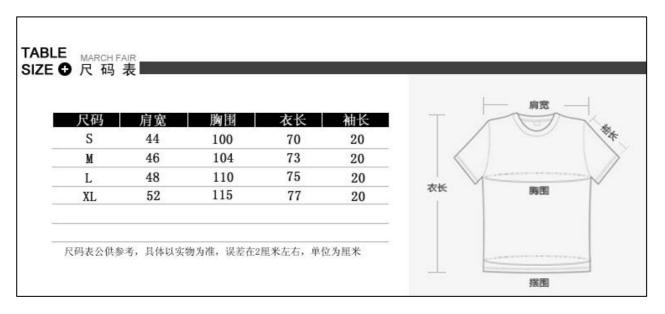
Understanding the measurements

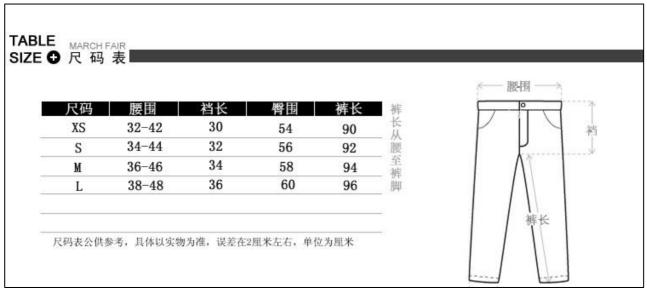
One of the main problems, as mentioned, of ordering form China is trying out your items. Normally in an online retailer store you can return your merchandise if your shoes don't fit or if a shirt is too big, but this is not the case for Taobao or any Chinese website of that kind.

In order to be able to estimate the size you should order (and trust me it varies a lot from supplier to supplier), please refer to these tables. Remember that below are **NOT standard sizes**, but they are meant to give you an indication of what a measurement table looks like in Chinese characters. I included a translation of the common terms you may be able to find in the details tab of the item you would like to buy.

If the table is not present I will explain you how to ask the seller for this info and/or how to request your agent to measure this for you (and retun the item if necessary).

胸围 = bust 肩宽 = shoulder 衣长 = length 袖长 = sleeve 腰围 = waist 裤长 = inside length





Can I find reviews on Reddit for the items I would like to buy?

Some of the items you may want to purchase may have been already purchased by someone else on Reddit, therefore you should leverage from their sacrifice and see if anyone posted a review.

As explained by u/bitches_love_fusha here:

"The first thing is to find the ID number of the item. Take this URL:

https://m.intl.taobao.com/detail/detail.html?spm=a1z5f.7632060.0.0&id=550870857073

The ID is what follows "id=", so in this case it would be 550870857073.

If your URL looks like this (no "item=" but has a item/xxxx.htm):

https://world.taobao.com/item/543897989647.htm?fromSite=main

then your ID is the thing between item/ and .htm, so in this case, it would be 543897989647. Then all you have to do is Google search! Copy your ID and add the parameters "inurl:/r/FashionReps" to get all matches from here, or "site:reddit.com" to get them from the whole site (includes RepSneakers, RepLadies, etc)."

Once you find all the items you like

Well, time to start creating a **haul!** When buying items from China you need to remember that shipping will be a big component of the price you will pay, both to have your items being delivered to your Mainland China agent, and then (and mostly) to have it delivered to you anywhere you are in the world.

That's why it's so important to buy more than some items and have them shipped all at the same time. For the moment, you don't need to do anything else other than bookmarking your items and leave them aside in a folder on your computer. Once you are ready to order then it's time to move on and register to Superbuy.

First of all, register with our preferred agent, Superbuy, by clicking here

Purchasing from China using an Agent

As mentioned before, first thing you should do is to register with any agent in China. Personally, I use and continue using Superbuy, hereby a link to register.

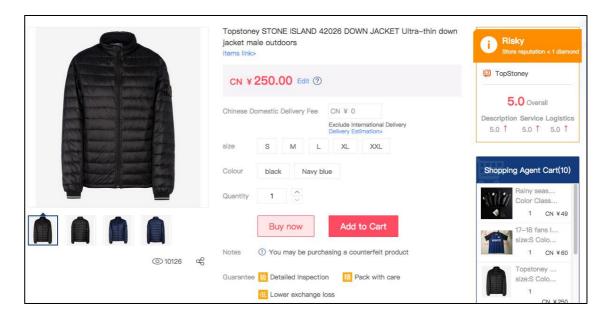
Adding an item to cart

Once registered, you'll be able to create your virtual shopping cart across all Taobao stores (but also Tmall which is the more international friendly version of Taobao).

In order to add an item, you have to add the URL on the homepage blank space or hovering on "Shop" on the top left corner:



Insert the link and click on try now, or the magnifying glass if you inserted in top left. You then may see something like this:



Much friendlier than Taobao. All you have to do now is to select the colour and the size of the item you want to add to your basket (on the lower right). Click on "Add to Cart" to store this item for later.

If you see on the top right side of the screen the "risky" or "not recommended" tags, the reason may be that you selected counterfeited goods or the store reputation is below some thresholds we discussed before. While this doesn't necessarily have to be an indicator of the quality of the goods or the store (may be a seller that recently closed a store and opened another, hence no reputation), you should pay attention and consider this when purchasing.

Send the purchase order

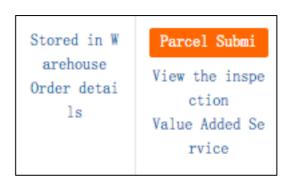
This would be the first time you would actually have to pay for you're the items you intend to purchase. Superbuy, through one of its agents, will purchase the item from the Chinese seller and have the item sent to their very own warehouse in Shenzhen.

In order to have the agent purchase you have to pay for the items and Mainland China shipping (usually between 8 and 10 Yuan per seller). Your standard payment methods include Paypal (but may not be there in case of counterfeited goods), credit card, Alipay, account balance (which can still be topped up by Paypal so this is an easy way around) and cash transfers.

Receiving the goods

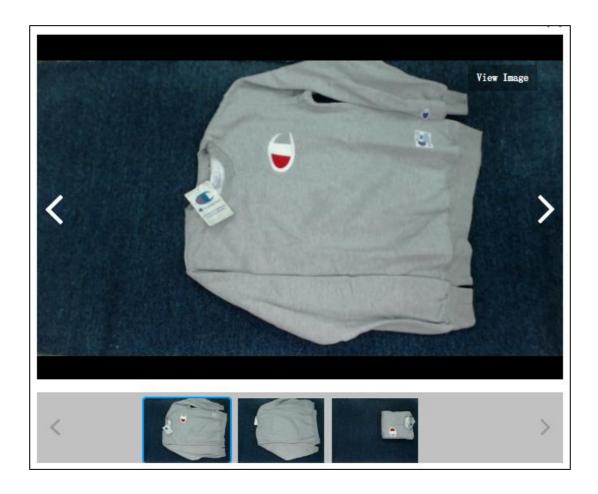
Once the order has been placed and you pay for the items, an agent working for Superbuy will purchase these items for you from the sellers. In your recap page, here https://www.superbuy.com/order, you'll be able to see all the items within the order. In the first window you may see how the order status looks like just after the agent has purchased the item. In the second on the right, how it looks like when the items have been received.

Purchased Order detai ls



Once the items have arrived you should receive an email from Superbuy informing you the items have been stored in the warehouse. This usually happened 1-2 days after the products actually arrive to the agent – you may verify at all times in the recap page.

At this point you can check if the items fit the description and are in line with your expectations. In order to do so you have to click on "View the inspection". This will open a window where you may be able to see the front, the back and another detail of the item you received. Disable any adblock as some plug-ins conflict with the website.



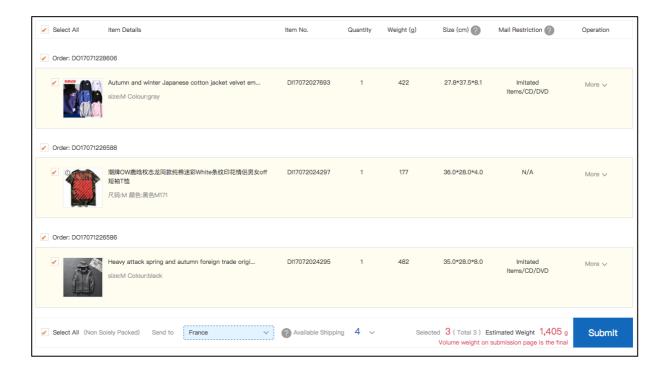
It may happen that you will not be able to see the small details of your item. In this case, follow the guide below to request more pictures or measurements form the customer service.

Shipping the products from Superbuy to you

When you feel like you have accumulated enough items to justify the high shipping costs, then you need to proceed to pay the shipping fees for the shipment from Superbuy to you. As I mentioned before the costs vary greatly according to what shipping carrier you pick, and not all the carriers may be available according to which country you are shipping to.

You also need to consider that most carriers calculate shipping at increments of 500 grams, kicking in after the first 1000 grams which are usually flat fee. In order to **optimize your costs**, you should aim at combining items and reach the threshold 1000 grams, 1500 grams etc without ever reaching them. Prefer having 1499 grams to 1501 grams all the time to save money.

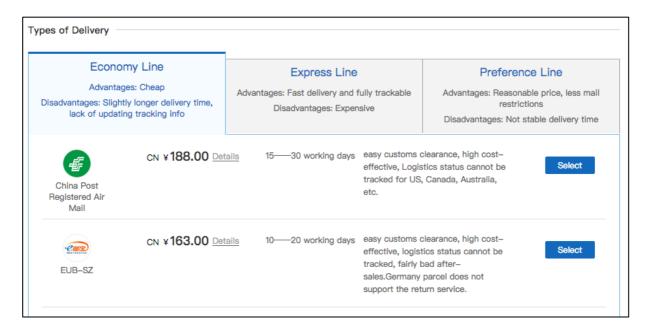
Click on the Warehouse icon on the right sidebar to access your stored items. Here is what the preliminary page to check your weights looks like:



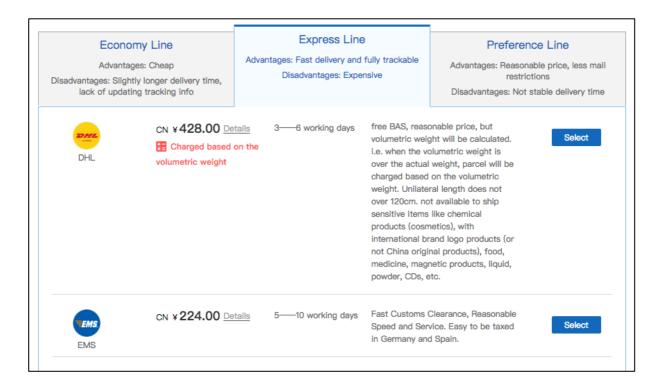
You may see the sizes and weights of the single items and combined weight of the parcel. The term "imitated item" means this item is a counterfeited item and some carriers may refuse to allow it in their packages. This applied to all restricted items, and you may find a comprehensive list here: https://www.superbuy.com/en/page/help/#p5 28

If you click on submit you will be able to see the page where you effectively need to choose the carrier and the most appropriate packaging for your items. You will now see 3 choices:

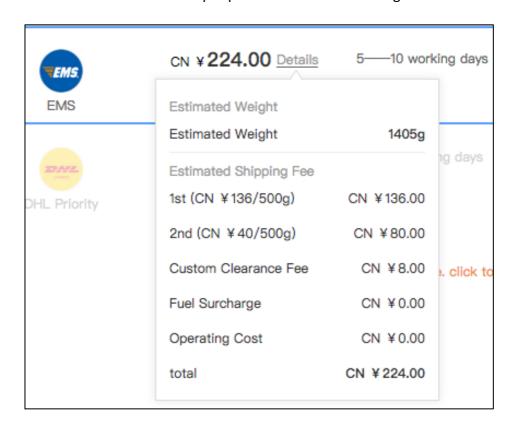
- Economy Line - Cheap shipping method, usually slow, non-traceable and/or unreliable in case of your package being held at customs.



- Express Line – DHL, EMS and European carriers that are usually fast, reliable, offer help with customs (meaning you can dialogue with them to resolve your issues) but expensive. Here is a screenshot:



Here is also a breakdown of the costs per parcel as I was mentioning before:



- Preferential Line - not available in my case, permits the shipment to reach a country with looser custom control then being forwarded to your country.



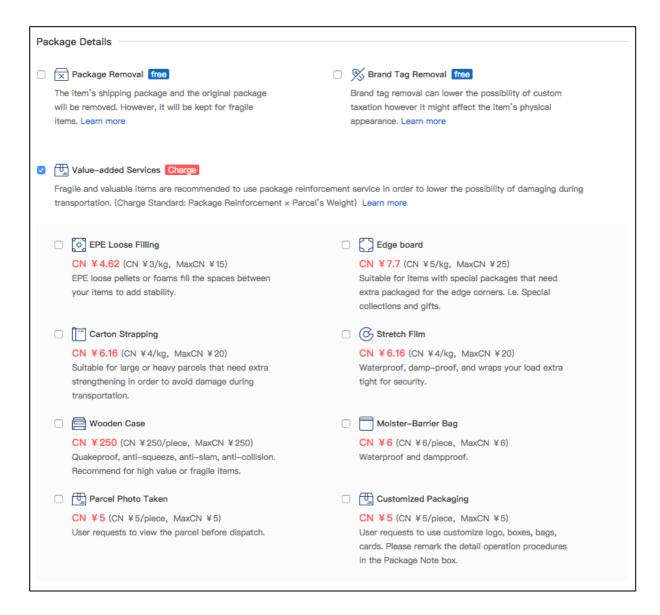
It's time now to declare the value of your package (if shipping with DHL or EMS). You should take into consideration what is the value of your goods and what are the thresholds above which taxes are due in your country. Most of European countries have a limit between 18 and 22 Euros.

If you select EMS for example, here is what your box to declare customs value looks like:



You don't necessarily need to declare the value yourself, it is up to you if you think that a specific value could be beneficial for you when passing through customs.

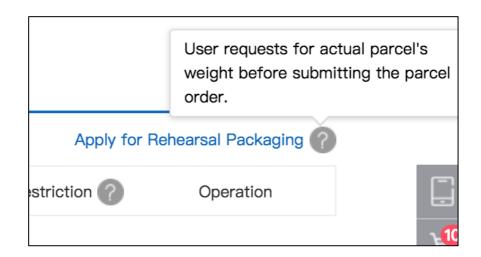
If the items you are shipping are delicate, fragile, or would need any kind of special wrapping or packaging, Superbuy allows you to choose, under the "Value Added Services" section, special arrangements for your package. Hereby a screenshot:



The only step you would have to take after this is to pay for the shipping, in the same way you pay for the items, by clicking on Place Order.

Is an item too heavy?

With Superbuy, you have the chance of having the agent weight again your package before the weight is confirmed and it affects your shipping costs. In order to do so you should click on "Apply for Rehearsal Packaging":

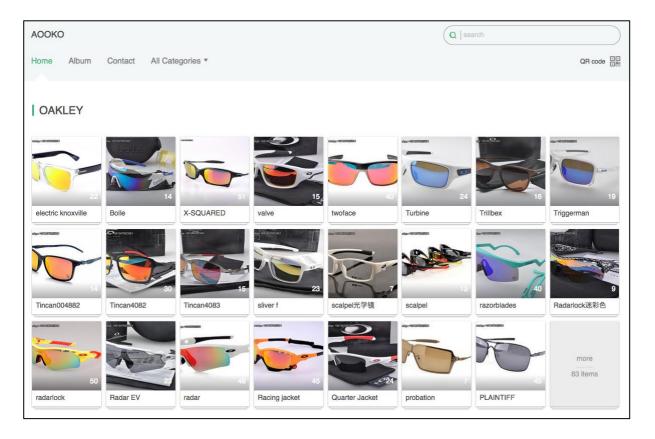


Superbuy will weight your items again and you will be given a new quote. The service costs 20 Yuan but could potentially save you a bit more depending on how much weight is off.

Yupoo

Yupoo is nothing else but a Chinese version of Flickr or pretty much any image/album host. Usually on Yupoo the seller showcase his products and add some info to be contacted, either on WeChat or Skype or Whatsapp.

A Yupoo page looks like this:

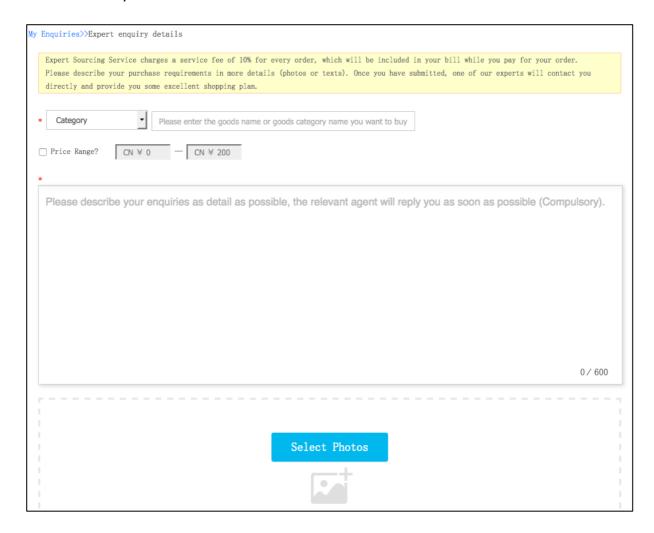


Purchasing a Yupoo article – Superbuy Expert Service

You cannot buy directly from Yupoo as this is not an eCommerce website but just a showcase. In order to be able to purchase you need to resort again to the services of Superbuy.

First of all, register with our preferred agent, Superbuy, by clicking here

Superbuy has a special section dedicated to ad hoc purchases from websites which are not eCommerce websites – <u>you may find it at this link</u>. You are basically providing to a Superbuy agent all the info he needs in order to buy the exact product you would like to buy. Here is what the form you will see looks like:



The information that I recommend you to supply to the Superbuy agent are:

- Link (URL of the Yupoo page) of the desired product;
- Name of the product;

- Colour;
- Quantity;
- Size;
- Price you saw on the website;
- Any relevant detail that may help the agent to uniquely identify the product you would like to purchase.

The agent will not buy the item right away but will have a discussion with the seller and this is a great time to ask questions about quality, batches or anything you may would like to know from the seller.

This service costs 10% of the item value including local shipping, therefore consider this when purchasing using this method. Once the article is shipped proceed as explained above to have it shipped at your house.

Discover more

Should you need any additional help or should you be interested in finding out more about reps, come check my website out – www.therepsguy.com

On the website you'll be able to find reviews, pictures and videos of the most hyped reps on the market, as well as daily added contacts and link.

Do you have any feedback? Would you like to reach out? Send us an email at therepsguy@gmail.com.

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