Tmall for foreign brands: two different routes

One storefront for shoppers, two channels with different rules for sellers

Tmall 天猫

- Domestic retail in China
- Requires a company in mainland China

Tmall Global 天猫国际

- Cross-border retail (CBEC)
- Open to overseas companies, including Hong Kong

Important

Choosing the wrong route costs months of approvals and a deposit paid under the wrong model

Tmall vs Tmall Global: key differences

Parameter	Tmall	Tmall Global
Legal entity	Company in mainland China (WFOE or distributor)	Overseas, including Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan
Product range	Any legal product	Positive list only
Product registration	Mandatory (for cosmetics: 注册 or 备案)	Not required
Inventory	Domestic warehouse	Bonded warehouse or overseas
Purchase limit	None	5,000 / 26,000 CNY
Annual fee	Waived for new sellers since Sep 1, 2024	Applies

Conclusion

Without a Chinese company, the workable option is **Tmall Global**

Tmall Global looks for brand owners, not resellers

Flagship store 旗舰店

Trademark owner or holder of an exclusive authorization

Specialty store 专营店

Distributor of several brands in one category

Authorized store 专卖店

A single brand under the rights holder's authorization

A brand known only through its own website will not pass screening

Important

Sales through major overseas marketplaces and retail chains count

Since May 2026, entry screening has become stricter

Recent documents

Brand documents are accepted only if issued within a reasonable period

Overseas sales

Sales on some fast-turnover online platforms do not count

Dietary supplements

Required factory certification: **GMP, TGA** or **NSF**

Global Origin Verification 全球探源计划

From May 28, 2026, participation by application. The brand submits:

- certificate of origin
- proof of authorization to sell in the country of manufacture
- in-store video or screenshots of a major online storefront

Result

The **“全球探源认证”** mark on product pages

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Food products require a trusted partner in China

Who it is 境内受托企业

A local company that manufactures or sells food. It is responsible for product recalls

Legal basis

SAMR and MOFCOM Announcement No. 1 of 2026

Deadlines on Tmall Global

90 days from May 15, 2026 to enter the partner's details in the seller back office

24 hours to submit a recall plan in the event of a safety risk

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Positive list and purchase limits

1,476 items on the positive list (正面清单) since March 1, 2022

A product not on the list cannot go through CBEC in any store format

Buyer limits

5,000 yuan
per order

26,000 yuan
per year

Taxes within the limits

0%
customs duty

70%
of standard VAT and consumption tax

- **Items over 5,000 yuan:** can be sold if it is the only item in the order and stays within the annual limit. Taxes are charged in full
- **Above the annual limit:** general trade regime

Tmall Global launch budget

Deposit 保证金

Security against violations and claims. Depends on category and trademark status

For baby food, dietary supplements, OTC drugs and maternity products — **300,000 yuan**

Annual technical service fee

30,000 or **60,000 yuan**. With multiple categories, the highest tier applies

Commission

2–5% of each sale, depending on category

Alipay fee

1% for currency conversion and transfer of revenue to an overseas account

Extra

A Tmall Partner (TP) operator is paid separately

Conclusion

The first-year budget is calculated from the highest-tier category in your range, not from the lowest fee tier

Bonded warehouse or direct shipping

1210

Bonded warehouse (保税仓)

- Stock is imported in advance
- Each unit clears customs when ordered
- Typical hubs: Hangzhou, Ningbo
- Fast delivery
- Best for bestsellers

9610

Direct import (直购进口)

- The parcel ships from abroad after the order
- No inventory in China
- Slower and more expensive delivery
- Best for testing demand

Important

A return within 30 days entitles the buyer to a tax refund. Agree on reverse logistics with the warehouse in advance

4 launch stages and where rejections happen most

Stage	What is submitted	Typical reason for rejection
1. Application	Store type, brand, category, company details	Category not on the positive list
2. Qualification review	Company registration, trademark or authorization chain, overseas sales	Expired documents
3. Preparation	Alipay activation, deposit	Broken authorization chain
4. Launch	Product listings in Chinese, annual fee	Claims of therapeutic effect

Tip

Request certificates of origin right before you submit

Key takeaway

Tmall Global removes the requirements for a legal entity, product registration and a warehouse in China, but requires proof of product origin and demand abroad. It is an entry point to test demand before investing in a Chinese company

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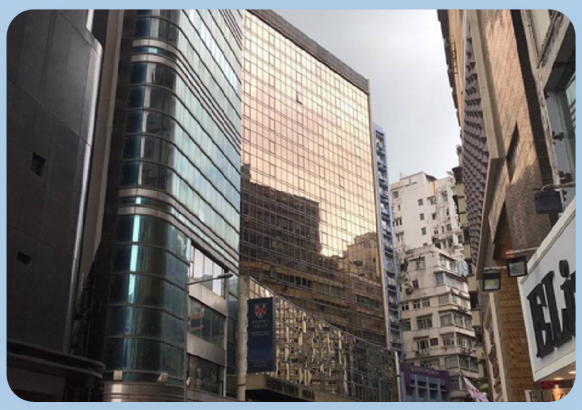
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