

What a shipping container cost in Jacksonville and Savannah in August 2026, and why the factory price is not the number

Observed transaction and depot prices for one-trip and used containers at Jacksonville and Savannah, a factory quote followed all the way to the port, and what buyers should watch into the fourth quarter.

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Five things to know

- 1

Standard boxes cost about the same at a U.S. depot as at the factory gate. A new 20-foot standard was quoted at \$2,050 ex-works in China and sold one-trip in a Jacksonville depot for \$2,125. Used is the reverse of what most buyers expect: a used 40HC quoted at \$3,040 in China against \$1,650 in Jacksonville.
- 2

When a container ships as freight, the factory price is roughly a third of the landed price. One fabricator's quote for a specialty container came to \$4,368 at the gate and \$12,819 landed at the Port of Jacksonville.
- 3

Specialty configurations are where factory-direct pays. A 20-foot two-door side-open retails at \$6,500 to \$6,900 in the Southeast. Positioned as a loaded first trip, the same configuration lands in the mid \$3,000s.
- 4

Prices are firming, 40HC first. Container xChange's June outlook expects rising Chinese prices and freight to lift U.S. depot prices. Spot freight Shanghai to New York reached \$8,706 per 40-foot in mid-August, the highest since July 2024.
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Marketplace quotes are good for 24 hours. Buyers with recurring volume carry every weekly move. A standing order on the configurations you buy most is the cheapest hedge available.

1. What buyers paid in August

Two prices matter to a dealer: the wholesale price a box trades for, and the price a depot retails it at. Both are shown for the Jacksonville and Savannah market.

The wholesale column is marketplace transaction pricing recorded in August 2026 for pickup at Jacksonville. Buyer details are withheld. The retail column is published depot pricing from Worthy Container's city listings and Conexwest's national list, checked on 3 September.

Exhibit 1. Jacksonville and Savannah prices, August 2026, per unit, pickup at depot

Configuration	Grade	Wholesale, marketplace transaction	Depot retail, Jacksonville / Savannah
20 standard	New, one-trip	\$2,125	\$2,100 (Savannah)
20 high cube	New, one-trip	\$2,900	not listed
40 high cube	New, one-trip	\$2,975	\$2,600 to \$3,000 depot lots
40HC side-open, four doors	New, one-trip	\$4,850 to \$4,975	\$7,100 / \$6,900

Configuration	Grade	Wholesale, marketplace transaction	Depot retail, Jacksonville / Savannah
20 side-open, two doors	New, one-trip	no transaction recorded	\$6,900 / \$6,500 (Conexwest national \$5,775)
20 standard	Used, cargo-worthy	\$1,050	not listed
40 high cube	Used, cargo-worthy	\$1,650	not listed

Retail prices exclude delivery.

What stands out. The one-trip 20-foot standard is trading wholesale within \$25 of Savannah retail. There is no spread left in that box, and it has sat near \$2,100 on the East Coast since late 2024. The 20-foot high cube is the anomaly: it traded \$775 above a 20-foot standard, while a factory charges only about \$230 more to build one. The premium is depot scarcity, not cost. Side-open configurations carry the largest wholesale-to-retail gap: the 40HC four-door traded at \$4,850 to \$4,975 and retails at \$6,900 to \$7,100.

2. A factory quote is not a landed price

The most common mistake we see is comparing a factory-gate price in China with a depot price in Florida. They are not the same product. The gap is the cost of moving a steel box across the Pacific.

In early September a Yangtze Delta factory quoted us the same configurations, ex-works. Exhibit 2 places the two sets of prices side by side, per unit, before any freight.

Exhibit 2. Factory gate in China vs. Jacksonville depot, per unit

Configuration	Factory, ex-works, Sep 2026	Jacksonville depot, Aug 2026	Difference
20 standard, used	\$1,210	\$1,050	factory +\$160
20 standard, new	\$2,050	\$2,125	factory -\$75
20 high cube, new	\$2,280	\$2,900	factory -\$620
40 high cube, used	\$3,040	\$1,650	factory +\$1,390
40 high cube, new	\$3,660	\$2,975	factory +\$685
40HC side-open, four doors, new	\$4,850	\$4,850 to \$4,975	even

Factory quote excludes inland transport, ocean freight, insurance, U.S. entry and drayage.

Before a container leaves the factory yard, most standard and used lines already cost more than the same box sitting in a Jacksonville depot. The exception is the 20-foot high cube, where the factory builds a high cube for close to the price of a standard while U.S. depots price it as a scarce item. The pattern is the structural fact of the container trade: China is short of empty boxes and the United States has too many, so a standard or used container is worth more at origin than at arrival.

What it costs to move one. Exhibit 3 shows the same specialty container, a 40HC with four side doors, landed at Jacksonville two ways. In the first, quoted by a Shandong fabricator for 100 units, the boxes travel as freight, occupying vessel slots. In the second, a CSC-plated container is loaded with a paying customer's cargo and crosses as a container, with the cargo covering the ocean leg.

Exhibit 3. One 40HC four-door side-open, factory gate to Port of Jacksonville

Route	Factory, ex-works	Inland to port	Ocean leg	Landed at Jacksonville
Shipped as freight (fabricator quote, 100 units)	\$4,368	\$784	\$7,667	\$12,819
First-trip positioning (our September program, all-in)	\$4,450	\$200	\$625	\$5,275

The fabricator was \$82 a box cheaper at the gate. It landed at 2.4 times the price. The ocean leg is the whole story: a box that occupies a slot pays the slot rate, and in August 2026 the Shanghai to U.S. East Coast slot rate was the highest in two years. A box that carries paying cargo has its crossing paid by the cargo.

The test for any factory quote is to ask whether the container will ship as a container or as freight. If the seller cannot answer, or the container is not CSC-plated, the ocean leg belongs on your side of the ledger at the spot rate, and the ex-works number is roughly a third of what you will pay.

3. Where domestic wins and where factory-direct wins

Buy domestically: standard and used. One-trip 20-foot standards and 40HCs already sit in U.S. depots because they arrived carrying cargo; the lessor or line sells at destination rather than pay to reposition. In the quotes we reviewed, that supply was priced within a few percent of a Chinese factory gate and available immediately, and used containers were cheaper in the United States than in China at every grade. We know of no factory-direct route that beats a Jacksonville one-trip 20-foot at \$2,125 or a Savannah 40HC lot at \$2,600.

Source factory-direct: specialty configurations. Side-open and other multi-door builds are not what shippers load in Asia, so they rarely arrive as one-trips. U.S. depots hold thin stock and price on scarcity, retailing at roughly 1.8 to 2 times landed cost. A factory-direct program that positions them as loaded first trips can land a 20-foot two-door in the mid \$3,000s against \$6,500 to \$6,900 retail.

Exhibit 4. Southeast depot retail for one-trip side-open configurations, 3 September 2026, per unit, pickup

Configuration	Jacksonville	Savannah	Atlanta	Miami / Tampa	National low
20 side-open, two doors, center post	\$6,900	\$6,500	\$6,900	\$6,900	\$5,200 (Houston)
20 full side-open	not listed	\$6,800	\$7,300	\$7,600	\$6,775 (Conexwest)
40HC side-open, four doors	\$7,100	\$6,900	\$7,400	\$7,700 / \$7,900	not listed

Sources: Worthy Container city price pages and a Miami marketplace listing; Conexwest product pages; accessed 3 September 2026. Prices exclude delivery.

Two limits apply. First, the crossing is the constraint, not the factory: positioning capacity for side-open units on the Shanghai to Jacksonville lane is limited, because a loaded side-open is harder to place than a standard box. Second, the benchmark above is retail; a dealer buying wholesale should compare against the implied wholesale range, where the advantage is roughly \$900 to \$1,200 a box rather than \$3,000.

4. Outlook into the fourth quarter

Three indicators point the same direction. Spot freight Shanghai to New York was \$8,706 per 40-foot on 13 August, up 10% in one week and the highest since July 2024, with Panama Canal surcharges on Asia to U.S. East

Coast applying from September (Drewry World Container Index). Container xChange's June North America outlook expects rising Chinese container prices and freight to push U.S. depot prices up, and flags the 40HC as the configuration to watch. And marketplace quotes carried 24-hour validity on the pricing reviewed for this brief, which means recurring buyers carry the full price risk between orders.

For reference on how far prices can move: in the 90 days to November 2024, North American container prices rose about 20%, and in 2021 new one-trip 20-foot containers reached \$5,000 to \$7,000.

What we would do. Keep buying standard and used units domestically, and ask lessors' sales desks for lot pricing at Jacksonville and Savannah rather than paying a marketplace margin on recurring volume. Move specialty configurations to a factory-direct first-trip program, and treat positioning capacity, not factory price, as the thing to secure. On any factory quote, ask how the box crosses; if the answer is "as freight," add the spot rate before comparing. Lock a standing order on the two or three configurations you buy every month.

Methodology and sources

This brief uses three kinds of evidence, each labelled where it appears. **Marketplace transaction pricing:** prices transacted on a container marketplace for pickup at Jacksonville, August 2026. Buyer identity, order size and exact date are withheld; prices are reported as transacted. **Factory quotations received by us:** a commercial invoice from a Yangtze Delta container manufacturer, early September 2026, ex-works, and a quotation from a Shandong steel-structure fabricator, early September 2026; supplier names are withheld and quotes are reported as received, with the fabricator's freight figure not verified against a carrier. **Published market data:** depot retail from Worthy Container and Conexwest, accessed 3 September 2026; freight from the Drewry World Container Index as reported on 13 August 2026; Container xChange's June 2026 North America outlook and its published one-trip and cargo-worthy price reports.

Where this brief cites our own first-trip landed price (Exhibit 3), that figure is our September 2026 program price for the configuration shown, all-in at Jacksonville port, presented for comparison rather than as market data. All prices are U.S. dollars per unit and exclude delivery from the port or depot unless stated.

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