Crypto tax filing checklist: from scattered history to a filed return

A practical, step-by-step checklist for filing your crypto taxes, from pulling your exchange and wallet history together to the figures that end up on your return. Work through it in order and nothing important slips. Download it as a PDF to print or tick off as you go.

CryptaTax

www.cryptatax.com

General information, not tax advice

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The short version

Filing crypto tax is mostly a reconciliation job, not a rules job. Get a complete, accurate record of what you did, and the reporting is almost mechanical. Get the record wrong, and no clever treatment at the end can rescue the numbers. The checklist below follows that order: collect everything first, classify it, apply a method consistently, then calculate and file.

What to gather

Before any calculation, pull together the full picture. Missing a single account or a batch of transfers is the most common reason a report comes out wrong, so start here and be thorough.

Every exchange account

Export the complete transaction history from each centralised exchange you used, including ones you have stopped using and any you closed during the year. Connecting by read-only API is usually more complete than a CSV, because it captures small trades and fees that manual exports miss.

Every wallet address

List each self-custody wallet and public address across every chain you touched, so on-chain activity, transfers, swaps, NFT and DeFi legs, is all captured. A wallet you forget is a gap in your cost basis that distorts every later disposal from it.

Income receipts and off-exchange events

Note anything that did not come through a trade: staking and mining rewards, airdrops, being paid in crypto, gifts sent or received. These are easy to overlook because no exchange records them for you, yet they are usually taxable on receipt and set the cost basis for later sales.

Reconcile before you classify

With everything in one place, match the two legs of every transfer between your own wallets and accounts. An unmatched transfer looks like a sale on one side and a free acquisition on the other, which inflates both your gains and your income. Reconciling first means the classification step works on clean data rather than phantom disposals.

Classify each transaction

Sort your activity into the categories your tax return cares about. The first fork is almost always capital gain versus income: selling, swapping or spending crypto you hold is usually a **disposal** (a capital gain or loss), while earning crypto from staking, mining, airdrops or salary is usually **income** at its value on receipt. NFT and DeFi activity often stacks both in a single strategy, so classify each leg on its own facts.

Pick a cost-basis method and apply it consistently

Choose a cost-basis method your country allows, FIFO, LIFO, HIFO, average cost or specific identification, and apply the same one across the whole year. The method decides which purchase is matched to each sale, and therefore the size of each gain. If you are unsure which methods are permitted where you live, the cost-basis cheat sheet summarises the options and the cost-basis guide covers the detail.

Calculate gains and income

With clean, classified, method-consistent data, calculate the capital gain or loss on each disposal (proceeds minus cost basis, net of fees) and total the income at the values you recorded on receipt. Offset losses against gains where your country allows, and note any losses to carry forward. This is the part where a per-lot ledger, or software that keeps one, earns its place over a spreadsheet.

Complete the right forms and keep your records

Most countries fold crypto into your normal annual return, capital gains for disposals, ordinary income for receipts, rather than a separate crypto form, though the exact schedules and deadlines depend on where you live. File the totals the forms ask for, and keep the transaction-level detail in case you are asked for it. Good records are also what let you claim every loss and allowance you are entitled to, instead of rounding up out of caution.

The checklist, in order

1. Gather every exchange account, including closed ones.
2. Gather every wallet address across every chain.
3. Note all income and off-exchange events (staking, mining, airdrops, gifts, salary).
4. Reconcile transfers between your own accounts so they are not read as sales.
5. Classify each transaction as a disposal or income.
6. Pick a cost-basis method your country allows and apply it consistently.
7. Calculate gains and income; offset losses and note carry-forwards.
8. Complete the forms your country requires and keep the detail behind every figure.

How CryptaTax does this for you

CryptaTax imports your activity from every wallet and exchange, matches transfers, classifies each transaction, applies your cost-basis method consistently, and produces a capital-gains and income report with each figure traceable to its source. The checklist above is essentially what it automates, so your time goes on the decisions that need judgement rather than on stitching exports together by hand.
Try the crypto tax calculator →

Disclaimer. General information, not tax advice. Crypto tax rules differ by country and change over time, verify against your country's guidance or a qualified advisor.

Put these figures on autopilot at app.cryptatax.com