

Required Report: Required - Public Distribution

Date: December 20, 2021

Report Number: JA2021-0001

Report Name: Exporter Guide Annual

Country: Japan

Post: Osaka ATO

Report Category: Exporter Guide

Prepared By: Yumi Baba & Hiroto Nakagawa

Approved By: Alexander Blamberg

Report Highlights:

The Japanese food market was valued at \$789 billion in 2020 with retail sales accounting for \$474 billion (60 percent) and foodservice sales accounting for \$239 billion (30 percent). Japan relies on imports from other countries for the bulk of its food supply. The United States is the leading agricultural product supplier with a 22 percent market share in 2020. The Japanese market is highly competitive with consumers seeking quality, value, and convenience. This report serves as an all-in-one resource for prospective U.S. exporters to Japan with information on the food and beverage market, business culture, consumer preferences, import regulations, trends, and the U.S.-Japan Trade Agreement. Links are provided to additional resources with further details on each of these topics.

Market Fact Sheet: Japan

Executive Summary:

The United States is the largest foreign supplier of food and agricultural products to an import-reliant Japan (22 percent of import market share)—the fourth largest market for U.S. agricultural products in 2020 (\$11.7 billion). On January 1, 2020, the U.S.-Japan Trade Agreement (USJTA) entered into force, providing preferential tariff access for many U.S. agricultural products. Japan’s food industries are well-developed and innovative in all sectors, including, retail, food service, food processing, and distribution.

Population: 125,570,000 (Jan 2021)

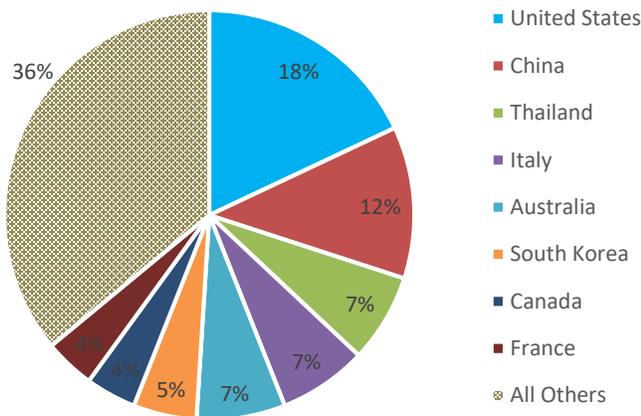
GDP: \$5.065 trillion (3rd)

GDP/Capita: \$40,335

Top Ten Growth Food Products

- 1) Beef and Beef Products
- 2) Pork and Pork Products
- 3) Processed Vegetables
- 4) Wheat and Wheat Products
- 5) Fresh and Processed Fruit
- 6) Tree Nuts and Peanuts
- 7) Distilled Spirits
- 8) Wine and Beer
- 9) Cheeses
- 10) Condiments and Sauces

Japan Consumer-Oriented Product Imports (\$38.9 Billion, 2020)



Food Industry by Channels

Consumer-Oriented Imports	\$ 39 billion
Food Processing Industry	\$ 223 billion
Food Industry Gross Sales	\$ 789 billion
- Retail	\$ 474 billion
- Food Service	\$ 239 billion

Top Ten Food Service Providers

McDonald Japan	Sushiro
Zensho Holdings	Plenus
Skylark Holdings	KFC Japan
Colowide	Kura Zushi
Nisshin Healthcare	Mos Burger

Food Processing Industry:

The \$223 billion food processing industry produces a wide variety of foods: traditional Japanese, Western, and health-oriented foods for infants and the elderly. Food processors focus on maintaining market share among traditional product lines while developing creative and innovative food products to attract consumers.

Food Retail Industry:

In 2020, the total value of all retail food and beverage sales was \$474 billion. Supermarkets represent the bulk of the retail food sales at 73 percent and the convenience store sector accounts for another 14 percent of sales. Ready-to-eat meals or take-home foods represent an area of growth.

Strength	Weakness
U.S. products are in demand and remain trendy.	The negotiating and decision-making process can take time.
Opportunity	Challenge
With USJTA, nearly 90 percent of U.S. products are duty free or receive preferential tariff access.	For products not covered in USJTA, many other suppliers enjoy tariff concessions through other FTAs.

Data sources include: Global Agricultural Trade System, Trade Data Monitor, LLC, Japan Ministry of Finance, Japan Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, Japan Food Service Association, The World Factbook, The World Bank. For additional information, contact ATOTokyo@usda.gov

USDA Japan Exporter Guide: Table of Contents

- SECTION 1: MARKET OVERVIEW** 4
 - Country Overview 4
 - Food Sector Overview 4
 - Advantages and Challenges in the Japanese Market..... 4
- SECTION II. EXPORTER BUSINESS TIPS** 5
 - Market Research 5
 - Trade Shows in Japan 5
 - Business Culture in Japan 5
 - Consumer Preferences..... 6
- SECTION III. IMPORT FOOD STANDARDS & REGULATIONS / IMPORT PROCEDURES** 6
 - Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards (FAIRS) Reports 6
 - U.S.-Japan Trade Agreement 6
- SECTION IV. MARKET SECTOR STRUCTURE AND TRENDS** 7
 - Market Sectors 7
 - Market Trends 7
 - Product Trends 8
- SECTION V. AGRICULTURAL & FOOD IMPORTS** 9
 - U.S. Export Data 9
 - Top-Five U.S. Consumer-Oriented Exports..... 10
- SECTION VI. KEY CONTACTS AND FURTHER INFORMATION**..... 11

SECTION 1: MARKET OVERVIEW

Country Overview

Japan is an island nation located off the eastern seaboard of the Eurasian continent. The Japanese archipelago consists of the five main islands of Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku, Kyushu, and Okinawa and over 6,800 smaller isles. The Japanese population was estimated at 125 million in June 2021. The population is concentrated in three major regions; Kanto region which includes Tokyo Metropolis and seven surrounding prefectures (population 44 million); Kinki region including seven prefectures around Osaka and Kyoto (22 million); and Chubu region including eight prefectures around Nagoya city (21 million). Japan's gross domestic product (GDP) totaled \$5.1 trillion in 2019, making it the world's third largest economy after the United States and China. Tertiary industries (the service sector) represent the mainstay of the Japanese economy, accounting for 69 percent of total GDP. Secondary industries (manufacturing) followed with 30 percent and primary industries (agriculture, fisheries, and forestry) accounted for only one percent. Due to declining birth rates, the Japanese population is shrinking and steadily aging. 29 percent of the population is currently over the age of 65 and this number is expected to rise to 35 percent by 2040. Japan has among the world's highest average life expectancies at 88 years for women and 82 years for men in 2020. (Sources: The World Factbook, United Nations, Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry)

Food Sector Overview

The Japanese food market was valued at \$789 billion in 2020 with retail sales accounting for \$474 billion (60 percent) and foodservice sales accounting for \$239 billion (30 percent). Japan relies on imports from other countries for the bulk of its food supply. On a caloric basis, Japan's food self-sufficiency rate was 37 percent in 2020 with the remaining 63 percent derived from imported products. However, on a value basis Japan's food self-sufficiency rate is 67 percent due to comparatively high domestic food prices. The United States is the leading agricultural product supplier with a 22 percent import market share in 2020. The Japanese market is highly competitive with consumers seeking quality, value, and convenience. Consumers have several options to choose from to satisfy their food needs: ranging from restaurants, fast food, convenience stores and a variety of retailers. Major supermarket chains are coping with this demand by introducing their own private labels, while many restaurant chains are reducing their prices or differentiating themselves with new menu offerings and special events to stay competitive. While traditional menus and tastes still generally guide the average Japanese consumer, Western and other Asian cuisines are increasingly influencing the market. There is a tendency to prefer domestic products over imports, especially if the price gap is narrow. However, there is always strong consumer interest in new and interesting products. The aging of Japan's population has also focused attention on healthy and functional foods, especially those with a high protein content. Lower birth rates have also led to smaller family units, thereby increasing demand for high-quality and high-value products in smaller packages.

Advantages and Challenges in the Japanese Market

U.S. Advantages	U.S. Challenges
90 percent of U.S. agricultural products have zero duty or preferential tariffs under the U.S.-Japan Trade Agreement	Some U.S. products face higher tariffs than competitor suppliers due to preferential trade agreements such as CPTPP and the Japan-EU EPA
U.S. products have a good quality reputation and are generally priced lower than domestic products	Japanese consumers generally prefer domestic products over imports and are willing to pay a premium for "made in Japan"

Recognized as global leader in high standards for food safety and animal/plant health	Strict regulatory standards for imports that sometimes exceed U.S. domestic regulations
Perception of the United States as a reliable supplier with large production capacity	Desire for Japanese importers to diversify risk by sourcing from multiple countries
Diverse range of product availability from bulk to intermediate to consumer-oriented	High costs for marketing in Japan and the need to adjust packaging size for the retail market
Increasing westernization and health consciousness of consumer food preferences	Deliberate pace of business decision-making and the expectation of long-term commitment from foreign suppliers

SECTION II. EXPORTER BUSINESS TIPS

Market Research

U.S. exporters to Japan are encouraged to review USDA Japan reporting on commodities and sectors of interest. In addition to this report, USDA Japan annually publishes reports analyzing retail, foodservice, and processing industry. There are also ad hoc reports on home meal replacements, health foods, organic products, and hemp-derived products. All of these reports and more are available at The full spectrum of reports are available at www.USDAJapan.org/market-research and <https://gain.fas.usda.gov>.

Trade Shows in Japan

Japanese buyers often prefer to find new food and beverage products at large trade shows or specially-targeted trade showcases instead of “cold calls” or requests for introductory meetings with individual companies. Many trade shows in Japan are well-suited for U.S. food and beverage companies, including two USDA-endorsed shows in Tokyo – FOODEX Japan and the Supermarket Trade Show – as well as the FABEX Kansai regional show in Osaka. These shows allow buyers to view many products at once and provide a platform for U.S. exporters to meet with many prospective importers, retailers, wholesalers, and distributors. The ATOs in Tokyo and Osaka often organize USA pavilions or offer services to support U.S. exhibitors at these shows. More information on Japan trade shows is available at www.usdajapan.org/find-a-partner/trade-shows/ and in the [Recommended Food and Beverage Trade Shows in Japan](#) GAIN report.

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has made it difficult for U.S. exporters to travel to Japan to participate in trade shows or meet with prospective buyers in-person. However, it is possible for U.S. exporters to send sample products to Japan for buyer consideration. Interested U.S. exporters are advised to review the following two reports which provide guidance for shipping small-sized individual samples and outline eligibility requirements for duty free shipments and import notification exemptions:

- [Guidance on Shipping Individual Small-Sized Samples to Japanese Buyers – November 18, 2020](#)
- [General Instructions for Shipping Product Samples to Japan – February 9, 2020](#)

Business Culture in Japan

Japanese businesspeople tend to prefer a formal approach to doing business. U.S. exporters are advised to make appointments as far in advance as possible, using e-mail rather than telephone and fax. It is important to carry business cards (*meishi*) to every engagement and present them formally with two hands. Decision making takes time in Japan so prepare for negotiations which may require several meetings to reach an agreement. Japanese

buyers will likely request very detailed information on ingredients, production processes, and quality controls. Be mindful of units used in Japan and make sure to use metric terms and quotes price in CIF (cost, insurance and freight) unless your importer specifically requests FOB (Free on Board). Major holiday periods in Japan include the New Year holiday (December 30 to January 3), Golden Week (April 29 to May 5), and *Obon* (one week in mid-August). Many companies close during these periods and people take vacations.

Consumer Preferences

There is a wide variety of consumer preferences in Japan. In general, Japanese consumers place high importance on food safety and quality. Many domestic producers emphasize traceability and farm-to-fork by placing photos of farmers on products packages. Japanese consumers appreciate seasonality and freshness as well as aesthetic appearance. Healthy and functional foods are gaining popularity especially during the COVID outbreak. Japanese consumers prefer products with simple ingredient lists and minimal food additives. Perhaps the most notable difference between U.S. and Japanese consumer preferences relates to product packaging. Most Japanese homes are much smaller in size than U.S. homes and have limited storage space. As a result, Japanese food packages are small and easily storable. Large, bulk packaging is impractical which is one of the reasons why Japanese consumers spend a higher proportion of their income on food than most other developed nations.

SECTION III. IMPORT FOOD STANDARDS & REGULATIONS / IMPORT PROCEDURES

U.S. exporters doing business with Japan for the first time may find Japanese food standards and regulations challenging. Japanese importers and freight forwarders are often the best sources of information and provide critical assistance with import procedures. For general guidance, USDA Japan has prepared the following resources to help U.S. exporters navigate the import process.

Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards (FAIRS) Reports

Each year, USDA Japan publishes Food and Agricultural Imports Regulations and Standards (FAIRS) reports which describe Japan's requirements for imported food and beverage products. The FAIRS Country Report provides information on the general food laws and the regulations on food additives, pesticides, packaging and containers, labeling, and other specific standards. The Japan FAIRS Export Certificate Report provides information on the required certificates for export to Japan. Additional export guidance is available at www.usdajapan.org/export-guidance.

- [Japan FAIRS Country Report](#)
- [Japan FAIRS Export Certificate Report](#)

U.S.-Japan Trade Agreement

The U.S.-Japan Trade Agreement (USJTA) entered into force on January 1, 2020. In this agreement, Japan provided substantial market access for the United States by phasing out most tariffs, enacting meaningful tariff reductions, or allowing a specific quantity of imports at a lower duty. Following implementation of USJTA, nearly 90 percent of U.S. food and agricultural products imported into Japan are duty free or receive preferential tariff access. USDA Japan has developed a series of product briefs which provide concise overviews of how USJTA affects certain product groups. The full list of product briefs as well as other information on USJTA is available at www.usdajapan.org/usjta. Tariff treatment for agricultural products under USJTA is searchable on the [USDA Agricultural Tariff Tracker](#) and may also be found in Japan's [Customs Tariff Schedule](#).

SECTION IV. MARKET SECTOR STRUCTURE AND TRENDS

Market Sectors

Retail

In 2020, the total value of all retail food and beverage sales in Japan was \$474 billion, a 1.5 percent increase over 2019 sales of \$467 billion. One-stop shopping became very important during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially during multiple States of Emergency (SOE) throughout Japan when the government urged citizens to stay home. Supermarkets continue to represent the bulk of the retail food market, accounting for 74 percent of sales. Food and beverage sales from drugstores and internet marketplaces are steadily increasing. Ready-to-eat meals (REM) and take-home food items represent another strong area of growth, and sales from this sector are key to increase retail food and beverage industry revenue. For details, see the USDA Japan [Retail Sector Report](#).

HRI Food Service

Total sales of the hotel, restaurant and institutional (HRI) food service industry totaled \$239 billion in 2020, a decrease of 26 percent from 2019 due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The industry experienced the biggest annual decline in sales since 1994, when industry statistics were first recorded by the Japan Foodservice Association. Despite the overall declines, American style fast food chains experienced stable sales, and with increased vaccination rates and public outings resuming, there's cautious optimism for sales to rebound. Japan's market size and food and agricultural consumption needs are still robust for foreign purchases and will continue to be crucial for U.S. agricultural products that supply the Japanese HRI food service industry. For details, see the USDA Japan [Food Service HRI Report](#).

Food Processing

In 2020, Japan's food processing industry manufactured \$218 billion of food and beverage products, down 1.1 percent from \$221 billion in 2019. The COVID-19 pandemic limited dining out and led to increases in home cooking. However, large drops in the production of soft drinks, juices, water, and alcoholic beverages were nearly offset by growth in wheat flour, dairy, health foods, and convenience or ready-to-eat foods. The pandemic further contributed to the decade-long upward trend in frozen food consumption, which has jumped from \$5.6 billion in 2010 to \$6.6 billion in 2020. For details, see the USDA Japan [Food Processing Ingredients Report](#).

Market Trends

COVID-19 Implications

COVID-19 has impacted Japan's food sector across the board. Government restrictions coupled with consumer risk-averse behavior have adversely affected the hotel, restaurant, and institutional (HRI) food service sector. Meanwhile, overall retail food and beverage sales, including from supermarkets and e-commerce stores, have generally increased with consumers spending more time at home. This marked a positive change for supermarkets, which saw sales generally declining pre-pandemic. For a more detailed analysis on COVID-19 impacts across the Japanese food and beverage sector, please see the following reports:

- [COVID-19 Impacts on Food Distribution in Japan – Update IV – January 16, 2021](#)
- [COVID-19 Pandemics Impact on Japan HRI Industry – June 25, 2021](#)

Focus on Functional and Healthy Foods

Japan's food and beverage market continues to focus on functional, healthy and nutritious products. Anything perceived as providing benefits for health and beauty has a stronger appeal and greater chance of becoming popular, particularly among female consumers. In addition, foods that look unique and appetizing on social media platforms often quickly gain popularity among younger consumers. Healthy food trends from the United States influence the market, with special diets focusing on daily protein intake and trendy "superfoods" gaining recent popularity.

International Events and Expected Foreign Visitors Recovery

Following the Tokyo Olympics held in 2021, the next large-scale international event planned for Japan is the Osaka World Expo from May 3 to November 3 in 2025. The Expo anticipates participation from 150 countries and over 28 million visitors, generating \$18 billion in new economic activity. Within the next decade, adjacent to the World Expo site, Osaka Prefecture plans to open an Integrated Resort (IR) with three high-end hotels (about 2,500 rooms), conference venues (holding capacity of about 6,000 people), 20,000 square-meter exhibition halls as well as casinos with an initial investment of \$9.5 billion. In northern Japan, the city of Sapporo has entered a bid to host the 2030 Winter Olympics & Paralympics.

Product Trends

Plant-Based Milks

According to the Japan Soymilk Association, Japan's soymilk market has been growing for over a decade, reaching its highest level ever in 2020. In 2020, production increased 5.3 percent from the previous year to over 430,000 kiloliters. New varieties of soymilk made cheese and yogurt were introduced to the market, further driving consumption. Japan relies on imports for 80 percent of its food-use soybeans, approximately 75 percent of which comes from the United States. Almond milk is the second-leading plant-based milk in Japan after soy. According to Almond Milk Labo, an industry association, the sales of almond milk surpassed \$92 million in 2020, a 19 percent increase compared to 2019. Production of almond milk increased 34 percent compared to 2019 reaching over 22,000 kiloliters. Other plant-based milks have also entered the market including coconut, cashew nut, oat, rice, and pistachio. The COVID-19 pandemic has focused consumer attention on healthy eating which has supported growing consumption of plant-based milks. Dietary preferences such as vegetarian and vegan are also slowly gaining traction in the Japanese market.

Frozen Foods

The pandemic has accelerated demand for quick and easy meals at home. According to the Japan Frozen Food Association, the domestic production value of frozen foods for household use in 2020 grew to \$3.3 billion, an increase of 18.5 percent from 2019. Many convenience stores and supermarkets are starting to remodel their stores to expand frozen shelf space. Major convenience store chains such as Lawson and Seven Eleven announced plans to remodel over 60 percent of their stores, totaling 8,000 and 12,000 stores respectively, to quadruple sales of frozen foods. Life Corporation, a national supermarket chain, remodeled 30 stores to increase the number of frozen products sold by 50 to 100 percent. AEON, Japan's largest retailer, remodeled 90 percent of their retail supermarkets (about 350 stores) to increase the volume of frozen meat products by 50 percent and frozen fishery products by 60 percent compared to 3 years ago.

Non-Alcoholic (or Low Alcohol) Drinks and Seltzers

Sales of non-alcoholic beverages and carbonated waters are growing in Japan. In addition to greater health consciousness among consumers, COVID-19 also forced foodservice establishments to offer non-alcoholic options in response to the government’s occasional bans on alcoholic service during the pandemic. According to Fuji Keizai, a research firm, the domestic market for non-alcoholic products including non-alcoholic beer expanded by more than 10 percent in 2020 compared to 2019. The firm projected production to reach over 60,000 kiloliters in 2021. Meanwhile, industry data showed that sales of carbonated water increased 13 percent compared to pre-COVID times. Sales of carbonated water drinks are expected to continue to increase in 2022 with major beverage corporations such as Coca-Cola Japan, Suntory, and Ito-En launching new extra-carbonated super sparkling water products. Notably, 2020 marked the very first year that the beverage production share of mineral water (17.8 percent) surpassed that of sugar-added/flavored soda drinks (17.4 percent) in Japan. Demand for sugar-added/flavored soda drinks dropped for second consecutive year with sales down 4.9 percent and production down 5.3 percent. The “mocktail” was selected as the trendy beverage for 2022 by Cookpad Inc., Japan’s largest recipe website.

SECTION V. AGRICULTURAL & FOOD IMPORTS

U.S. Export Data

Export data by aggregated groups and top ten consumer-oriented product category by value is shown in the table below. For additional U.S. agricultural trade data available in customizable reports, please consult the Global Agricultural Trade System (GATS) [here](#).

U.S. Agricultural Product Exports to Japan

Product Category	United States Exports to Japan (million USD)				
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<i>Agricultural Total</i>	11,428	12,128	13,141	12,002	11,717
Consumer Oriented Products	6,187	6,579	6,787	6,428	6,359
Bulk Products	4,077	4,257	4,933	4,074	3,991
Intermediate	1,164	1,292	1,422	1,499	1,367

U.S. Consumer-Oriented Product Exports to Japan

Product Category	United States Exports to Japan (million USD)				
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<i>Consumer Oriented Products Total</i>	6,187	6,579	6,787	6,428	6,359
Beef & Beef Products	1,506	1,878	2,091	1,936	1,925
Pork & Pork Products	1,552	1,625	1,629	1,522	1,621
Processed Vegetables	493	529	515	514	482
Tree Nuts	374	397	435	418	388
Dairy Products	206	290	269	282	322
Fresh Fruit	343	316	319	323	314
Soup & Other Food Preparations	209	234	230	196	197
Processed Fruit	176	170	186	156	152
Dog & Cat Food	98	96	120	130	119
Distilled Spirits	98	112	111	130	110

Top-Five U.S. Consumer-Oriented Exports

Beef and Beef Products

In 2020, the United States exported \$1.93 billion of beef products to Japan, making Japan the number one overseas market for U.S. beef. Japan is a major importer of chilled and frozen meat as well as offal (mainly tongues and skirts). As foodservice typically accounts for around 60 percent of beef consumption in Japan, COVID-19 restrictions on restaurant operation caused overall beef demand to dip in 2021. A portion of lost foodservice sales were recovered through increased retail demand, especially for home barbecue meals. Shipping delays and tight availability have caused beef prices to increase. A safeguard tariff on U.S. beef in early 2021 also pushed prices higher. In the long term, beef demand is expected to continue trending upward given increased consumer focus on protein consumption and healthy eating. U.S. beef generally has a higher protein content and less fat compared to highly marbled Japanese beef. For more on the Japanese beef market, see the USDA Japan [Livestock and Products Annual Report 2021](#).

Pork and Processed Pork Products

In 2020, the United States exported \$1.6 billion of pork products to Japan, making Japan the number two overseas market for U.S. pork. Imported pork accounts for about a half of domestic demand. Pork remains one of the most popular protein choices for Japanese households. U.S. pork accounts for about one-third of Japan's total pork imports, competing with suppliers from Canada, Spain, Denmark and Mexico. Competition in the chilled market is especially tight between the United States and Canada. Critically, tariffs on U.S. ground seasoned pork and sausage will be eliminated in 2023 under USJTA, enabling the United States to maintain tariff parity with competitors. Tariffs on other pork products will also be reduced over time. For more on the Japanese pork market, see the USDA Japan [Livestock and Products Annual Report 2021](#).

Processed Vegetables

In 2020, Japan's imports of frozen vegetables declined for the first time in six years, down 5.3 percent to 1.04 million tons. Institutional use by hotels and restaurants was particularly sluggish due to COVID-19. However, in the long run, Japanese consumers are expected to continue to seek convenient meals and ingredients due to the increase in working women and single-person households, leading to rising demand for processed vegetables. The United States is the second largest supplier of processed vegetables to Japan following China. The United States is the largest supplier of prepared potatoes, sweet (canned and frozen) corn and mixed vegetables as well as tomato and carrot puree and juice. USJTA provides duty-free access for U.S. frozen sweet corn and mixed vegetables, fresh broccoli, and fresh celery. Frozen and cooked potatoes will also face lower tariffs under USJTA, providing increased market opportunities for potato use in hotels, restaurants, and home-meal replacements.

Nuts

U.S. nuts have made strong in-roads into the convenience health snack sector in Japan. Most supermarkets and convenience store chains now carry a diverse selection of nuts and dry fruit snacks. Peanuts, almonds, pecan, and walnuts in plain, roasted, and salted forms are readily available in single-serve snack packaging at convenience stores across Japan. These products primarily target the large, fast-paced, health conscience Japanese working population. Many school lunch programs also include small packages of mixed nuts and peanuts (often with dried small fish for calcium). Candied and chocolate-coated tree nut snacks continue to increase in sales and scope. Japanese foodservice providers are also beginning to explore new salad creations incorporating tree nuts. USJTA provides duty-free access for U.S. almonds and walnuts as well as in-quota access for peanuts. Tariffs on almond flour will be eliminated by 2023.

Dairy Products

In 2020, the United States exported over \$322 million of dairy products to Japan, making it the 7th largest export market. The United States is the fourth largest exporter of cheese to Japan, following Australia, New Zealand, and the European Union. Japan is a major importer of U.S. hard cheeses such as cheddar as well as cream cheese and grated/powdered natural cheese. Approximately 60 percent of cheese consumed in Japan is natural cheese, nearly 90 percent of which is imported. Japanese cheese consumption continues to grow, reaching a record high for the sixth consecutive year in 2020. Increased household consumption has helped to offset declining demand from institutional users during the pandemic. Household consumption of cheese increased 14 percent year-on-year to reach four kilograms per household in 2020. The “stay home” effect of the pandemic significantly increased home-delivered pizza orders as well as consumption of cheese snacks to pair with drinking alcoholic beverages at home. 88 percent of natural cheese, which accounts for 60 percent of total consumption in Japan is imported. Increasing popularity of Western cuisine in recent years has boosted retail consumption of fresh cheeses including mozzarella, camembert, and cream cheese. Although it has been increasing steadily since 2009, per capita cheese consumption in Japan remains low compared to Europe (20 kilograms) and the United States (16 kilograms). For more on the Japanese dairy market, see the [USDA Japan Dairy Products Annual Report 2021](#).

SECTION VI. KEY CONTACTS AND FURTHER INFORMATION

Agricultural Trade Offices (in Tokyo and Osaka) and Office of Agriculture Affairs in Japan stand ready to assist you in your efforts to bring products to market in Japan.

ATO Tokyo

U.S. Embassy, Japan
E-mail: atotokyo@usda.gov
Tel: +81 3 3224 5115
Fax: +81 3 3582 6429

ATO Osaka

U.S. Consulate General Osaka-Kobe
E-mail: atoosaka@usda.gov
Tel: +81 6 6315 5904
Fax: +81 6 6315 5906

Office of Agricultural Affairs

U.S. Embassy, Japan
E-mail: agtokyo@usda.gov
Tel: +81 3 3224 5102

Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO)

The Japan External Trade Organization also provides information on the Japanese market and regulations here: <https://www.jetro.go.jp/en/reports/>.

U.S. Agricultural Trade Organizations (Cooperators)

Approximately 40 U.S. agricultural trade organizations (cooperators) have representatives in Japan who promote U.S. products and help member companies enter Japanese market. The full list of cooperators is available at www.usdajapan.org/find-a-partner/in-japan.

Attachments:

No Attachments