

Voluntary Report – Voluntary - Public Distribution
2025

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Report Name: Egypt--Overview of Walnut Industry

Country: Egypt

Post: Cairo

Report Category: Tree Nuts

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Report Highlights:

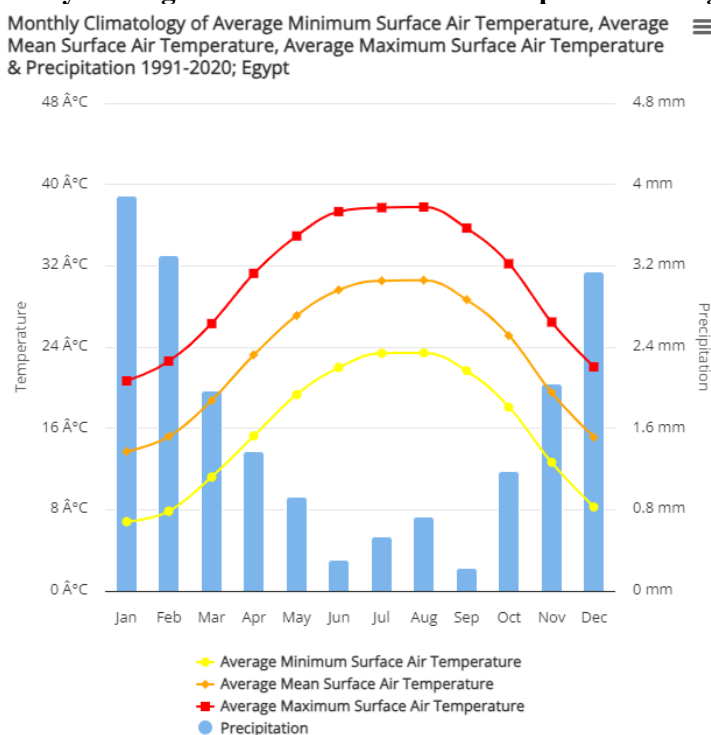
Tree nut production in Egypt is limited due to its climate and thus heavily relies upon imports. The top varieties for tree nut exports to Egypt include walnuts, almonds, and pistachios. Tree nuts are a popular snack item in Egypt, and walnuts are used in many deserts, especially during the month of Ramadan. Although consumption peaked during Covid-19, Egyptian imports and consumption of walnuts have since declined. The United States is a large exporter of walnuts to Egypt, as many Egyptians value the quality that U.S. walnuts provide. Consumption is not expected to increase for marketing year 2025/26, as consumers will continue to prioritize essential foods over non-compulsory items, like walnuts. Additionally, lower cost, savory snacks, particularly puffed snacks and potato chips, represent the fastest growing category in terms of retail sales volume.

Production

According to recent statistics published by the Egyptian Ministry of Agriculture & Land Reclamation (MALR), the government does not keep data on commercial cultivation of walnuts in the country. According to experts in the Egyptian horticultural sector, there may be a handful of Egyptian walnut producers, but these trees are likely dispersed throughout the country (with no central hub of production in Egypt). Production is believed to be minimal, and primarily for personal use.

Walnut trees typically require between 400 to 15,00 chilling hours per year (during the winter), which means they need exposure to temperatures between 32°F (0°C) and 45°F (7.2°C) to break dormancy and properly flower (See Image 1). Such temperature requirements are difficult to achieve in Egypt given the country's climate, which therefore challenges walnut production. Accordingly, most walnuts used in Egypt are imported from foreign countries.

Image 1: Monthly Average Minimum Surface Air Temperature in Egypt (1991-2020)



Source: <https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/country/egypt/climate-data-historical>

Consumption

Walnuts are a popular nut in Egypt, especially during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, and other religious holidays. Walnuts represented 24.55 percent of the volume of imported nuts during the past five years (2019-2023). Most walnuts are consumed in traditional desserts, the most famous being “Kahk,” a traditional sweet cookie stuffed with walnuts and dates (or sometimes both) and served during the last week of Ramadan and Eid El Fitr (a feast to celebrate the end of Ramadan). Walnuts are also used in preparing other homemade traditional confectionery such as Kunafa, Umm Ali, Baklava, Qatayef, and Basbousa – all widely consumed during the month of Ramadan.

The Egyptian consumption of walnuts (and other nuts) spiked in 2021, amid the coronavirus pandemic, as a larger segment of the population was snacking on nuts due to their nutritional value. However,

Egyptian walnut (and other nut) consumption levels returned to pre-pandemic levels in 2022 as nut consumption decreased due to their high price. Since 2022, Egypt has suffered from a myriad of economic challenges (chiefly, a severe shortage of foreign currency) which has challenged commodity supply chains. Exacerbating this challenge was the lingering impacts on the economy from the coronavirus, the Russian invasion of Ukraine, regional conflicts in neighboring countries, and the Houthi attacks on shipments in the Red Sea. The collective effect of these challenges has, in part, led to high inflation rates (25.5 percent in November 2024).¹

In March 2024, Egypt raised interest rates, devalued the Egyptian pound, and committed to reducing spending on infrastructure projects in exchange for a \$5 billion expansion of its International Monetary Fund (IMF) loan package.² The devaluation made imported food products, such as walnuts, more expensive for the average Egyptian consumer. Current retail prices for walnuts range from \$16.7 to \$19.7 per kg in Egypt (USD=50.8 EGP), making them a very expensive snack. During Ramadan and Eid El Fitr celebrations, prices of walnuts tend to rise even more due to increased consumer and food service demand.

Despite high inflation rates, increasing urbanization and rising consumer awareness of healthier foods -- which includes eating more vegetables, fresh fruit, and nuts -- have helped walnuts maintain their place in the Egyptian market. While annual headline inflation is expected to decline from an average of 29 percent in 2024 to an average of 15-16 percent in 2025,³⁴ increased consumption of walnuts is not expected as consumers will continue to prioritize essential foods over non-compulsory items, like walnuts. Additionally, lower cost, savory snacks (particularly puffed snacks and potato chips), represent the fastest growing category in terms of retail sales volume.

To maintain sales, some food manufacturers have reduced the size of their packaging as a means to reduce consumer prices. Additionally, consumer product promotions and discounts in modern retail outlets are becoming increasingly common, including online shopping where internet shopping outlets are also increasingly offering discounts. There has also been an increasing consumer interest in local brands, which benefit from lower prices compared to their imported counterparts, as well as being more widely available.

Trade

During the past five years (2019-2023), Egypt's imports of tree nuts totaled 138,233 metric tons (MT). This included in-shell (HS code 080231) and shelled (HS code 080232) walnuts, almonds, and pistachios amounting to 54,053 MT, 76,825 MT, and 7,355 MT, respectively (see Figure 1).

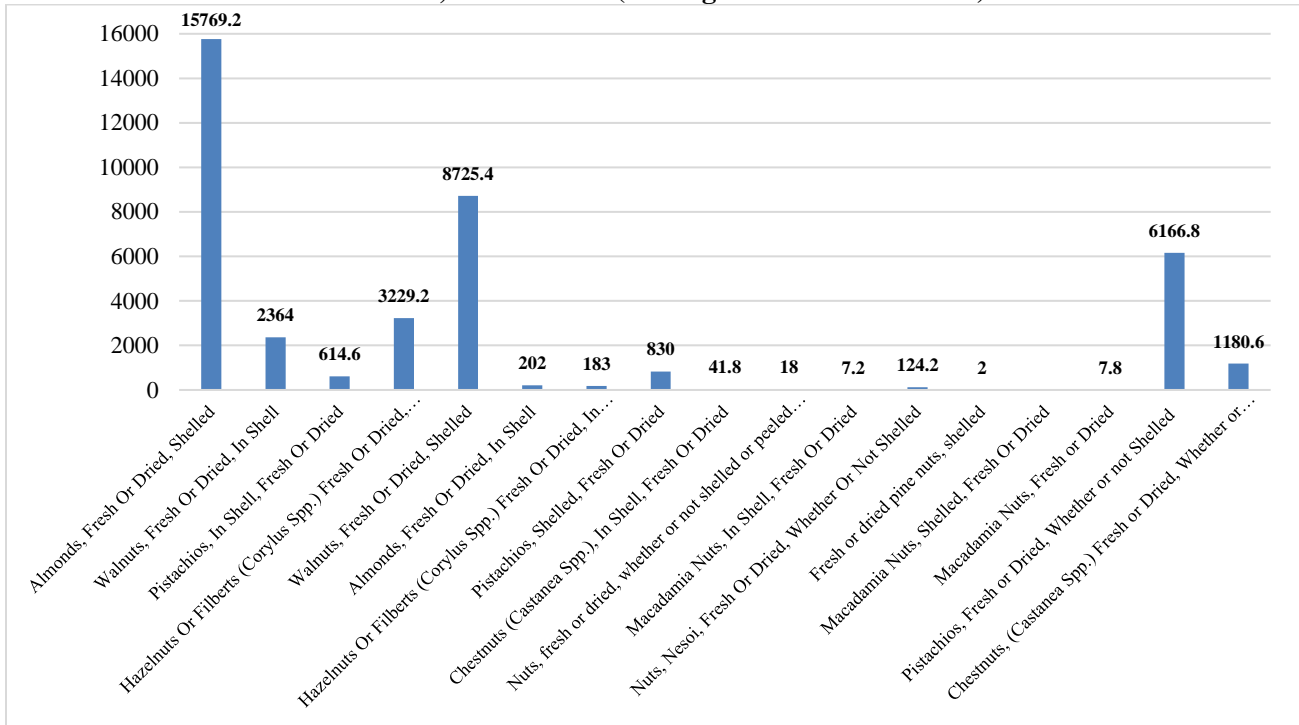
¹ See, e.g., [https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/egypts-annual-urban-consumer-price-inflation-255-november-2024-12-10/#:~:text=CAIRO%2C%20Dec%2010%20\(Reuters\),agency%20CAPMAS%20showed%20on%20Tuesday](https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/egypts-annual-urban-consumer-price-inflation-255-november-2024-12-10/#:~:text=CAIRO%2C%20Dec%2010%20(Reuters),agency%20CAPMAS%20showed%20on%20Tuesday).

² See, e.g., <https://gfmag.com/economics-policy-regulation/egypt-devalues-currency-raises-interest-rates-imf-deal-8-billion/>

³ <https://www.businesstodayegypt.com/Article/1/5464/Morgan-Stanley-forecasts-CBE-to-begin-interest-rate-cuts-in>

⁴ <https://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/3/12/534548/Business/Economy/IMF-projects-Egypt-inflation-to-cool-to--by-end-of.aspx>

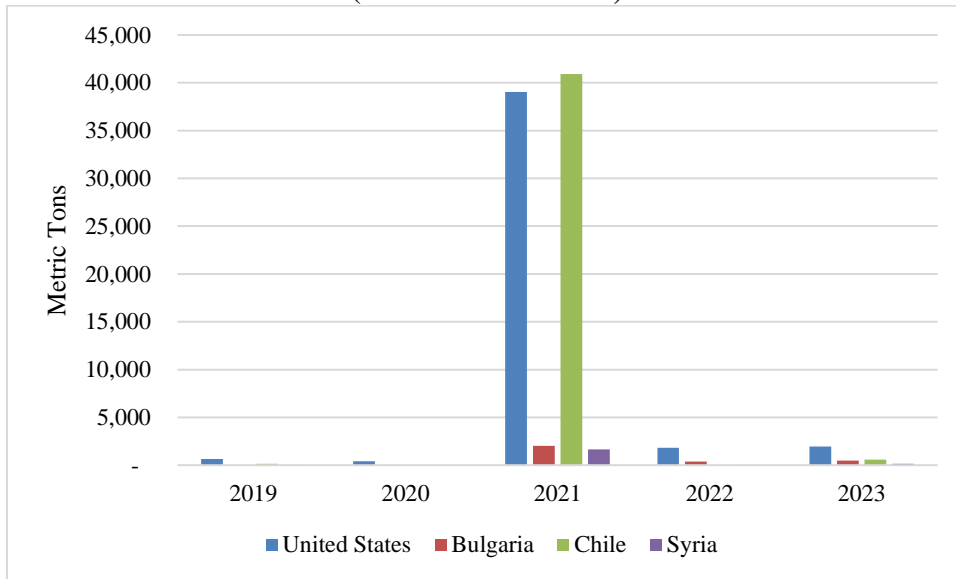
**Figure 1: Average Annual Volume of Tree Nut Imports into Egypt
HS Code 0802, Metric Tons (Average Between 2019-2023)**



Source: Trade Data Monitor LLC

The major suppliers of walnuts to Egypt from 2019-2023 were the United States (26,314 MT), Chile (21,641), and Bulgaria (2,887 MT) (see Figure 2). The major suppliers of shelled walnuts to Egypt from 2019-2023 were the United States (17,556, MT), Chile (20,384), and Bulgaria (2,695 MT) (see Table 1), while major suppliers of in-shelled walnuts to Egypt were the United States (8,758 MT) and Chile (1,257 MT) (See Table 2). However, in 2021, Egypt saw a record number of walnut imports (both shelled and in-shell), primarily on account of the United States and Chile. The reason for the massive increase in 2021 was due to the increased consumption of walnuts during Covid-19, as people opted for a healthier snack.

**Figure 2: Top Suppliers of Walnuts to Egypt (2019-2023)
(Shelled and In-Shell)**



Source: Trade Data Monitor LLC

**Table 1: Suppliers of Shelled (Fresh or Dried) Walnuts to Egypt
(From 2019-2023, by Volume)**

Partner Country	Calendar Year (UOM1: T)				
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
World	213	113	41,010	516	1,472
Bulgaria	0	24	2,002	182	487
United States	184	89	16,582	302	399
Chile	15	0	20,003	0	366
Syria	13	0	1,640	22	107
Lebanon	0	0	32	1	90
Ukraine	1	0	0	0	23
China	0	0	51	9	0
United Arab Emirates	0	0	0	0	0
Brazil	0	0	700	0	0

Source: Trade Data Monitor LLC

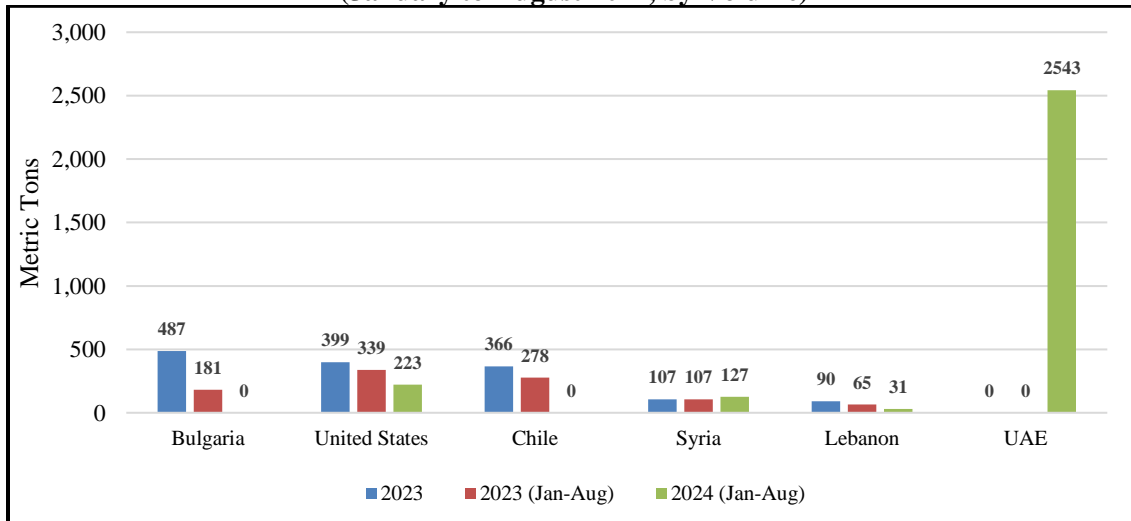
**Table 2: Suppliers of In-Shell (Fresh or Dried) Walnuts to Egypt
(From 2019-2023, by Volume)**

Partner Country	Calendar Year (UOM1: T)				
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
_ World	417	230	6,900	1,508	1,674
United States	286	226	5,882	1,207	1,157
China	0	0	0	68	225
Chile	131	0	922	0	204
Syria	0	0	8	0	45
Argentina	0	4	66	0	42
Bulgaria	0	0	2	190	0
Turkey	0	0	20	0	0
Ukraine	0	0	0	43	0

Source: Trade Data Monitor LLC

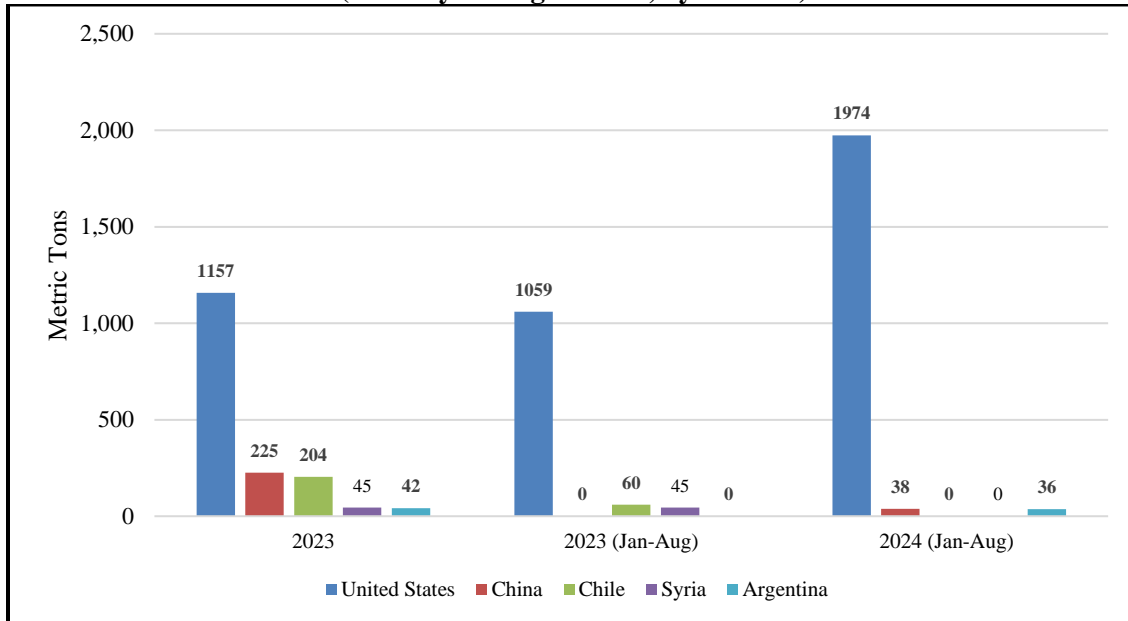
While walnut exports to Egypt are nowhere near their 2021 figures, exports have slightly increased. Data from January 2024 – August 2024 shows a large increase in walnut exports to Egypt by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) (see Figure 3). This may be a transshipment or data error, as large walnut exports from the UAE to Egypt are unusual. On the other hand, exports of in-shell walnuts to Egypt increased by 76 percent compared to the same period last year, primarily driven by the United States, constituting almost 70 percent of the total volume of Egyptian walnut imports (See Figure 4). The reason for this increase is most likely due to many Egyptians favoring the quality of U.S. walnuts and as the economy may improve.

**Figure 3: Top Suppliers of Shelled (Fresh or Dried) Walnuts to Egypt
(January to August 2024, by Volume)**



Source: Source: Trade Data Monitor LLC

Figure 4: Top Suppliers In-Shell (Fresh or Dried) Walnuts to Egypt (January to August 2024, by Volume)



Source: Trade Data Monitor LLC

Import Procedures

For detailed import regulations, please see FAS/Cairo’s Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards report ([EG2024-0018: FAIRS Country Report Annual](#)) and the certificates laid out in [EG2024-0019: FAIRS Export Certificate Report Annual](#).

Detection of Contaminants in Imports and Exports

Currently, Egypt’s National Food Safety Authority (NFSA) is the responsible authority for the detection of contaminants in imported products. Decision No. 6/2022 covers chemical contaminants in food and maximum residue limits (MRL). The decision contains 12 articles and five appendices that categorize food groups, chemical containments, MRLs of chemical containments in foods and methods for their testing and detection. For more information, see [EG2022-0022: Egypt's National Food Safety Authority Issues Technical Regulation for the Maximum Residue Levels of Chemical Contaminants in Food](#). The maximum allowable total aflatoxin levels and B1 levels and other contaminants for tree nuts are listed in the following table:

TABLE 1: Egypt, Selected Aflatoxins and Other Contaminants MRLs for Nuts according to NFSA Decision No. 6/2022

Food Item	Maximum Allowable Aflatoxins B1,B2,G1,G2	Maximum Allowable B1 Level
Tree nuts other than hazelnuts and Brazil nuts, almonds, pistachios intended for direct human consumption or use as ingredient in food stuff	4 µg/kg	2 µg/kg
Tree nuts other than Hazelnuts and Brazilian nuts, almonds, pistachios to be subjected to sorting or any physical treatment before direct human consumption or use as ingredient in food stuff	10 µg/kg	5µg/kg
Tree Nuts	Ochratoxin A	Sensitivity Range 0.3 ug/kg
Tree Nuts	Cadmium	Sensitivity Range 0.2ml/kg
Tree Nuts	Lead	Sensitivity Range 0.01mg/kg
Tree Nuts	Fusarium Toxins	Sensitivity Range 150ug/kg

Source: NFSA Decision 6/2022

Detection of Pesticides Residues in Imports and Exports

NFSA is also responsible for the control of pesticide residues and contaminates in imports. For more information, see [EG2022-0027: Updates to Egypt's National Food Safety Authority Issues Technical Regulation for the Maximum Residue Levels of Chemical Contaminates in Food](#). Egypt's [Central Administration of Plant Quarantine](#) (CAPQ) remains the authority for managing exports and determining acceptable residue levels. CAPQ will continue testing for residues in exports until NFSA takes charge of this responsibility.

Attachments:

No Attachments.