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**Report Highlights:**

This guide serves as a resource for U.S. companies seeking to do business in Thailand and provides market overviews, practical tips and information on local business practices, consumer preferences, and trends. This report also identifies opportunities and entry approaches for the three major market sectors (food retail, food service, and food processing).

# Market Fact Sheet: Thailand

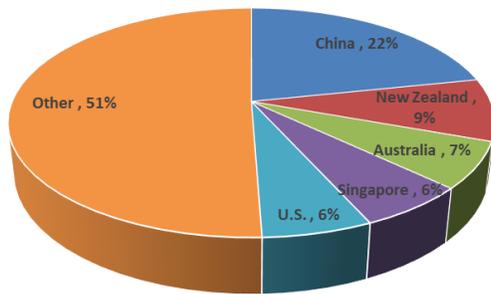
## Executive Summary

Thailand has the second largest GDP in ASEAN at \$512.19 billion and a population of 70.2 million. Urbanization rates grew from 45% in 2012 to 53% in 2022. The country has a dynamic, expanding consumer market, supported by a fast-growing middle class. In 2023, the country was the 21<sup>st</sup> largest export market for U.S. agricultural products, while the United States was the third largest supplier of agricultural products to Thailand with a total export value of \$1.6 billion in 2022.

## Imports of Consumer-Oriented Products

In 2022, U.S. exports of consumer-oriented agricultural products to Thailand were valued at \$453 million. The United States was the 5<sup>th</sup> largest supplier in this product category.

Thailand's Top Supplier Countries in 2022



## Food Processing Industry

Thailand is a leading food and agricultural exporter thanks to its well-developed food processing sector, quality controls and standards. Domestic sales of processed foods are rising due to a shift in consumption patterns favoring convenience. With rising global demand for processed foods, food processors must import large quantities of raw materials not locally available. Thailand exported \$27.8 billion in processed food products in 2022 and imported \$3.3 billion in food ingredients.

## Food Retail Industry

Thailand's retail food industry is estimated at \$68 billion and expected to grow 6-8 percent in 2023 as the tourism sector recovers after the pandemic. Changes in the structure of Thai households and the pandemic have led to a rising demand for convenient ready-to-eat meals, healthy food products, and food delivery.

## Quick Facts: Thailand

**2022 Imports of Consumer-Oriented Products:**  
\$7.84 billion

### List of Top 10 Growth Products in Thailand

- |                        |                     |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| 1) Dairy products      | 2) Spices           |
| 3) Seafood products    | 4) Food preparation |
| 5) Fresh produce       | 6) Bakery products  |
| 7) Tree nuts           | 8) Wine and beer    |
| 9) Chilled/frozen beef | 10) Beverages       |

### 2022 Food Industry by Channels (billion US\$)

Food and Agricultural Imports	\$22.3
Food and Agricultural Exports	\$47.3
Full-Service Restaurant Sales	\$3.8
Food Delivery Sales	\$0.4
Food & Bev E-Commerce Sales	\$5.1

### Top Retailers in Thailand

#### Supermarkets

- 1) Central Food Retail
- 2) Gourmet Market
- 3) Villa Market
- 4) Foodland
- 5) UFM Fuji Super
- 6) MaxValu
- 7) CJ Supermarket

#### Hypermarkets

- 1) Lotus's
- 2) Big C

#### Convenience Stores

- 1) 7-Eleven
- 2) Family Mart
- 3) Lawson 108
- 4) CJ Express

#### Cash and Carry

- 1) Makro

### GDP/Population

Population (*millions*): 70.20

GDP (*billions US\$*): \$512.19 (as of 10/2023)

GDP per capita (*US\$*): \$7300 (as of 10/2023)

2022 Economic Growth Rate: 2.6%

Sources: International Monetary Fund, Trade Data Monitor, Bank of Thailand, Euromonitor, Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board, Kasikorn Research, USDA, and industry estimates.

<b>Strength</b>	<b>Weakness</b>
Thailand has well-established retail, food service and food processing industries.	Trade barriers on imported food & beverages to protect local industry
<b>Opportunity</b>	<b>Challenges</b>
The growing urban population, especially the middle and upper middle-class, is willing to pay for premium food products.	Higher tariffs on U.S. products vis-à-vis others with trade agreements dampens importer interest in U.S. products.

## Section I. Market Overview

### Economy

The Fiscal Policy Office of Thailand's Ministry of Finance forecasted Thailand's economy would expand by 2.7 percent in 2023, mainly driven by the recovery of the tourism sector and domestic consumption. In 2024, Thailand's Ministry of Finance expects the economy to increase by a further 3.2 percent, boosted by growing domestic consumption and exports. Tourism is one of the largest segments of Thailand's economy and has yet to reach pre-pandemic levels. Thailand recorded more than 22 million arrivals of international tourists as of October 2023, the latest available data. The Tourism Authority of Thailand expects the total 2023 number of international tourists to reach 25-28 million, generating \$61 billion in revenue, or 60-70 percent of Thailand's pre-pandemic tourism revenue from 40 million tourists in 2019.

### Agricultural Trade

In 2022, Thailand was the world's 11th largest agricultural and food exporter with an export value of \$39 billion, a 13 percent increase from 2021. Agricultural and food exports account for 17 percent of Thailand's total exports. Thailand remains a leading exporter of various agricultural products (e.g., rice, cooked poultry, cassava, sugar, natural rubber, frozen shrimp, canned tuna, canned pineapples, and other processed products). According to Thailand's Ministry of Industry, the country's agricultural and food exports in the first nine months of 2023 reached \$33 billion. The National Food Institute, under the Ministry of Industry, projects Thailand's 2023 food exports to reach \$44 billion, while the forecast for 2024 is \$47 billion.

Revenue in the food market amounts to \$68 billion in 2023. The market is expected to grow at a compounded annual growth rate of 5.25% from 2023 to 2028 according to [Statista](#). Thailand's food market is segmented into several categories, including fresh food, processed food, and foodservice. In 2023, according to [Duntower](#), the fresh food segment was the largest, with a market value of \$26 billion, followed by the foodservice segment, with a market value of \$22 billion, and the processed food segment, with a market value of \$20 billion.

In 2022, Thailand imported a total of \$17.28 billion in food and agricultural products, of which \$1.57 billion came from the United States. U.S. agriculture and food products represented 9 percent of Thailand's total agricultural imports and placed the United States as Thailand's third largest agricultural supplier after Brazil and China in 2022. The value of U.S. consumer-oriented agri-food exports to Thailand was \$453 million, while the total value of U.S. imports of consumer-oriented products from Thailand was \$2.6 billion. Thailand's top five imported U.S. consumer-oriented products were food preparations, seafood products, dairy products, tree nuts, and fresh fruits.

**Table 1. U.S.-Thailand Trade in Consumer-Oriented Ag Products in 2018-2022 (million, US\$)**

Calendar Year	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
U.S. Exports to Thailand	369.0	410.5	398.5	396.4	453.3
U.S. Imports from Thailand	1,655.0	1,699.5	1,828.4	2,080.1	2,600.0
<i>Trade Balance</i>	<i>(1,286.0)</i>	<i>(1,289.0)</i>	<i>(1,429.9)</i>	<i>(1,683.7)</i>	<i>(2,146.7)</i>

Source: Global Agricultural Trade System (GATS).

Thailand currently has free trade agreements with the Association of Southeast Asian Nation countries (ASEAN), Australia-New Zealand, China, India, Japan, Peru, South Korea, and Chile. Thailand is in negotiations for free trade arrangements with the European Union (EU), Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Canada (through ASEAN), and Turkey (Table 2).

On November 15, 2020, Thailand officially joined the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) agreement with Australia, China, Japan, New Zealand, and South Korea. The free trade agreement entered into force on January 1, 2022. The impact of RCEP on U.S. agricultural exports to Thailand is expected to have a marginal impact on U.S. consumer oriented agricultural products in Thailand. Most consumer oriented agricultural products from member countries have already been imported duty free prior to RCEP through the ASEAN free trade agreement and separate free trade agreements that Thailand has with Australia, China, Japan, New Zealand, and South Korea. More information is available in [“The Impact of RCEP on US Agricultural Exports to Thailand”](#) report.

**Table 2. Thailand’s Free Trade Agreements**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>
ASEAN-China	October 1, 2003
Thailand-India	September 1, 2004
Thailand-Australia	January 1, 2005
Thailand-New Zealand	July 1, 2005
Thailand-Japan	November 1, 2007
Thailand-Peru	December 31, 2011
ASEAN-Korea	January 1, 2010
ASEAN-India	January 1, 2010
ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand	March 12, 2010
ASEAN-Japan	June 1, 2009
Thailand-Chile	November 5, 2015
ASEAN-Hong Kong, China Free Trade Agreement (AHKFTA)	June 11, 2019
Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)	January 1, 2022

Thailand’s duties on imported U.S. consumer-ready food products range between 30-60 percent. Tariffs on meats, fresh fruits and vegetables, and processed foods are particularly high, despite no or very limited domestic production of some of these products. For example, Thailand does not produce frozen potatoes but imposes a 30 percent tariff on U.S. frozen potatoes. Similarly, Thailand has a 10 percent tariff on U.S. apples, while grapes and cherries face duties of 30 and 40 percent, respectively.

Advantages	Challenges
Thais spend 27 percent of their total expenditures on food and non-alcoholic beverages- (Euromonitor 2023), and about 37.2 million middle-to-upper income consumers (53 percent of the total population) are eager to purchase imported food products.	Imports of some U.S. food products are subject to trade barriers, including high import tariffs, rigid food import procedures, and burdensome documentation requirements.
27 percent of Thailand’s population are between the ages of 15 and 34, and eager to try new products to fit their westernized lifestyles.	Thailand has 14 FTAs in place with 18 countries currently. The free trade agreements have made U.S. products less competitive, especially for high-value consumer products such as meats, processed meat, wine, spirits, fresh fruits, frozen potatoes, and cheeses.
Urban Thais (53 percent of the population) increasingly spend more on imported food items and have become relatively brand conscious. They are changing their eating habits toward a more western style diet.	Local production is increasingly substituting imported food items. Locally produced snack foods, salad dressings, sauces, jams, and other processed foods are relatively inexpensive.
Increasingly the purchasing power of consumers in rural areas translates into more discretionary spending on non-traditional agricultural products.	Market penetration for imported products is mostly concentrated in Bangkok and major tourist-destination areas.
The Thai food processing industry is looking for new ingredients, particularly with health and/or functional associations.	The oligopolistic nature of hypermarkets exerts some control over prices, while convenience stores prefer low priced locally or regionally sourced products.
Restaurants are increasingly offering more niche premium products to appeal to consumers with higher incomes.	Strong government protection of domestically produced products, such as poultry and pork, greatly complicate market access for imported products.

## Section II. Exporter Business Tips

### Market Research:

- It is essential to visit the market to conduct market research, especially for product testing, price comparisons, gauging competitors, and understanding consumer preferences.
- U.S. exporters should identify the best distribution channel (e.g., local importers, distributors, and retailers) and establish a good relationship with their representatives as they are very useful in facilitating and promoting exports of U.S. consumer-ready foods to Thailand.
- FAS Bangkok publishes its analysis of Thailand’s key policy and market sector developments with likely impact on U.S. agricultural trade at <https://gain.fas.USDA.gov>.

### Business Partners:

- U.S. exporters should work with a representative or agent who has or can get strong local connections with target customers (i.e., retailers, hotels, restaurants, and food processors), a good understanding of Thai food and agriculture regulations, and food import procedures.
- Networking with government officials and/or appropriate authorities can be the key to doing business successfully in Thailand.

- FAS Bangkok advises new-to-market U.S. exporters to participate in activities and events that introduce them to the Thai market, such as trade missions organized by the State and Regional Trade Associations (e.g., [Food Export USA](#), [the Western United States Agricultural Trade Association](#), and [the Southern United States Trade Association](#)) as these organizations work closely with FAS in Thailand and can provide reliable importer contacts and market opportunity updates.

#### Local Business Customs and Trends:

- Localize your products: adjust the product to local tastes, verify consumer preferences, and set a competitive price.
- Trade show participation is another way to raise awareness of your product(s) and meet with prospective importers, retailers, and distributors. The three recommended trade shows in Thailand are [Thaifex Anuga Asia](#), 28 May -1 June 2024, (a non-USDA endorsed trade show targeting products for retail and food service markets), [Food Ingredients Asia](#), 17-19 Sept 2025, (USDA endorsed trade show targeting products for food processing market), and [VIV Asia](#), 12-14 March 2025 (USDA endorsed trade show targeting animal feed products).
- Successful U.S. exporters must ensure reliable product availability, consistent quality, technical support, and respond to inquiries within 24 hours.
- When introducing new products, several factors should be kept in mind. Thai middle to upper-middle income consumers have an aversion to low quality products and are attracted to branded products. They also tend to be image conscious. New products that focus on good quality, better packaging, availability, promotions, and competitive prices may replace existing brand loyalty.
- U.S. exporters can request a list of importers from FAS Bangkok at [agbangkok@fas.USDA.gov](mailto:agbangkok@fas.USDA.gov).

#### General Customer Tastes and Trends:

- Smaller households are driving the demand for smaller quantity packages and more emphasis on convenience foods that require less preparation time.
- The COVID-19 health crisis continues to impact consumer behavior and new trends in the food and restaurant industry. Restaurants and retail stores are producing new products and services that are based on the consumer trend towards health and wellness. The demand for healthy and functional claim (e.g., immunity-boosting) food and beverages, such as vitamin enriched drinking water, continues to grow since the pandemic.
- For further information on market trends, please see the [Thailand's Food and Restaurant Trends in 2022 report](#).
- The rapid growth of food delivery applications during the pandemic contributed to the emergence of one big food trend: ghost restaurants (cloud kitchen), which are food outlets that are set up only for delivery service without a physical store and dining area. More information can be found in the report [Thailand Online Food Delivery Market](#).
- On-going urbanization encourages Thai consumers to adopt lifestyles of convenience and speed, which lead to stronger sales of ready-to-eat and ready-to-cook meals.
- Thais are increasingly getting food-related information including brands, new trends, nutritional and restaurant information through online searches, social media, bloggers, and influencers.

### **Section III. Import Food Standards & Regulations/Import Procedure**

The most recent [Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards Report](#) for Thailand contains information on food laws, labeling requirements, regulations on food additives, pesticides and other

contaminants, import procedures, and other key regulations, requirements and specific standards. Please contact the FAS Bangkok office at [agbangkok@fas.USDA.gov](mailto:agbangkok@fas.USDA.gov) with specific product-related inquiries.

#### Section IV. Market Sector Structure & Trends

Thailand’s consumer market is relatively mature with a high potential for future growth due to the country’s growing economy, on-going urbanization, and a growing middle class. Along with urbanization, the household income in Thailand has increased rapidly over the past decade. Consumers’ disposable incomes continue to rise enabling more spending on consumer goods, including food and beverage products. Food and non-alcohol beverage expenditures constitute almost a third of total spending for Thai consumers. In 2022, Thai consumer expenditures on food and non-alcoholic beverages per household reached \$2,846.3, with the total Thai consumer expenditures on food and non-alcoholic beverages of \$73 billion (Table 3).

**Table 3: Thai Consumers’ Expenditures on Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages in 2018-2022**

Unit	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
US\$ billion	65.41	71.70	72.94	73.60	73.31
US\$ per household	2,678.0	2,891.5	2,900.5	2,890.0	2,846.3

Source: Euromonitor International 2023

#### Retail Sector and Trends

Food and beverage sales are driving Thailand’s retail sector. Sales of packaged foods in 2022 reached \$15.2 billion, compared to \$14.4 billion in 2021. The pandemic and aging population have changed eating patterns and habits for many in Thailand. Thais are shifting towards a more flexible pattern of eating and more convenient food and beverages. While the demand for convenient food and beverages is increasing, consumers are becoming more conscious about the nutritional value, health benefits, traceability, and food safety. The result is an increasing trend towards healthy, functional, quality, and organic food products, reflected in the introduction of more of these products in the retail stores. By 2030, individuals over the age of 60 years old will make up 27 percent of the total population. A shift toward e-commerce in retail businesses has forced retailers to expand and adjust their online marketing strategies and utilize omnichannel retailing to fit with consumers’ modern lifestyles, where payment and delivery of products are faster and more convenient. Online sales revenue accounts for 10-15 percent of total revenue.

Further information on this market sector can be found in [Thailand: Retail Foods](#).

#### HRI Food Service Sector and Trends

2022 was a transformative year for foodservice operators. In addition to closures of some consumer foodservice outlets, many operators in the hotel, restaurant, and institutional (HRI) foodservice sector have adapted to the post-pandemic market conditions. Foodservice providers adjusted their menus and prices to attract more local consumers. Their offerings also cater to the changing lifestyles of the Thai consumers. There are opportunities for existing and new foodservice providers as Thailand continues to move past COVID-19.

According to Euromonitor, foodservice value sales increased by 19 percent in current terms in 2022 to \$3.82 billion (THB134 billion). Outlet numbers grew by 1 percent to 11,394 in the same year.

Euromonitor projects foodservice value sales to increase at a current value compound annual growth rate of 12 percent (2022 constant value compound annual growth rate of 10 percent) over 2023 to \$6.76 billion (THB237 billion). The number of outlets is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate of 3 percent to 13,025 compared to 2022.

Full-service restaurants are also expected to continue expanding into retail locations to generate additional income. Restaurants will likely adjust their menu items to packaged food formats compatible with sale through channels such as supermarkets and convenience stores. A presence on retailers’ shelves provides opportunities for restaurants to build brand awareness and familiarize consumers with their product offerings. Health-conscious consumers will likely demand healthier menus. The restaurant industry will likely focus on ways to decrease its costs while maintaining quality, such as self-service dining options, robot waiters and adjusting the sourcing of ingredients as these costs grew due to the high inflation in 2022.

Further information on this market sector is available in the [Thailand: Food Service - Hotel Restaurant Institutional](#).

### Food Processing Sector and Trends

Thailand’s food processing industry is among the most developed in Southeast Asia. There are many medium-to-large food processors that produce high-value products for domestic and export markets. Thailand aims to be one of the world’s top ten processed food exporters by 2027 and a key global player in the “Future Food” market. The value of Thailand’s food exports was approximately \$39 billion in 2022, while the value of Thailand’s imports of food ingredients reached \$3.3 billion. With rising demand for processed foods, Thai food processors must import large quantities of food ingredients that are not locally available.

Further information on this market sector can be found in the [Thailand: Food Processing Ingredients](#).

### Alcoholic Drinks and Trends

There is a high proportion of out-of-home consumption for the alcoholic drinks categories, such as ready-to-drink, beers, and cocktail mixers. Thailand’s largest alcoholic drinks category is beer, and it is dominated by local brewers.

In 2022, Thailand’s total volume of alcoholic drink sales reached 2.77 million liters, a 7 percent increase compared to 2021. The total value of alcoholic drink sales was \$14.37 billion in 2022, a 14 percent growth relative to 2021. Total retail consumer expenditure on alcoholic drinks in 2022 was \$5.02 billion, a 5 percent increase over 2021.

**Table 4. Retail Consumers’ Expenditure on Alcoholic Drinks (2018-2022)**

Unit	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
US\$ billion	5.09	5.20	4.83	4.78	5.02

Source: Euromonitor International 2023

Unit prices rose across the entire market, especially for beers and spirits, in 2022 due to global inflation, which increased production costs, such as shipping, raw materials, and packaging costs. Consequently, the alcoholic drinks market saw a significantly greater increase in market value than in volume sales

across all products in 2022. The recovery of the tourism sector will contribute to an increase in demand for all alcoholic drinks categories across different foodservice channels.

Product innovation strategies will likely focus on premiumization and targeting of younger consumers of legal drinking age. Additionally, in response to consumers’ focus on health and wellness, more companies are looking to adapt by reformulating the alcohol content of the products or ingredients.

## Section V. Agricultural and Food Imports

Export data by aggregated groups and the top consumer-oriented products by value are shown in the tables below.

### U.S. Agricultural Product Exports to Thailand

Product Category	U.S. Exports to Thailand (billion US\$)				
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>Agricultural Total</i>	2.23	1.94	1.90	1.80	1.70
Consumer Oriented Products	0.37	0.41	0.39	0.39	0.45
Bulk Products	1.05	0.92	0.87	0.79	0.63
Intermediate	0.70	0.49	0.51	0.50	0.44

### Top U.S. Consumer-Oriented Product Exports to Thailand

Product Category	U.S. Exports to Thailand (million US\$)				
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>Consumer Oriented-Products Total</i>	369.0	410.5	398.5	396.4	453.3
Food Preparations	128.0	129.9	122.9	129.8	120.9
Dairy Products	35.0	56.0	74.9	89.9	112.6
Treenuts	32.0	41.5	36.6	32.0	60.0
Fresh Fruits	40.0	44.9	35.2	22.3	26.0
Chocolate & Cocoa Products	15.0	20.3	19.7	24.2	22.8
Processed Vegetable	23.0	21.6	17.4	14.7	20.2
Non-Alcoholic Bev (excl. juice)	16.0	18.1	18.2	18.9	17.8
Processed Fruit	14.0	12.5	12.9	11.4	11.7
Dog & Cat Food	12.0	13.4	13.4	11.2	11.1
Beef & beef products	7.0	8.1	7.1	8.1	9.8
Wine & related products	5.0	4.2	7.4	6.2	7.9

For additional U.S. agricultural trade data in customizable reports, please consult the [GATS](#).

**Best High-value, Consumer-Oriented Product Prospects Categories:** Food preparations, seafood products, dairy products, tree nuts, fresh fruits, beef & related products, chocolate, and cocoa products, processed-vegetable, non-alcoholic beverages, processed fruit, dog & cat food, wine & related products, health and functional food and beverages.

## **Section VI. Key Contacts & Further Information**

The Foreign Agricultural Service in Bangkok maintains up-to-date information covering food and agricultural import opportunities in Thailand and would be pleased to assist in facilitating U.S. exports and entry into the Thai market. Questions or comments regarding this report should be directed to the Foreign Agricultural Service in Bangkok at the following address:

Office of Agricultural Affairs  
U.S. Embassy  
120-122, Wireless Road  
Bangkok 10330 Thailand  
Tel. +662-205-5106  
Fax. +662-255-2907  
Email: [Agbangkok@fas.USDA.gov](mailto:Agbangkok@fas.USDA.gov)  
Web site: [www.fas.USDA.gov](http://www.fas.USDA.gov)

**End of Report.**

**Attachments:** [Import Tariff Table Thailand.pdf](#)