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Report Highlights:

This report contains information about Thailand's food service industry. It provides an overview of market opportunities and key channels of distribution for U.S. food and beverage products destined for the food service market in Thailand.

Executive Summary

Thailand's highly competitive hotel, restaurant, and institutional food service (HRI) sector is comprised of approximately 150,000 outlets including some 100,000 restaurants and more than 5,000 hotels and resorts. The industry has steadily increased in recent years driven by continuous growth in the country's tourism industry as well as changes in consumer behavior as modern urban families tend to eat out more regularly. Thailand imported U.S. \$418 million in consumer-oriented foods from the United States in 2018. HRI establishments are heavy users of imported products for food preparation, ready-to-eat meals, and catering services for airlines and cruise lines. In 2018, per capita consumer expenditures on hotels and catering totaled U.S. \$781 per person, an 13 percent increase from the previous year.

The macroeconomic situation and key data about the Thai economy can be found in <u>Thailand's Exporter</u> <u>Guide Report dated February 21, 2019.</u>

Imports of Consumer-Oriented Products

In 2018, the United States was the 3^{rd} largest supplier of these products to Thailand with exports valued at U.S. \$418 million.



HRI Industry

Thailand has a well-developed hotel and restaurant industry with solid growth expected over the next three years. The country has over 100,000 restaurant establishments across the country. According to industry estimates, the restaurant sector expanded by 4-5 percent in 2018. The long-term outlook for the restaurant industry remains positive owing to increasing urbanization, higher consumer disposable income, and the increased frequency of Thais to eat out. Currently, Thais on average eat out around 56 times per month. Food outlets are located everywhere in Thailand ranging from small street carts to five-star restaurants in some of the world's finest hotels. The ubiquity of food outlets leads establishments to compete by offering different menu items, trendy concepts, and innovative cuisine. On average, the entire HRI sector sources about 30-35 percent of their food products through imports. The United States has approximately a 20 percent market share of this sector.

Quick Facts CY2018

Total imports of Consumer-Oriented Products: U.S. \$5.2 billion.

Consumer Insights:

- Thailand's rising incomes and rapid urbanization has increased consumer demand for a wide variety of new food products
- Thais' growing interest in international travel has corresponded with an enthusiasm for tasting foreign and novel foods
- Promising growth for restaurants and HRI operators that focus on indulgence and creating a unique experience
- Thai women have substantial buying power and are the primary decision makers for food products and restaurant choices
- Convenience and innovation shape consumerpurchasing decisions
- Thai consumers are starting to look for quality food choices that are natural, nutritious, and well balanced to support a healthy lifestyle
- Over 40 percent of consumers are heavily influenced by social media when making restaurant or menu selections
- Coffee drinking has become a daily habit for many Thais.

Food and Beverage Trends in Thailand for 2019:

Health foods (organic, natural derived, clean foods, health snacks); Health beverages (natural ingredients, functional drinks); Ready-to-eat foods; Frozen meals, Food Delivery; Halal Foods; Food for aging populations; Organic foods; Vegetarian foods; Plant protein based products; Processed seafood.

GDP/Population

Population (2018): 69.18 Million GDP (2018): U.S. \$505 Billion GDP per capita: U.S. \$7,445

For more information, contact: FAS Bangkok at agbangkok@fas.usda.gov

SECTION I: MARKET SUMMARY

Thailand's highly competitive hotel, restaurant, and institutional food service (HRI) sector is comprised of approximately 150,000 outlets including some 100,000 restaurants and more than 5,000 hotels and resorts. The industry has steadily grown driven by continuous growth of the tourism sector as well as the increased propensity of modern urban Thais families to eat out. In 2018, Thailand imported U.S. \$418 million in consumer-oriented foods from the United States. There are minimal barriers to entry for newcomers entering the market. HRI establishments are heavy users of imported products for food preparation, ready-to-eat meals, and catering services for airlines and cruise lines. In 2018, per capita consumer expenditures on hotels and catering were U.S. \$781 per person, 13 percent increase from the previous year.

| Consumer Expenditure on Hotels and Catering 2013-2018 | | | | | | |
|---|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| (million US\$) | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |
| Catering | 25,925 | 26,341 | 28,241 | 28,642 | 33,278 | 37,731 |
| Accommodation | 10,003 | 9,500 | 10,548 | 11,731 | 14,256 | 16,281 |
| Total Consumer Expenditure on Hotels and Catering | 35,928 | 35,841 | 38,789 | 40,373 | 47,534 | 54,012 |

Source: Euromonitor and USDA Foreign Agriculture Service - Bangkok, Thailand

Thailand's tourism industry remains one of the strongest in Asia and is an important component of the service sector, a driver of Thailand's GDP growth, accounting for 12.3 percent of GDP in 2018. The Ministry of Tourism and Sports reported that 38.3 million international tourists arrived in 2018, a 7.5 percent increase from the 35.6 million tourists that visited Thailand in 2017. Thailand's goal is to continue to grow the number of tourists by 10 percent annually. As Thailand's HRI food service sector is reliant on tourism, the growing numbers of tourists continue to fuel the growth of the country's HRI food service sector. Spending by international tourists on food and beverage products totaled U.S. \$12.3 billion in 2018, accounting for 21 percent of total tourist expenditures.

Number of International Tourist Arraivals to Thailand (in thousand)

| | 2017 | 2018 | | 2018 | 8 | | 2019 | 9 |
|--------------------|--------|--------|--------|-------|-------|-------|--------|-------|
| | 2017 | 2018 | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q1 | Q2 |
| East-Asian | 23,846 | 26,064 | 6,746 | 6,483 | 6,512 | 6,342 | 6,932 | 6,470 |
| European | 6,514 | 6,765 | 2,498 | 1,107 | 1,186 | 1,974 | 2,440 | 1,098 |
| Others | 5,232 | 5,448 | 1,365 | 1,284 | 1,362 | 1,437 | 1,423 | 1,406 |
| Total | 35,592 | 38,277 | 10,609 | 8,873 | 9,060 | 9,735 | 10,795 | 8,974 |
| Growth Rate (%YOY) | 9.4 | 7.5 | 15.5 | 8.4 | 1.9 | 4.3 | 1.8 | 1.1 |

Source: Ministry of Tourism and Sports

Thailand's Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions (MICE) industry has been growing steadily since 2010, with the number of MICE travelers rising from 679,585 to 2 million individuals in 2018. Similarly, MICE revenue more than doubled from U.S. \$1.45 billion in 2010 to U.S. \$4.2 billion in 2018. Hotels that support MICE travelers have seen their revenues rise significantly, as MICE tourists traveling on business usually have high expenditures and require better quality food and services. It is estimated that their expenditures are on average 3.5 times higher than those for average leisure tourists.



Source: Thailand Convention & Exhibition Bureau

Thailand has a well-developed hotel industry with solid growth expected over the next three years. Hotel room occupancy rate is projected at 71.5-72.5 percent by the end of 2019 in line with the increasing number of tourists. However, the large proportion of room occupancy remains in major tourist destinations such as Bangkok, Phuket, Chiang Mai, and Chonburi. Strong tourism growth rates have resulted in significant hotel investment, especially for the high-end



segment as well as in the tourist regions of Bangkok, Phuket, Pattaya, Samui, Chiang Mai, and Hua Hin. Key players in Thailand's competitive hotel sector include Accor, InterContinental, Starwood, and Marriott as well as local hotel groups such as Minor International, Centara, and Dusit International. Due to the growing presence of leading international hotel chains in the Thai market, existing hotels are readjusting their marketing strategies to focus more on food and beverage sales. For four to five star hotels with 400 rooms or more, food and beverage sales accounts for about 40 percent of total revenues. The hotel food and beverage market grew by an estimated 10-15 percent in 2018.

Thailand has over 100,000 restaurant establishments across the country. According to industry estimates, the restaurant sector expanded by 4-5 percent in 2018. However, the long-term outlook for the restaurant sector remains positive due to increasing urbanization, higher consumer disposable income, and the increased frequency of Thais eating out. Thailand has a strong food culture with food playing a role with identity and relationships. Furthermore, growing overseas study, international travel, internet usage, and social media have influenced many young Thais and urbanites to transition from traditional open-air food stands to indoor restaurants, especially those located in retail malls. According to Euromonitor, Thailand's food and beverage industry revenue will continue to grow at 4.7 percent between 2012 and 2022. Revenue grew from U.S. \$21 million in 2012 to U.S. \$25 million in 2017 and is expected to grow to U.S. \$31 million by 2022, which is driven mainly by an increase in the number of outlets. The continued expansion of retail mall operators and modern retail food establishments will give Thais, particularly those in the provincial areas, easier access to casual dining restaurants. To compete for these consumers, restaurants use a variety of strategies including introducing new food products, using online sales and online marketing, and branding that advertises not just the food but also a lifestyle.

The restaurant sector is highly competitive with international chains competing with well-established local restaurants and other small-to-medium sized food establishments. Low barriers for entry leads to new establishments regularly entering the market and bringing with them new ideas and concepts. Food outlets are

| | 201 | 6 | 2017 201 | | | 8* | |
|----------------------|---------|------|----------|------|---------|------|--|
| (USS Million) | Revenue | % | Revenue | % | Revenue | % | |
| Café | 236 | 13.6 | 281 | 14.2 | 349 | 15.5 | |
| Restaurant | 685 | 39.7 | 741 | 37.4 | 794 | 35.3 | |
| Fast Food | 645 | 37.4 | 789 | 39.8 | 921 | 40.9 | |
| Ice Cream and Bakery | 161 | 9.3 | 171 | 8.6 | 187 | 8.3 | |
| Total | 1,726 | | 1,982 | | 2,251 | | |

located everywhere in Thailand ranging from small street carts to five-star restaurants in some of the world's finest hotels. Thus, restaurants compete on a variety of factors including price, food quality, value perception of menu, service, trendiness, new product development, and food variety. Japanese and Korean style foods such as ramen, shabu, yakiniku, Korean barbeque, Bibimbap (Korean

style hotpot mixed rice), Chinese cuisine, American style burgers, Italian pizzas and pasta, and French cuisine are popular in Thailand, especially among Thai teenagers.

Thailand's restaurants can be divided into three categories as follows:

Quick Service Restaurants (QSR) hold a 10 percent market share for the restaurant sector and have become increasingly popular in Thailand, with an annual growth rate of 8-10 percent. Patrons of QSRs in Thailand today are a diverse group including traditional families, office workers, teenagers, and tourists. The QSR market is

| | 201 | 6 | 201 | 7 | 2018 | | |
|-------------------|---------|------|---------|------|---------|------|--|
| Revenue | Revenue | (%) | Revenue | (%) | Revenue | (%) | |
| Chicken | 564 | 16% | 630 | 16% | 746 | 16% | |
| Burger | 213 | 6% | 264 | 7% | 305 | 6% | |
| Bakery Products | 325 | 9% | 356 | 9% | 393 | 8% | |
| Ice Cream | 231 | 7% | 251 | 6% | 266 | 6% | |
| Convenience Store | 1,389 | 40% | 1,560 | 40% | 1,992 | 42% | |
| Pizza | 207 | 6% | 226 | 6% | 271 | 6% | |
| Others | 557 | 16% | 638 | 16% | 730 | 16% | |
| Total | 3,488 | 100% | 3,925 | 100% | 4,703 | 100% | |

dominated by franchises, which sell chicken, burgers, bakery products, pizza, ice cream, and breakfast meals. Traditionally, about 80 percent of Thailand's food franchises are formed through partnerships with U.S. brands such as McDonald's, KFC, Pizza Hut, Au Bon Pain, Subway, and Domino Pizza and non U.S. brands like Bonchon Chicken, Chabuton ramen, Mos Burger, and Japanese rice bowls from Yoshinoya. It is estimated that the QSR market will grow to reach nearly U.S. \$7.6 billion by 2020. However, the QSR sector faces a growing challenge from consumers that perceive fast

Source: Euromonitor

food as unhealthy. Thai consumers also increasingly focus on healthiness and food quality.

Full-Service Restaurants represent about 10 percent of all establishments in the restaurant industry. In Thailand, Japanese restaurants are consumers' top preference, followed by Italian, Chinese, American, and Vietnamese restaurants. According to Euromonitor, the overall market sales of full-service restaurants in 2018 was U.S. \$5.6 billion. While chain full-service restaurants make up just over a third of the full-service sector, Sales in Full-Service Restaurants 2013-2018 their market share has been growing due to the full-service for the full-

| Full-Service Restaurants | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |
|------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Chained Full-Service Restaurants | 1,862.90 | 1,832.30 | 1,789.70 | 1,796.20 | 1,950.60 | 2,103.20 |
| Independent Full-Service Restauran | 3,303.30 | 3,209.70 | 3,097.80 | 3,048.70 | 3,245.40 | 3,515.80 |
| Total | 5,166.20 | 5,041.90 | 4,887.40 | 4,844.80 | 5,196.00 | 5,619.00 |

Source: Euromonitor and USDA Foreign Agricultural Service - Bangkok, Thailand

their market share has been growing due to increased consumer preference for convenience, hygiene, and high quality standards. High-end restaurants reach teenagers and young professionals by offering high-quality food in a unique

atmosphere. Many full-service restaurant chains offer takeout and delivery options which are also popular.

Small Restaurants (SMEs-Small Medium Enterprises) comprise of 80 percent of all restaurants in Thailand. The influence of hypermarkets and shopping center food courts has raised standards for this sector and put increased pressure on street vendors. However, the street food category had steady growth, while the restaurant category had low growth. The food delivery category had the highest rate of growth. SME restaurants have adopted to the competition by finding unique niches that will appeal to specific consumer groups.

Demand for convenience and the increase of the urban population have pushed up spending on dining out. The urban population in Bangkok spent 42 percent of their income on dining out in 2018 compared with 35 percent in 2014. Thais regularly eat out, averaging about 56 times per month, according to Nielsen Research, with younger Thais leading the way. This has helped pave the way for the food industry to offer more selection and variety. Thais are also purchasing tea and coffee increasingly at restaurants. In Bangkok, consumers purchase tea or coffee on average 8 times per month, compared to 6 times per month in the countryside. Coffee has steadily been growing popularity and can be found throughout Thailand.

| million; US\$) | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |
|---|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Food | 52,632 | 51,398 | 49,940 | 50,562 | 53,161 | 59,385 |
| Non-Alcoholic Beverages | 8,286 | 8,019 | 7,705 | 7,577 | 7,956 | 8,831 |
| Coffee, Tea, and Cocoa | 1,466 | 1,474 | 1,419 | 1,397 | 1,522 | 1,698 |
| Mineral Waters, Soft Drinks, Fruit and Vegetable Juices | 6,820 | 6,544 | 6,286 | 6,180 | 6,433 | 7,133 |
| Alcoholic Beverages | 5,618 | 5,497 | 5,374 | 5,143 | 5,323 | 5,909 |
| Wine | 242 | 267 | 286 | 290 | 321 | 366 |
| Spirits | 2,691 | 2,628 | 2,607 | 2,326 | 2,324 | 2,560 |
| Beer | 2,686 | 2,602 | 2,481 | 2,528 | 2,678 | 2,983 |

Thailand's e-commerce market is fast growing and remains a promising new market given Thailand's population of 66 million and high mobile phone, social media, and internet penetration. Technology has influenced consumers' purchasing behaviors as they can easily access information and make purchases through the internet. Recently, home delivery and takeaway establishments have seen a surge in their consumer base particularly among working professionals as the 'grab and go' trend is gradually evolving into a new, dominant lifestyle. For example, in Bangkok's public transportation system, subway commuters have the option to purchase meals for later in the day. Retail stores also have adjusted to meet the growing demand for fast, convenient, and high quality food through on-line ordering and food delivery options.

Food delivery revenue growth is estimated at 12 percent during 2017-2022, outpacing restaurant sector revenue growth at 4.7 percent. The major drivers of this growth are the need for convenience, rising use of online platforms, fast-paced lifestyle of new-generation consumers, and smaller household size. The online food delivery sector is led by several players such as LineMan, GrabFood, Food Panda, and a new comer, GET Food. Additionally, many chain restaurants in Thailand have started partnering with online food delivery providers or have created their own food delivery division. According to Euromonitor, Thailand's food delivery business will amount to U.S. \$1.6 billion by 2022. This is in line with KResearch, which estimates that the food delivery business will amount to U.S. \$1 billion and account for 8 percent of Thailand's total restaurant business value in 2019. Thai restaurants also increasingly use social media to enhance their brand by highlighting new products, services, and corporate responsibility campaigns. Some restaurants in Thailand have started allowing customers to make reservations online.

The Thai catering sector has become increasingly concentrated and competitive. Catering is organized into four categories: contract caterers (Compass Group, F&B International Co.), airline and exhibition caterers (Thai Airways International Plc., LSG Skychefs, Bangkok Air Catering, BITEC, and Impact Arena), hotels and medium to high-end restaurants, and small local caterers. For airline catering, THAI catering is the industry leader with a market share of over 70 percent, serving over 70,000 meals a day. About 21 percent of food purchased by THAI catering is imported. For contract catering caterers, the target clients are customers at private workplaces, employee restaurants, and executive diners. These clients include local, national and international organizations, military services, hotels, hospitals, and office buildings. Many of these establishments also have cafeterias and food courts for their staff and customers. Approximately 10 percent of catering service menus use

imported products such as frozen potatoes, beef, salmon, sauces and seasonings, cheese, butter, dried fruits, nuts, fresh fruits and vegetables, turkey, and a variety of beverages. Some restaurants also provide outside food catering services and snack boxes for corporate events.

On average, the entire HRI sector sources about 30-35 percent of their food products through imports. The United States has an approximately 20 percent share of this market. U.S. beef, seafood, cheese, frozen potatoes, seasonings, fresh fruits, dried fruits, nuts, bakery filling, fruit juices, juice concentrate, wine, and craft beer are well known by this sector.

Advantages and challenges facing U.S. products in Thailand

| Advantages | Challenges |
|---|--|
| Excellent opportunities exist for U.S. products targeting niche markets. Thais are increasingly | Bilateral free trade agreements between Thailand and other countries (i.e. China, Australia, and India) |
| dining out and demanding healthier meal | make U.S. products less competitive due to higher |
| options. | tariffs. |
| | U.S. products are not always price-competitive compared to imports from other Asian countries due |
| food items and changing their habits to eat more western style foods. | to high tariffs, shipping costs, and transit times. |
| Local Thai consumers view U.Sorigin products as high quality and safe. | Thai government's policies and actions try to increase demand for local Thai products. |
| A wide range of restaurants and menus to meet | Market penetration for imported products is mostly |
| demands of tourists requires a wide variety of products. | concentrated in Bangkok and other major tourist- destination provinces. |
| Restaurants are offering more niche products to | Local manufacturers have lower production costs |
| appeal to consumers with higher incomes by | and can quickly adjust their products to match |
| offering premium products. | changes in consumer behavior. |

Top Food Shows in Thailand



SECTION II: ROAD MAP FOR MARKET ENTRY

Direct contact with local food service importers is the best entry strategy for U.S. exporters. Hotels and resorts



do not import food directly in volumes to be attractive to U.S. exporters and typically use food service importers. Restaurants such as fast food chains or family style restaurants also order and purchase imported food from food service companies or from their affiliated companies who act as their distributors. Five star hotels and resorts are the heaviest users of U.S. products. International restaurants located in Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Hua-Hin, Samui Island, and Phuket are other potential markets for U.S. exporters. Direct contact with catering services is also recommended. FAS Bangkok can provide a list of importers to U.S. companies upon request.

SECTION III: COMPETITION

U.S. agricultural exports to Thailand have encountered fierce competition from not only local Thai produced products but also imported products from countries that have a free trade agreement with Thailand such as China, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Chile, and South Korea. However, HRI business operators are confident in U.S. products' quality and consistency.





SECTION IV: BEST MARKET PROSPECTS

Best market prospects for U.S. suppliers include:

- Meat: frozen and chilled beef;
- Potatoes: frozen American Fries with variety cuts;
- Fresh and frozen seafood such as fish fillets, scallops, lobster, mussels, oysters, salmon, halibut, cod fish, Alaska king crab, etc;
- Dairy products: cheese, processed cheese, whipped topping, sour cream, ice-cream, dips;

- American spices and seasonings;
- Bakery and baking products: flour, biscuits, pancake mixes, waffles, cookies, muffins, cakes, frosting and icings, and puff pastries;
- Beverages: fruit and vegetable juices, wine, liquor, whisky, craft beer, cocktail mixes, mineral water, healthy beverages, and mineral water;
- Dried fruits and nuts;
- Canned foods: soup, fruit and vegetables;
- Condiments: bacon bits & toppings, barbecue and cocktail sauce, dips, hot sauce/pepper sauce, mayonnaise, mustard, olives, salsa and taco sauce, pickles, steak sauce, syrups, salad dressing, and vinegar.
- Fresh fruit and vegetables (organic and specialty vegetables, apples, grapes, cherries, kiwi fruit, blueberries, grapefruit, oranges). Jams, jellies, and spreads.

SECTION V: POST CONTACT AND 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 to the Thai market. Questions or comments regarding this report should be directed to the Foreign Agricultural Service in Bangkok at the following local or U.S. mailing address:

Local:

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End of Report.

Attachments:

No Attachments