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Report Name: Food Service - Hotel Restaurant Institutional

Country: Burma - Union of

Post: Rangoon

Report Category: Food Service - Hotel Restaurant Institutional

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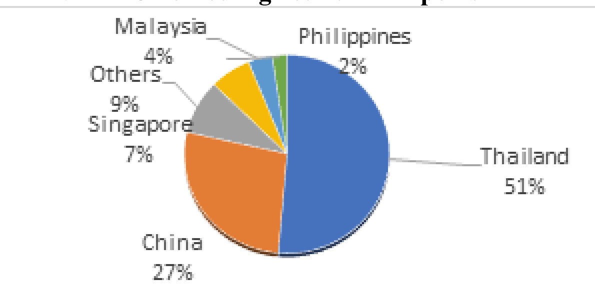
Report Highlights:

This report contains information about Food Service industry in Burma. 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 Burma.

Executive Summary:
Burma is a lower middle-income country with 54 million citizens and low economic development. In 2024, the International Monetary Fund forecasts Burma's gross domestic product (GDP) to increase 1.5 percent to [$68.01 billion](), positioning the country as the 86th-largest economy in the world. In 2023, Burma's imports of agricultural products reached $3.5 billion, a 3 percent increase from 2022. In 2023, consumer-oriented goods accounted for $1.7 billion, followed by intermediate goods at $1.5 billion, and bulk imports at $171 million.

Consumer-Oriented Agricultural Imports



Top Exporting Countries to Burma 2023

Food Retail Industry:
The retail sector is one of the fastest developing sectors despite the country's political and economic situation and import challenges. Burma's retail market size reached $10.57 billion in 2023 and is expected to grow 1.2 percent in 5 years. according to Euromonitor. The number of modern retail stores is reaching 7 percent, especially in Yangon and Mandalay in 2024.

Food Processing Industry:
Burma's food and beverage industry is comprised of over 24,000 registered private industrial enterprises, which account for 54 percent of the total manufacturing industry. Approximately 20 percent of these enterprises are large businesses. Nearly 90 percent of Burma's food processing industry supplies the domestic market.

Food Service Industry:
Burma's food service sales reached $2.56 billion in 2023. Euromonitor forecasts a 15 percent growth in 2024. The number of bars, street stalls, and full-service hotels and restaurants have significantly increased in Yangon and Mandalay in recent years. However, higher food cost, electricity shortages and inconsistency of food supplies are still the main constraints.

Quick Facts CY 2023

Imports of Consumer-Oriented Products *(US $1.7 billion)*

List of Top 10 Growth Products in Burma

1) Soybean Meal
2) Wheat
3) Soybeans
4) Distillers Grains
5) Food Preparations
6) Other Intermediate Products
7) Eggs & Products
8) Dextrin, Peptones, & Proteins
9) Other Feeds, Meals & Fodders
10) Dairy Products

Food Industry by Channels (U.S. billion)

Packaged Food Sales	$3.2
Food Service Sales	$2.56
Retail market size	$10.57
Food and Agriculture Exports	$4.3

Top 10 Retailers in Burma

1) City Mart
2) Marketplace by City Mart
3) Makro Wholesale
4) 1 Stop Supermarket
5) Easy Mart
6) Ocean
7) Pro-Mart
8) Capital Hyper Market
9) Orange
10) Sein Gay Har

GDP/Population
Population (millions): 54.51
GDP (billions USD): $65.01 (as of 1/2025)
GDP per capita (USD): $1,190 (as of 1/2025)

Source: International Monetary Fund, Trade Data Monitor LLC, Euromonitor, Myanmar Central Statistical Organization

Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats

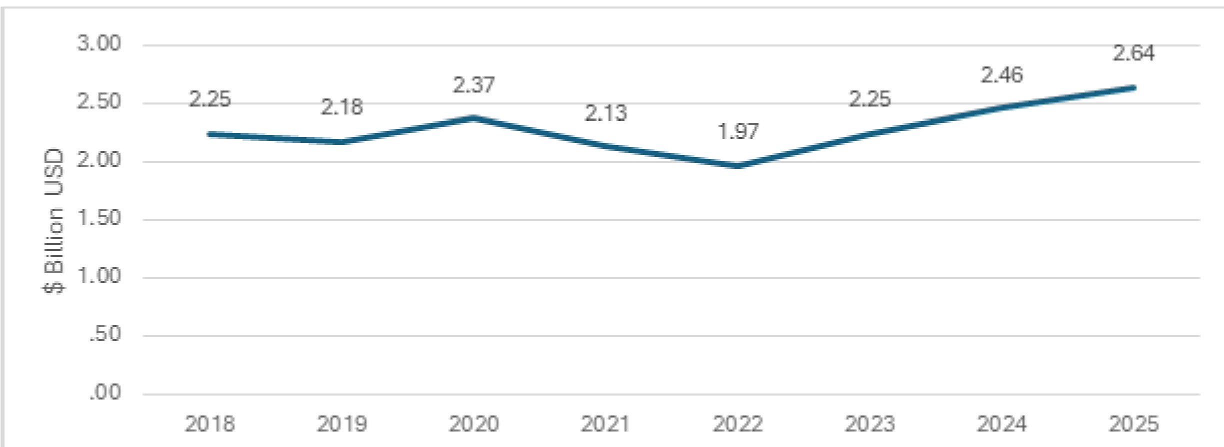
Strength	Weakness
Potential for international food sales	High level of local food industry protection resulting in trade barriers for some imported food & beverage products
Opportunity	**Challenges**
Growing demand for imported products due to limited domestic production capacity in Burma.	Unstable political situation and unfavorable business climate

SECTION I. Market Summary

When Burma liberalized its economy in 2011, the country experienced a surge of foreign direct investment, including hotel projects and food service providers, including several famous western brands. The tourist arrivals rose from below 1 million in 2011 to 4.3 million in 2019. This growth stands in contrast to other forms instability, including a military coup in February 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic till March 2022, with continuous political arrestment and conflicts.

In 2024, the food service sector has largely recovered, with most dine-in and quick-service restaurants back to normal operations. Burma's food service sales reached $2.56 billion in 2024, and the growth forecast for 2025 is 15 percent according to Euromonitor. In recent years, the number of cafés, street stalls, fast food outlets, local food stalls, bar and beer pubs, quick-service restaurants, and full-service hotels and restaurants has seen significant growth, especially in Yangon. Notably, the market is highly price-sensitive, but consumer demand for quality products remains. Despite political and economic challenges within the country, demand for international foods, and imported foods and beverages, improved after the coup. According to Euromonitor, consumer expenditure in Burma is forecast to expand by 14.6 percent in real terms over 2023-2028, while expenditures on hotels and catering are anticipated to increase at nine percent in 2024. Food and non-alcoholic beverages are expected to remain the major consumer spending category through 2028.

Consumer Expenditure on Hotels and Catering in Burma



Source: Euromonitor

Four years after dictatorship resumed in Burma, armed conflicts continue between the military junta and several civil democratic armed groups. Several major clashes took place in Sagaing Region, Magwe Region, Kayah State, Mandalay State, Chin State border of India, Shan State border of Thailand and China, and Rakhine State border of Bangladesh. Most of the refugees have fled to large cities (e.g., Yangon, Mandalay) or neighboring countries (e.g., Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia) due to the intense fighting in their regions. Cities have experienced an influx of refugees fleeing civil conflict, resulting in extended stays in hotels, rented houses, and property purchases. This demand, coupled with political instability and a growing preference for real estate as a secure investment, has driven significant increases in rental fees and property prices. In major cities like Yangon, prices have risen by 30 to 50 percent, with some areas seeing spikes exceeding 70 percent compared to pre-coup levels. Higher food costs, electricity shortages, and the inconsistency of food supplies are still main constraints to operations and growth.

Food Trends in Burma

The food scene in Burma has been evolving in recent years, influenced by both local traditions and global trends. One third of the relocated people from conflict areas jumped into the food and beverage industry, often via a food stall or small restaurant, promoting their local traditional foods. The number of restaurants, both large and small, has been growing significantly, driven by the popularity of traditional food trends such as Rakhine vermicelli, Shan noodles, Lashio noodles, Kayah sausage, Mandalay Moat Ti, and Central region vegetable fries, among others. On one hand, some famous Burmese food brands like YKKO, Rangoon Tea House, Feel Myanmar, Burbrit Craft beer, etc. have expanded their businesses in neighboring Thailand. On the other hand, to generate much-needed foreign currency, the regime is focused on increasing domestic agricultural production and exports, while reducing imports. Domestic industry is focused on developing and promoting locally produced substitutes for the imported consumer-oriented items, including milk, ready-to-eat foods, and beverages, including wine and liquor.

Korean, Japanese, Taiwanese, Thai, and Chinese cuisines are popular among Burmese consumers because of the cultural and ingredient similarities. As Burma's culinary scene grows, the fusions of local ingredients with international flavors is becoming more popular in the form of Burmese Thai, Burmese Korean, Burmese-Western, etc. The latest restaurant concepts in Burma include Hotpot, Mala Xiang Guo, Mala Tang, bubble tea, Thai tea, entertainment bars, and all-day dining tea shops, which are willing to expand their presence by opening new stores in big cities. Street food is a central part of Myanmar’s food culture, and it continues to be a significant trend. Street food vendors, including food trucks and pop-up stalls, offer a broader range of dishes, from traditional Mohinga to international Korean tteokbokki, twisted potatoes, Japanese sushi, American corn dogs, burgers, Thai-style barbeque, Chinese mala-flavored foods, and more.

Alternatively, health and wellness trends continue to thrive, with people becoming increasingly mindful of the ingredients in their food. They are opting for nutritious, low-fat, and vitamin-rich dishes. There is also a growing demand for healthy fruits, organic vegetables, whey proteins for fitness, and detox drinks. Fast and convenient food options are increasingly popular for time-strapped consumers, often managing full-time work and family life. Lunch box catering services are on the rise for school and office. High-end food and experiential dining at luxury hotels and restaurants are popular among affluent, elite consumers. Foreign consumer-oriented foods and beverages are imported formally or informally to fulfill the consumers’ needs in the market.

Burma followed the trend of transitioning to an online food delivery market during the pandemic. Food delivery applications, such as Food Panda, Grab Food, Yangon Door2Door, and others have emerged as a significant food trend since the pandemic. Ongoing urbanization encourages consumers to adopt food preferences focused on convenience and speed, including ready-to-eat and ready-to-cook meals. Food and beverage pages on Facebook, the most widely used application and information source, also function as food ordering applications in Burma.

Advantages and Challenges

Advantages	Challenges
• A dynamic, eager, and young population is willing to try new products and is receptive to trends that fit their increasingly westernized lifestyles. • Growing HRI sector which requires a wide range of imported food products and ingredients. • U.S. products have a good reputation among experienced food and beverage importers. • A large number of bars, fast foods stalls, and cafés operate in major cities, enabling market acceptance of new-to-market U.S. products • Burma generally has tariffs that are comparable to or lower than those of other countries in the region.	• As a Financial Action Task Force blacklisted country, disruptions in the banking sector made transferring money more difficult. • Rising prices for energy, transportation, and imported goods have increased operating expenses for many food service providers. • There is a shortage of skilled workers in the food service industry, particularly in managerial and culinary roles. • Consumers have reduced purchasing power due to a loss of income among workers. • Importing ingredients and food items from abroad are expensive and complicated due to limited infrastructure. • There are limited direct shipping lines from the United States. • Border trading is still the main flow of importation after the coup. • There is a lack of transparency and predictability in Burma's regulations. • U.S. and EU sanctions made exporters less confident in doing business in Burma. • There is limited communication between the U.S. Government and the military regime.

Section II. Roadmap for Market Entry

A. Entry Strategy

Post recommends that new-to-market U.S. exporters refer to the Exporter Guide, the Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards (FAIRS) Report, and Burma Retail Foods Reports, which could facilitate their entry into the Burmese market. Before doing business in Burma, it is essential to conduct market research, including about price comparisons, competitor analysis, consumer preferences, and trends. Market data is limited; however, some official import statistics and market information are available in the statistical data section of the Burma Central Statistical Organization and the Ministry of Commence website. FAS Rangoon can provide contact information for potential importers (see Section VI). Learn more about the tips in Burma's country commercial guide.

The most effective approach to entering the Burmese market is by forming partnerships with importers, wholesalers, and distributors who can help introduce your products to key retailers, hotels, and restaurants. Navigating complex regulations, costly import processes, and logistical challenges are significant hurdles that most local HRI stakeholders may not be equipped to manage. It can be helpful to start small, shipping only a few pallets or cases, and understand that it might take several months or even years before an importer is ready to place large orders. Be prepared to comply with special labeling requirements and necessary documentation from the Burma FDA, and consider working with a consolidator or using mixed container shipments.

Burmese consumers have a good impression of U.S. food products and regard them as premium and high-quality items. Most imported food and beverage products are from Thailand, Indonesia, and China, which offer affordable price points for the middle-class population. U.S. firms should be mindful with their pricing strategies, as the Burmese market is very price sensitive. Fluctuating exchange rates and an irregular supply of consumer goods are the main factors contributing to retail prices.

The United States imposes targeted sanctions on Burma, which can be confusing for U.S. exporters. The sanctions are directed toward companies and individuals that are tied to the military regime. For U.S. exporters, it is safe to work with businesses that are not related to the military government, its cronies, and affiliated companies and individuals. Burmese importers continue to demand high-quality U.S. brands, either through direct importation or importation via third countries or over land borders to reduce supply uncertainty and delays.

B. Market Structure

Most consumer food service is independent, with 99 percent of market share. Chain food service occupies less than 1 percent of the market share.

Sales in Consumer Food Service: Chain Vs Independent 2019-2024 (in million U.S. dollars)

Category	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Market Share
Chain Consumer Food Service	6.7	5.2	4.3	4.5	5.3	6.3	0.21%
Independent Consumer Food Service	3,556.3	2,517.6	2,062.5	2,214.6	2,561.0	3,025.0	99.79%
Total	**3,563.0**	**2,522.9**	**2,066.8**	**2,219.2**	**2,566.3**	**3,031.4**	**100.00%**

Source: Euromonitor

In Burma, street stalls/kiosks comprise 35 percent of market share, valued $1 billion. This segment is among the fastest-growing food and beverage categories in Burma, as it offers inexpensive and convenient options after the coup. Full-service restaurants take 33 percent of the market share. Meanwhile, cafés and bars account for 28 percent of the food service market. Players in this segment include independent cafés and bars, as well as juice, bubble tea and tea shops. Limited-service restaurants, which covers only of 4 percent of market share, consist of bakeries, ice-cream shops, and pizza restaurants.

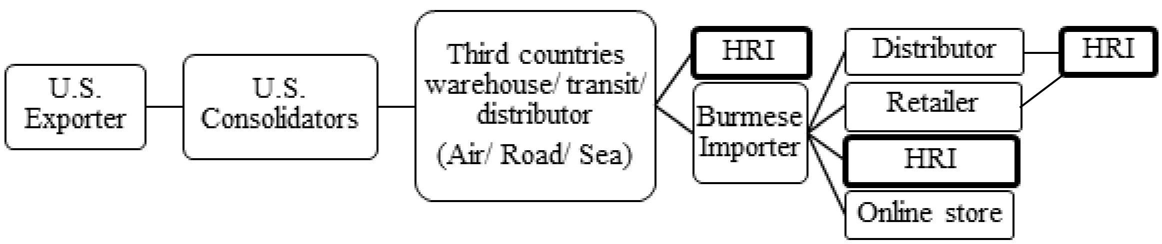
Sales in Consumer Food Service by Category 2019-2024 (in million U.S. dollars)

Category	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Market Share
Cafés/Bars	1,132.5	691.4	523.0	567.7	719.9	859.2	28%
Full-Service Restaurants	1,239.7	852.1	662.7	729.0	831.4	986.8	33%
Limited-Service Restaurants	120.9	91.5	75.0	79.8	94.6	111.4	4%
Self-Service Cafeterias	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
Street Stalls/Kiosks	1,069.9	887.8	806.1	842.7	920.4	1,073.9	35%
Total	**3,563.0**	**2,522.8**	**2,066.8**	**2,219.2**	**2,566.3**	**3,031.3**	**100%**

Source: Euromonitor

C. Distribution

In the years following the coup, importing directly from the United States has proven to be a challenging task. Most imports from the Unites States first go to third countries like Thailand, Singapore, and Malaysia, and are then transshipped to Burma by air, overland, or by sea. Some small importers tend to buy small quantities from third countries. Thailand borders (Myawaddy, Tarchileik, Ranong, and Maw Taung) are the most-used points of transport for imported items in 2023-2024. China's borders are variably open and closed, depending on the conflict's situation in the area.



D. Sub-sector Profiles

Tourism: According to inbound tourism survey 2023, total numbers of international arrivals in 2023 were 1,284,731, which was a 450 percent increase over 2022 arrivals. In 2023, total expenditures by international visitors in Burma was $693 million. Due to civil unrest and armed conflict, the U.S. Government advises against travel to Burma (Level 4: Do Not Travel with updated security alert released on October 20, 2023). Nonetheless, the military regime is eager to revitalize Burma's tourism industry. The Ministry of Hotels and Tourism aims to attract more Russian, Chinese, and Indian tourists in the next few years.

Hotels: There are more than 2,400 registered hotels and guesthouses across the country, 21 percent of which are in Yangon (business hub), 12 percent in Mandalay (another business hub), 7 percent in Bagan (tourist area), 4 percent in Nay Pyi Taw (capital city), 5 percent in Nyaung Shwe (tourist area), and the other 20 percent in other regions. According to a Ministry of Hotel and Tourism announcement, the permitted foreign investment in the hotel and tourism sector is $4.4 billion or 3.5 percent of total foreign investments, led by Singapore at 60 percent, Thailand at 11 percent, and Vietnam at 10 percent. Several established higher-end hoteliers, including Sedona, Inya Lake, and Rosewood, sold their properties after the pandemic and 2021 coup. Those hotels are now reopened but operating under new management since 2023. Other hotels, however, suspended construction or closed in 2021, and have not reopened. The hotel zone in the renowned Ngapali Beach and Thandwe in Rakhine State has become nearly deserted due to the conflict, leaving the area in a state of near abandonment under the control of ethnic armed groups. The conflict has extended to Chaungtha Beach in Ayeyarwady region, leading to the displacement of approximately two-thirds of residents in beach resort towns as of January 2025. However, hotels in major cities such as Yangon, Mandalay, Nay Pyi Taw, and Taunggyi have seen a significant rise in local visitors, business events, and long-term guests.

Most major upscale hotels typically feature high-end restaurants and prioritize food quality and service. However, despite Burma reopening its borders to international visitors, many hotels have struggled to recover from the pandemic. Ongoing instability following the coup has kept international tourists at bay, while inflation and frequent power outages have driven up operational costs. Industry focuses on catering to local consumers and businesses as key sources of revenue. Hotel food and beverage supplies are typically sourced from local food service suppliers, with additional procurement of festival and seasonal items from third-party buyers, such as those in Thailand, to ensure timely availability.

Leading Hotel Groups in Burma

No.	Myanmar Hotel Groups	Website
1	KMA Hotels Group	KMA Hotels
2	Memories	Memories Group
3	Htoo Hospitality	Htoo Hospitality
4	Eden hotels and resorts	Eden hotels and resorts
5	Amazing Hotels	Amazing Hotels
6	Max Hotels group	Max Hotels Group
7	Jasmine Palace Hotel	Jasmine Palace Hotel
8	Amata	Amata Hotel Group

International Chain Hotels and Resorts in Burma

No.	International Hotel Chains	Website
1	AccorHotels Group	Myanmar hotels
2	Wyndham	Wyndham Grand Yangon
3	Belmond hotels	Governor’s Residence
4	Best Western	Best Western Chinatown Hotel
5	Lotte Hotels and Resorts	Lotte Hotel Yangon
6	Melia Hotels & Resorts	Melia Yangon
7	Pan Pacific Hotels and Resorts	Pan Pacific Yangon, Park **Royal** Yangon
8	Dusit Hotels and Resorts	Inya Lake Hotel
9	GCP Hospitality	The Strand Yangon, Hotel G Yangon
10	Sedona hotels	Sedona Yangon
11	Hilton	Myanmar hotels
12	Chatrium Hotels & Residences	Chatrium Hotel Royal Lake Yangon
13	Shangri-La Hotel	Shangri-La Serviced Apartments

Restaurants: According to Rentechdigital report, Myanmar has 9,661 restaurants, a 3.48 percent increase from 2023. The top three regions with the most restaurants are Mandalay 2,118, Yangon 1912 and Shan State 979. Following the coup, five Asian and two American food and beverage franchise brands, including Auntie Anne's, announced their exit from the Burmese market. The remaining foreign brands continue to operate and find the way to be resilient in the market. Though the number of bars, street stalls, and full-service hotels and restaurants have seen significant growth after the pandemic, higher food costs, electricity shortages, and the inconsistency of food supplies are still main constraints to operations and growth. The list of operating restaurants in Yangon can be found in Myanmoe restaurant directory and Myanmar Restaurant Association. The leading Myanmar restaurant group includes Feel International Group, City Food Concepts, YKKO, Yoma F&B, RTH Group Ltd, 57 Below Hospitality, Shwe Taung Group.

International Restaurant Chains in Burma

No.	International Food Chain	Country of Origin	Type of food
1	KFC	American	Fried chicken
2	Pizza Hut	American	Pizza
3	Burger King	American	Burger
4	The Coffee Bean and Tea leaf	American	Coffee
5	Krispy Kreme	American	Donut
6	Gloria Jean's Coffees	American	Coffee
7	IPPUDO	Japan	Ramen
8	OMUK	Korea	Korean food
9	Real Pork	Korea	BBQ
10	Bulgogi Brothers	Korea	Dining
11	Lotteria	Korea	Fried chicken
12	Bonchon	Korea	Fried chicken
13	Marry Brown	Malaysia	Fried chicken
14	Potato Corner	Philippines	French Fires
15	The Manhattan Fish Market	Singapore	Dining
16	Pezzo Pizza	Singapore	Pizza
17	Ya Kun Coffee & Toast	Singapore	Coffee
18	Astons Specialties	Singapore	Dining
19	Beauty in the pot	Singapore	Hotpot
20	BreadTalk	Singapore	Bread
21	Harry's Bar	Singapore	Dining
22	Gong Cha	Taiwan	Bubble tea
23	The Pizza Company	Thailand	Pizza
24	KingKong fried skewer	Thailand	Fast-food
25	Black Canyon	Thailand	Dining
26	Café Amazon	Thailand	Coffee
27	ChaTraMue	Thailand	Tea

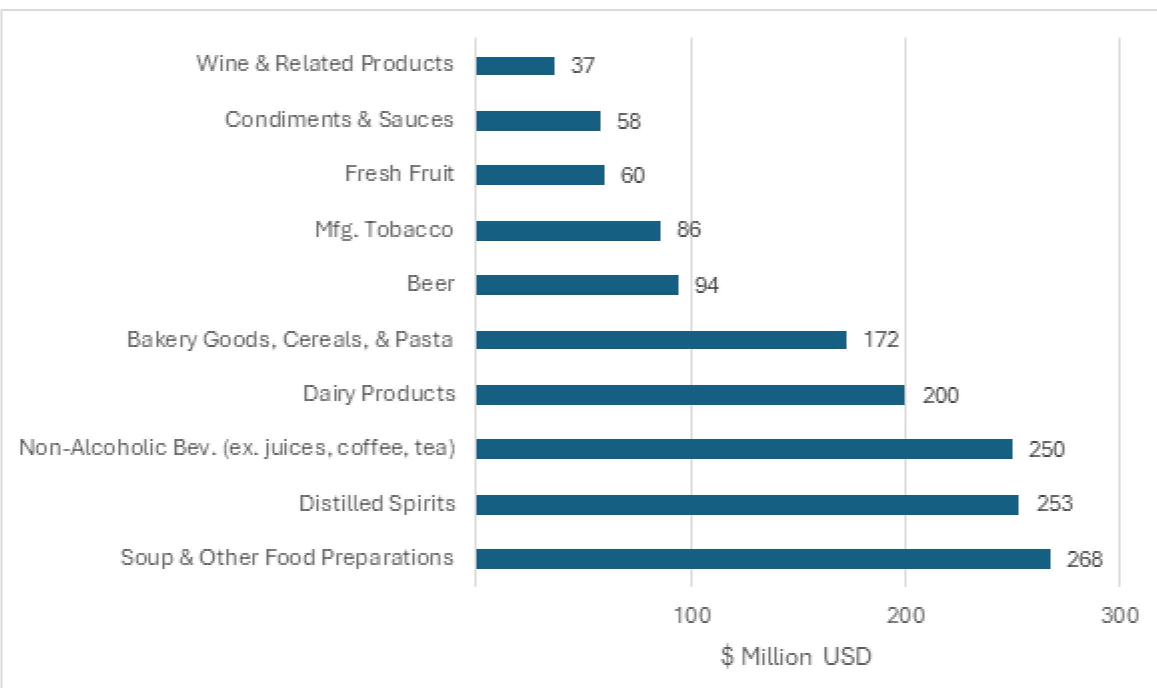
Institutional Food Service: Catering services in Burma are often contracted for events such as weddings, corporate gatherings, conferences, and festivals, and for institutions, such as schools, hospitals, and airlines. Some larger hotels and specialized catering companies offer buffet-style meals, plated dinners, or cocktail receptions for various occasions. In recent years, young chefs training schools have become popular, since there is a shortage of skilled workers in the food service industry, particularly in managerial and culinary roles. Post often collaborates with chef associations and culinary schools, such as Star University Myanmar and Culinary institute of Myanmar CIM, along with trainer chefs, to incorporate U.S. food products into their recipes and share knowledge to raise awareness.

SECTION III. COMPETITION

The food importation market in Burma is heavily impacted by the economic, political, and conflict environment. In 2023, the majority of food imports, valued at $1.7 billion, came from Thailand, accounting for 51 percent, followed by China at 27 percent, Singapore at 6 percent, Malaysia at 4 percent, and other countries making up the remaining 15 percent. Still, the United States, New Zealand, and the EU effectively compete with Asian suppliers in sales of dairy products, food preparations, egg products, processed vegetables especially potatoes and non-alcoholic beverages. The United States ranks as the 12th-largest supplier of consumer-oriented products to Burma, with a total value of $4 million. The competition in major consumer-oriented products categories of Burma in 2023 can be found in Appendix 1 (attachment).

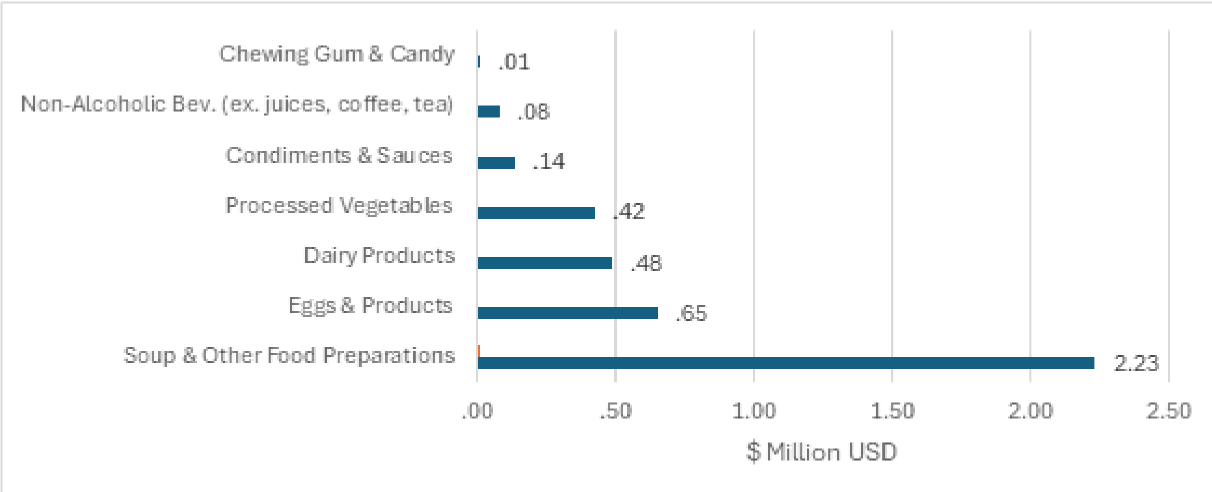
SECTION IV. BEST PRODUCT PROSPECTS

Top Consumer-Oriented Products Imported from the World in 2023



Source: Trade Data Monitor

Top Consumer-Oriented Products Imported from the United States in 2023



Source: Trade Data Monitor

U.S. Products Present in Market with Good Sales Potential

1. Food preparations: food colors, food mix, can foods, sugar, gelatin
2. Egg products
3. Dairy: cheddar cheese
4. Processed vegetables: frozen potatoes
5. Condiments and sauces: vinegar, tomato sauce, chili sauce, mixed seasonings
6. Non-alcoholic beverages
7. Chewing gum and candy
8. Chocolate and cocoa products
9. Fresh fruits: apples, oranges, grapes, cherry, berries
10. Poultry: turkey
11. Whey and milk powder
12. Distilled spirits

U.S. Products Not Present in Market with Good Sales Potential

1. Cream cheese
2. Bakery goods, cereals, and pasta

U.S. Products Not Present in Market Due to Significant Barriers

1. **Beer** is illegal to import**;** only hotels and duty-free shops are allowed to legally import and sell foreign beers.
2. **Pork** is occasionally implemented temporary bans on pork imports due to a threat of African Swine Fever (ASF).
3. **Live chickens and processed chicken products are prohibited due to strict import** regulations, which cite concerns about disease outbreaks**.**
4. **Beverages, fruit juices, coffee mix, tea mixes, instant coffee, fresh milk, sweetened condensed milk and evaporated milk** have been prohibited for import to Burma through all border trade points, citing the lack of ability to conduct food safety inspections since May 2021.

Section VI. Key Contacts and Further Information

Different ministries within the Burmese Government set import requirements for agricultural products. A general breakdown of government oversight is provided below:

Plants and plant products, plant-based feed ingredients, seeds, pesticides, fertilizers	Department of Agriculture (DOA) under Ministry of Agriculture Livestock and Irrigation (MOALI)
Live animals, meat and poultry products, animal-based feed ingredients, veterinary medicine/pharmaceuticals	Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department (LBVD) under Ministry of Agriculture Livestock and Irrigation (MOALI)
Seafood and seafood products, feed ingredients for aquaculture	Department of Fisheries (DOF) under Ministry of Agriculture Livestock and Irrigation (MOALI)
Packaged food and beverage products, including distilled spirits and wine	Department of Food and Drug Administration (FDA) under Ministry of Health and Sports (MOHS)
Import licenses	Ministry of Commerce
Customs	Burma Customs Department

The Foreign Agricultural Service office in Rangoon, Burma maintains current information about import requirements and food and agricultural import opportunities. The office can provide lists of potential importers and distributors, associations, and other key contacts. Please contact our office with questions or comments:

Agricultural Affairs Office
Physical Address:
U.S. Embassy
110 University Avenue, Kamayut Township
11041, Yangon, Burma
http://www.fas.usda.gov

Phone: +95-1-536509
Email: agrangoon@fas.usda.gov

End of report.

Attachments:

Appendix 1- Competition in the Major Consumer-Oriented Product Categories of Burma in 2023.pdf

Appendix 2- Consumer Oriented and Seafood Products U.S. Exports to Burma.pdf