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## France

## Kosher Foods

## French Kosher Report

**2002**

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### Report Highlights:

France is a \$2.2 billion market for kosher foods, as measured by domestic sales. France is also the leading kosher market in Europe, with the largest Jewish community on the continent, approximately 700,000 people. The kosher food segment in France grew by 15 percent in 2001, and is estimated to reach \$2.5 billion in 2002. Both imported and domestic products are distributed not only in specialized retail and kosher shops, but also in kosher sections in the largest supermarkets. Many French consumers consider kosher food products to be healthy, high quality, natural, and good tasting. The best prospects for kosher foods are gourmet-style products including wines, matzos, sauces, snacks, soups, crackers, and vegetarian dishes.

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Includes PSD changes: No

Includes Trade Matrix: No

Unscheduled Report

Paris [FR1], FR

**Note: Average Exchange Rate:****– Calendar Year 2000: USD1 = FF 7.13****-- Calendar Year 2001: USD1 = FF 7.32 or 0.8956 Euros.****Summary**

Ten years ago, France's kosher foods market was considered a niche-ethnic market. However, today, France is a major consumption market and international trading center for kosher products. Kosher foods in France are consumed by many in the mainstream market who consider kosher products to be healthy, high quality, natural, and good tasting.

More than 80 percent of France's Jewish population is of Sephardic origin, which is heavily influenced by Mediterranean-style foods. The Sephardic influence can be seen in the offerings of the more than 300 kosher restaurants, bakeries, and other eating establishments in Paris alone. Imported and domestic kosher products are distributed not only by specialized retailers and kosher shops, but they can now be found in special kosher sections in major supermarkets throughout France. The best prospects for kosher foods in France are gourmet-style products including wines, sauces, snacks, vegetarian food products, matzos and Passover products.

**1. Market Overview**

Kosher is translated in French as "kasher", but it can also be spelled as "casher", "cashère", "kasher", "cacher", or "kacher". The word, translated from the Hebrew "kosher", means appropriate, in conformity and clean.

In France, the Jewish community numbers about 700,000 people. France's Jewish community is generally recognized as the largest in Europe. About 46 percent of the community live in Paris and the surrounding suburbs, 15 percent in Marseille, and the remainder in large cities such as Lyon, Strasbourg, and Toulouse. The European kosher food market (including Western/Eastern Europe and Israel) is estimated at \$5.6 billion. In 2001, the French kosher market alone was estimated at \$2.2 billion. The French kosher market grew by 15 percent in 2001 and is expected to grow and reach \$2.5 billion in 2002.

In France, the kosher food trade goes as far back as the 11th century. Prior to the French Revolution in 1789, Jews in France bought and sold kosher foods among themselves and with Jewish communities in other countries. However, following the Revolution, the settlement and demography of the French Jewish communities changed profoundly. In 1806, Napoleon established the position of Chief Rabbinate of France, to represent the Jewish community. Commercially, the role of the Chief Rabbinate is to supervise the ritual slaughter of animals (Pisani decree April 1964 and French Ministry of Agriculture decree of 1970), and to inspect, supervise and certify kosher producers and retailers.

Following its destruction during World War II, the kosher food market took off again in the 1960's with the repatriation of the Jewish population from North Africa, which brought its food preferences from Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco.

<b>Jewish Communities in France</b>	<b>Estimated Population</b>
Paris and Paris Area	325,000
Marseille	105,000
Lyon	70,000
Strasbourg	70,000
Other Locations	130,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>700,000</b>

Source: The Israeli Congregation of Paris.

France's Jewish community is comprised of two main groups: the Sephardim (as noted previously) from Mediterranean basin countries including Algeria, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria, and Tunisia; and the Ashkenazim, from northern and eastern European countries.

Among the Jewish community, the religious calendar drives kosher food consumption in France. Consumption increases during religious holidays, especially Passover, Shavuot, Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur, and Sukkoth. Also, personal and family events (birthdays, births, weddings, bar/bat mitzva, etc.) and professional events contribute to increased household and institutional consumption of kosher foods. However, in the mainstream market, consumption of kosher products takes place throughout the year and is not subject to seasonal influences.

It is estimated that the non-Jewish community accounts for about 60 percent of kosher food consumption. In addition, other ethnic or religious groups such as Muslims are important consumers of kosher products. Vegetarians and lactose-intolerants purchase a significant amount of kosher pareve products because of the assurance that this designation means that neither meat nor dairy ingredients are included in the final product. Other consumers select kosher products for different reasons, including taste, cultural traditions, a reputation for high quality, or a perception of sanitary and quality assurance provided by the kosher certification.

## **2. Domestic Production of Kosher Products**

France is now the European center for kosher food sales, due to the dynamism of its population and kosher professionals, as well as the large number of institutions that purchase kosher foods (estimated at 5,000).

The 10 largest French kosher food manufacturers produce and distribute kosher foods all over Europe. In general, locally manufactured kosher products are more price-competitive than imported kosher products. Both imported and domestic kosher products can be found in kosher sections of local supermarkets throughout Paris, Marseille, and Lyon. Kosher products are carried by major retail chains, such as Carrefour, Leclerc, Auchan, and Casino, as well as specialized retail shops. In addition, there are at least two networks of kosher stores, Naouri Cash Casher (25 stores) and HyperCasher (5 stores).

In the Paris metropolitan area, a typical kosher store carries a variety of pastries, condiments, cheeses, olives, and wines. France's Jewish community consumes a significant amount of wine, and there are over 160 kosher wines produced and sold in France. In addition to French products, many stores also carry kosher food products from Israel and other countries. These products include Israeli brands such as Osem, Elite and Carmel, and a smattering of American products; Kedem Grape Juice, Rokeach Gefilte Fish, Pasksez candies and snack foods, and Gefen grocery products. Producers of kosher foods are now launching new products on the market, such as biscuits, dairy foods, candies and even organic/health and speciality-ethnic foods.

### 3. Certification Process

In order to be accepted and recognized as kosher, products must have the "K" identification label with the name of the rabbi who certified the product. For delicatessen products, there are additional requirements; the word "casher" must appear both in French and Hebrew, plus the name of the rabbi and his city. The Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations (OU) and the Organized Kashrus Laboratories (OK) certifications, "Star K" Kosher Certification (STAR-K), and "KOF-K" Kosher Supervision (KOF-K), are also recognized in France.

The certification of kosher foods in France is controlled by the Beth-Din "Jewish Community Court of Law." This institution identifies and verifies all kosher food products sold in France and also inspects the manufacturing establishments. The number of French kosher food manufacturers that requested kosher certification increased in 2001, particularly for food ingredients.

### 4. Packaging, Labeling and Duties

For packaging, labeling and custom duties, French import regulations and labeling requirements also apply to kosher foods. Labels must be in French and include the following information, which must be in French:

- g Product definition
- g Shelf life: Indicate "used by" and "best before" dates and other storage requirements
- g Cautionary information or usage instructions, if applicable
- g Statement of contents: ingredients, weights, volumes, etc., in metric units. All additives, preservatives, and color agents must be noted on the label with their specific group name or their "E" number
- g Product's country of origin and name of importer or vendor within the European Union
- g Manufacturer's lot or batch number.

Also, food products entering the EU and France are subject to custom duties that vary by product. Most processed products are subject to additional import charges based on the content of ingredients such as sugar, milk fat, milk protein, and starch content. **In addition, the best source of packaging and labeling information is the French importers and distributors. Thus, U.S. exporters are advised to maintain close contact with an established French importer, retailer, and/or distributor for current requirements.**

## 5. Retail and Institutional Sales

Development of the local kosher industry has led to increased competition at the retail and wholesale levels. At present, France has between 500 and 600 companies that are exclusively involved in kosher food trade, as follows:

- g 18 percent are manufacturers, processors of meat and dairy products,

- g 26 percent are wholesalers, distributors, occasional or regular manufacturers. These companies import and export kosher foods for supermarkets (40 percent) and specialized stores (60 percent);

- g 41 percent are retail stores

- g 15 percent are in the hotel, restaurant, and institutional sector (HRI).

Retail prices of kosher foods are estimated to be about 15-20 percent higher than prices of non-kosher foods. Most imported kosher food products sold in France are from Israel. However, there is potential for increasing sales of U.S. kosher food products in France.

In France, food service is also booming, and kosher catering in some large establishments in Paris is as much as 10-12 percent of overall business. Reliable catering sources say that Servair, France's dominant airline caterer, has developed facilities to produce kosher airline meals. The sources view this as recognition of the tremendous growth of kosher food service in France. In addition, kosher has become so popular in France that a glossy magazine called "Le Cachere" now reaches over 30,000 people. A recent listing in the magazine of products certified as kosher (by Parisian rabbinic authorities) exceeded 5,000 items.

## 6. Market Opportunities

In France, the best prospects for kosher foods and beverages include gourmet-type products such as matzos, sauces, snacks, soups, crackers, vegetarian items, citrus-related products, and of course, wine. In addition to gourmet quality products in the highest price range, popular products also may include some every-day foods in the medium price range.

The best way for a U.S. company to promote the sale of kosher foods is to participate in trade shows. The Office of Agricultural Affairs recommends participation in two major trade shows in France:

1. EUROKosher

(The only kosher food show in Europe with visitors from 32 countries)

EUROKosher

Dates: June 2004 (tentative)

Place: Paris, Porte de Versailles

Show Organizer:

GROUPE ESCD

Contact: Pierre Lévy

62, avenue de Wagram - 75008 Paris

Tel: (33-1) 48 88 0505

Fax: (33-1) 47 66 8068

Email: [infos@euro-Kosher.com](mailto:infos@euro-Kosher.com)

Internet: <http://www.euro-Kosher.com>

The EuroKosher food exhibition will be every two years; the next EuroKosher is tentatively scheduled in June 2004. For an update, contact the show organizer (see above) for additional information and show dates. Also, FAS/Paris is ready to assist U.S. exporters interested in the French kosher market.

2. SALON INTERNATIONAL DE L'ALIMENTATION  
(SIAL)

Dates: October 20-24, 2002

Place: Parc des Expositions - Paris-Nord/Villepinte

Show Organizer:

IMEX MANAGEMENT INC.

505 East Boulevard, Suite 200

Charlotte, NC 28203

Tel: 704 365 0041

Fax: 704 365 8426

Contact: [Francois Gros](mailto:fran@imexmgt.com)

Email: [sial@imexmgt.com](mailto:sial@imexmgt.com)

Internet: <http://www.sial.fr>

## 7. Key Contacts and Further Information

*Questions about the French kosher food market:*

Syndicat des Professionnels de l'Alimentation des Services et  
des Produits Kasher (SPAK)

Email: [kasher@wanadoo.fr](mailto:kasher@wanadoo.fr)

*Kacherout Certification:*

Internet: [www.consistoire.org](http://www.consistoire.org)

*For lists of kosher food importers/distributors in France, please contact:*

*Agricultural Affairs Office*

*American Embassy*

*PSC 116-Box A-218 (AGR)*

*APO AE 09777*

*Tel: (33-1) 43 12 2264*

*Fax: (33-1) 43 12 2662*

*Email: [agparis@fas.usda.gov](mailto:agparis@fas.usda.gov)*

*Internet: [www.amb-usa.fr/fas/fas.htm](http://www.amb-usa.fr/fas/fas.htm)*

For more information on exporting U.S. food products to France, visit our homepage. The Office of Agricultural Affairs homepage includes information on the HRI and retail food sectors, Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards, product briefs on the market potential for U.S. products, upcoming promotional trade shows and fairs in France. Importer lists are available from our office to exporters of U.S. food products.

For more information on exporting U.S. agricultural products to other countries, please visit the Foreign Agricultural Service home page: <http://www.fas.usda.gov>