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Report Highlights:

This report provides an overview of the Italian food retail and distribution sectors, outlining market trends and areas of potential sales growth. Italy's retail food sales reached $179.5 billion in 2024 and is expected rise through 2025 on strong demand in supermarkets as well as discount and convenience stores.

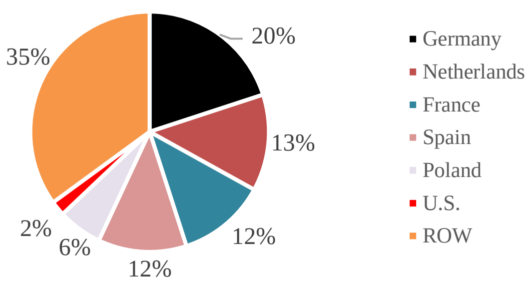
Market Fact Sheet: Italy

Executive Summary

Italy's economy is the eighth largest in the world and the third largest in the euro-zone, with a GDP estimated at $2.3 trillion and a per capita GDP of $40,226 in 2024. Being a net agricultural importer, most raw materials and ingredients are imported, as Italy's economic strength is in the processing and the manufacturing of goods. Italy exports mainly consumer-oriented products to the United States, while the United States exports mostly bulk commodities to Italy. In 2024, U.S. agricultural exports to Italy were $1.7 billion, while U.S. imports from Italy were $8.9 billion.

Imports of Consumer-Oriented Products

In 2024, Italy's imports of consumer-oriented products were $38.3 billion, of which 84 percent originating from other EU member states. Imports from the EU were primarily dairy products, meat, and fruits and vegetables.



Food Processing Industry

The Italian food-processing industry is highly fragmented, characterized by a growing consolidation of smaller companies. Progress in food technology, marketing innovations, "Made in Italy" products, and exports of finished food products have all contributed to Italy's increasing demand for food ingredients. Italian consumers continue to favor baked goods, processed meat and seafood, and dairy products.

Food Retail Industry

The Italian food retail industry is highly diversified. Hypermarkets, supermarkets, convenience stores, major discount stores, and specialized stores coexist with traditional corner grocery stores and open-air markets. Italy's food retail sales reached $179.5 billion in 2024, up 2.6 percent compared to the previous year. Increased sales were registered in discounters (+5.1 percent), supermarkets (+3.0 percent), grocery retailers (+1.8 percent), and hypermarkets (+0.2 percent).

Quick Facts CY 2024

Imports of Consumer-Oriented Products: $38.3 billion

List of Top 10 Growth Products in Italy

1) Coffee
2) Vegetable Oils
3) Dairy Products
4) Beef
5) Food Preparations
6) Chocolate Confectionary
7) Tree Nuts
8) Processed Vegetables
9) Baked Goods
10) Sauces, Dressings, and Condiments

Food Industry by Channels ($ billion)

Consumer-Oriented Food Exports	$63.5
Consumer-Oriented Food Imports	$38.3
Retail Food	$173.6
Food Service	$90.8

Top 10 Italian Retailers

1) Conad
2) Esselunga SpA
3) Coop Italia
4) Crai Secom SpA
5) Selex Gruppo Comm.
6) Lidl Italia SpA
7) Gruppo VéGé
8) Gruppo Eurospin
9) Carrefour SA
10) Despar Italia

GDP/Population

Population: 58.9 million
GDP: 2 trillion
GDP per capita: $40,236

Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats	
Strengths	**Weaknesses**
Italy's food consumption levels are among the highest in the world.	Competition from EU countries that export to Italy tariff-free.
Opportunities	**Threats**
Italy is dependent on raw imports for its processed food industry.	Non-tariff barriers, including traceability requirements, can hinder U.S. exports.

Data and Information Sources:
Trade Data Monitor (TDM), LLC; Euromonitor; industry contacts.

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Section 1. Market Summary

The Italian retail food market is modern and diverse. Hypermarkets, supermarkets, convenience, discount, and specialty stores co-exist with traditional corner shops and open-air markets. Convenience stores and small supermarkets are commonly located in densely populated cities and town centers while hypermarkets and supermarkets are found in large shopping complexes in suburban areas or outskirts of cities.

Italy’s retail food sales reached $179.5 billion in 2024, a 2.6 percent increase from 2023. Increased sales were registered at discount stores (+5.1 percent), supermarkets (+3 percent), convenience stores (+2 percent), small local grocers (+3.4 percent), and hypermarkets (+0.2 percent). On the other hand, small local grocers decreased sales (-1.8 percent).

Supermarkets have the highest penetration for retail food sales in Italy which continued to grow in 2024, as a result of improved inflation volatility and increased promotional activities. While e-commerce is growing in Italy, in-store shopping at supermarkets remains the primary method for retail food purchases, especially for consumers over age 50.

Health, wellbeing, fitness and self-care were focal points for Italians in 2024, which had a positive impact on sales in supermarkets that cater to these consumer trends. Grocery retailers tailor product offerings to meet Italy’s evolving consumer preferences, expanding the range of locally grown, but also ethnic, vegan and vegetarian alternatives, “free from” products (e.g. gluten, lactose, or sugar free), and “super foods.” A key factor in Italy’s retail sector future will be the decline of small local grocers operating in the market. This gap in the market will likely be filled by the expansion of supermarket chains and online shopping. Furthermore, given Italy’s rapidly ageing population proximity and convenience will be an increasingly important factor for where and how people choose to shop in the market (Euromonitor, 2025).

Key drivers and consumption trends

- Aging population and increased consumer health consciousness fuels Italy’s demand for health and wellness products, as well as functional foods.
- Demographic evolution is driving change in consumer buying habits, as single and two person households are growing, while households of four or more declining.
- Locally grown, but also ethnic, vegan, vegetarian, and flexitarian alternatives, and “free from” products (e.g. gluten, lactose, or sugar free) attract Italian consumers.
- Consumers increasingly require traceability and information about production methods as well as sustainability practices.

Advantages	**Challenges**
Italians are becoming more aware of foreign cuisines.	Competition in the Italian food market is fierce, and many consumers prefer traditional Italian products.
Italy is a member of the Euro zone, which eases market entry.	The Italian retail sector is fragmented, and mandatory customs duties, sanitary inspections, and labeling requirements can be onerous.
Interest in new and innovative products,	Competition from similar food products from EU

especially with a health benefit.	countries that enter tariff-free.
American food and food products remain quite popular in Italy.	Complying with European and Italian regulations.
There are many specialty importers interested in buying from the United States.	Italy has well-established brands for mainstream products, and private label products remain popular.

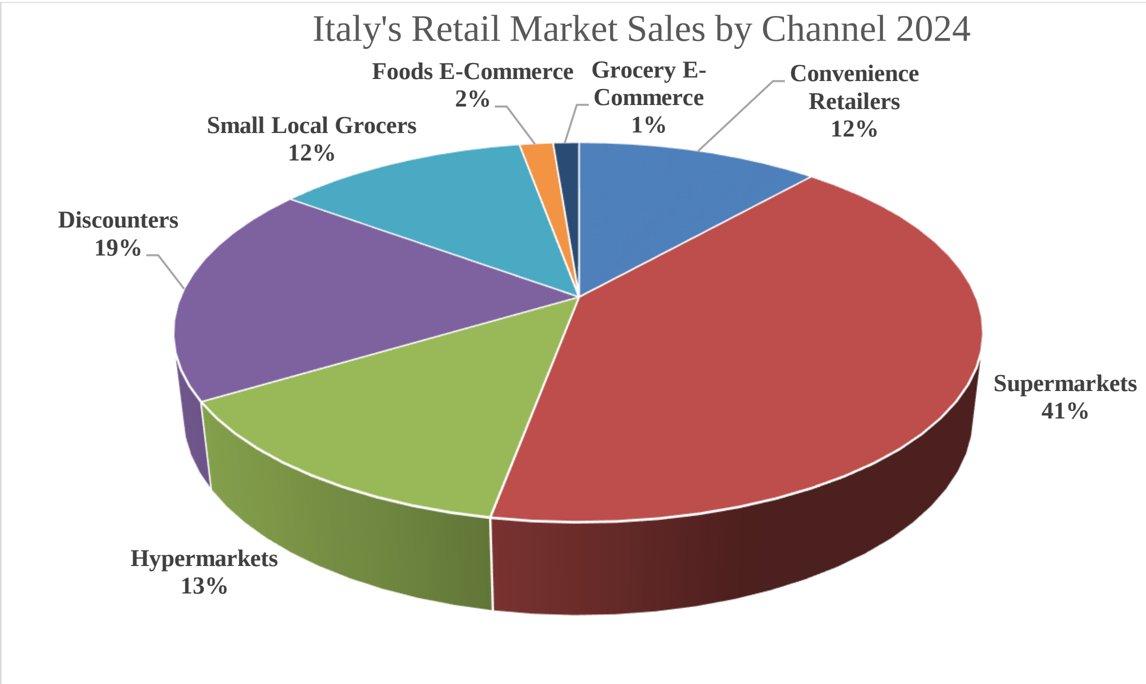


Chart 2: Retail Market by Channel 2024

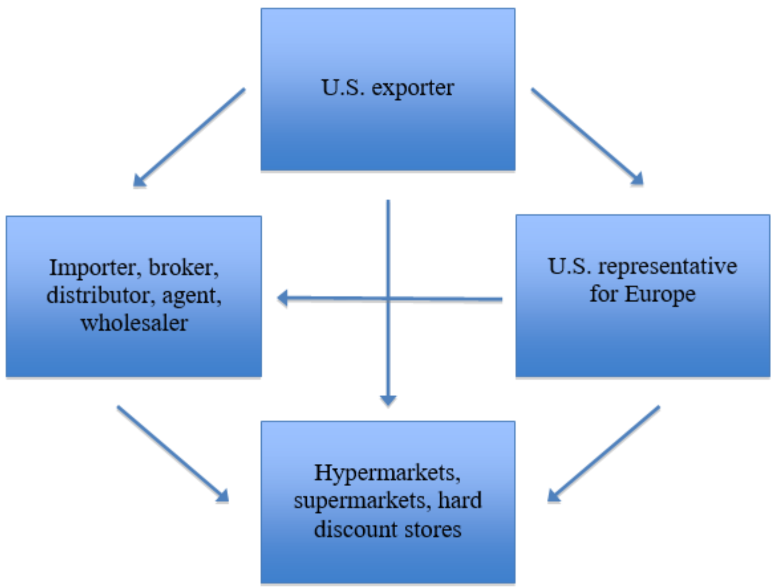
Section 2. Roadmap for Market Entry

- **Entry Strategy**

  - Survey existing and potential opportunities by reviewing FAS GAIN reports and consider engaging a market research firm to assist in analyzing market opportunities and challenges.
  - Identify a key importer, broker, distributor, agent, or wholesaler, as they know how to best navigate the import and distribution process and can engage directly with Italian food retailers.
  - Price is important, although quality and novelty do help move some imported products.
  - Be prepared to start small by shipping a few pallets or cases of a product and recognize it could take several months or years before an importer is ready to order full containers. Italians place high importance on building trust before expanding a business relationship.
  - Be willing to meet special EU labeling requirements and consider working through a consolidator or participate in mixed container shipments.
  - Participation in some of the larger European international food trade shows (ANUGA, SIAL, and TUTTOFOOD) to get a sense of the Italian market and the opportunity to meet potential Italian importers or distributors.

- **Market Structure**

Most imported food products enter the Italian market through brokers or specialized traders. Italian importers are usually small to medium-sized companies, rather than larger entities found in northern Europe. Consequently, these companies import on a smaller scale, but often have a broader range of products than their larger counterparts. Imported products from North America often enter Italy indirectly from the Netherlands' Port of Rotterdam or directly via air.



- **Leading Food Retailers**

  - Conad
  - Esselunga SpA
  - Coop Italia
  - Selex Gruppo Commerciale SpA
  - Crai Secom SpA
  - Gruppo VèGè
  - Consorzio C3
  - D.IT Distribuzione Italiana Soc. Coop.
  - Carrefour Italia
  - Spar International

- **Import procedures**

To the extent that EU food laws have been harmonized, Italy's food laws and regulations follow EU rules. Similarly, Italy employs the same tariffs and border measures as the other EU member states. Products imported into Italy must meet all Italian and EU food safety and quality standards, as well as labeling and packaging regulations.
For more information, see the latest *Italy Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards (FAIRS)* and *Italy FAIRS Certificate* reports at: https://gain.fas.usda.gov/#/. You may also want to review the FAIRS reports produced by the U.S. Mission to the EU in Brussels, Belgium that are available at: https://www.fas.usda.gov/data/european-union-fairs-country-report-annual.

Section 3. Competition

Nearly 70 percent of Italy's agricultural imports (by value) are sourced from EU-27 countries due to proximity and price competitiveness. Meanwhile, products made in Italy accounted for the largest share of the country's total retail food sales.

Leading suppliers of consumer-oriented products to Italy

Partner Country	January - December (Value: USD)			Market Share (%)			%Δ 2024/23
	2022	2023	2024	2022	2023	2024	
World	30,688,077,393	34,851,131,593	38,303,020,010	100	100	100	9.9
Germany	5,668,535,407	6,854,521,772	7,684,407,264	18.47	19.67	20.06	12.11
Netherlands	3,821,964,178	4,511,050,448	4,916,624,338	12.45	12.94	12.84	8.99
France	3,747,783,347	4,240,928,108	4,520,741,824	12.21	12.17	11.8	6.6
Spain	3,335,711,486	3,951,162,770	4,420,782,781	10.87	11.34	11.54	11.89
Poland	1,814,726,195	2,077,086,721	2,244,732,513	5.91	5.96	5.86	8.07
Belgium	1,581,167,498	1,806,248,509	1,852,282,090	5.15	5.18	4.84	2.55
Austria	1,185,870,481	1,331,262,312	1,402,212,313	3.86	3.82	3.66	5.33
United States	659,829,805	730,181,150	848,508,117	2.15	2.1	2.22	16.21
Turkey	514,751,519	576,627,878	735,083,306	1.68	1.66	1.92	27.48
Greece	561,086,675	672,851,573	721,210,391	1.83	1.93	1.88	7.19

Source: TDM, LLC

Competitive situation for selected consumer-oriented products

Commodity	Italy's imports from the world 2024	Italy's imports from the United States 2024	Key constraints over market development	Market attractiveness for the United States
Beef and beef products	$2.9 billion	$40.6 million	Competition from other EU countries, mainly Poland, France, the Netherlands, and Germany.	Growing consumer demand.
Processed vegetables	$2.3 billion	$45.6 million	Competition from other EU countries, mainly Spain, France, the Netherlands, and Belgium.	Growing consumer demand and manufacturers demand for potatoes and tomatoes.
Bakery goods, cereals, and pasta	$2.1 billion	$15.6 million	Competition from other EU countries, mainly Germany, France, Austria, and Spain.	Growing consumer demand. Strong demand for pasta.
Chocolate and cocoa products	$2.1 billion	$422,110	Competition from other EU countries, mainly Germany, the Netherlands, France, and Belgium.	Growing consumer demand.
Tree nuts	$1.8 billion	$432.3 million	Competition from Türkiye, Spain, and Chile.	Growing demand from manufacturers, confectionary, and snack industry.
Soup and other food preparations	$1.2 billion	$15.9 million	Competition from other EU countries, mainly Germany, the Netherlands, France, and Poland.	Growing consumer demand.
Distilled spirits	$1.1 billion	$272.1 million	U.S. is the leading supplier. Competition from UK, France, and Spain.	Growing consumer demand.

Source: TDM, LLC

Section 4. Product Prospects

- **Top consumer-oriented products imported from the world**
  - Dairy products (especially cheese; milk and cream; and yogurt)
  - Pork and pork products
  - Beef and beef products

- **Top consumer-oriented products imported from the United States**

    - Tree nuts (mostly almonds and pistachios; however, walnut and hazelnut imports growing)
    - Distilled spirits (rum and tafia; whisky)
    - Processed vegetables (tomato sauce)
    - Beef and beef products

- **Products present in the market which have good sales potential**

    - Tree nuts
    - Distilled spirits
    - Food preparations
    - Sauces, dressings, and condiments

- **Products not present in significant quantities, but which have good sales potential**

    - Functional and health food
    - Free-from products (lactose-free, gluten-free, sugar-free)
    - Specialty foods
    - Beef, sold under the High-Quality Beef Quota

- **Products not present in the market because of significant trade barriers**

    - Poultry (sanitary procedures – chlorine wash)
    - Processed food products containing genetically engineered (GE) ingredients

Section 5. Key Contacts and Further Information

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Physical Address: Via Veneto, 119a - 00187 Rome, Italy http://www.fas.usda.gov https://it.usembassy.gov/embassy-consulates/rome/sections-offices/fas/	Email: agrome@usda.gov

FAS Italy publishes numerous market and commodity reports available through the Global Agricultural Information Network (GAIN) at: https://gain.fas.usda.gov/#/

For more information on Italian regulatory agency and Ministry contacts, please see the latest *Italy Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards (FAIRS)* and *Italy FAIRS Certificate* reports at: https://gain.fas.usda.gov/#/.

Attachments:

No Attachments