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Report Highlights:

Israel is a net importer of all major categories of food products. The United States is the top leading supplier of imported consumer-oriented agricultural products to Israel with a total of $444 million in 2022. The Israel food retail sector was estimated at around $13 billion in 2022. Over 65 percent of consumers buy their food at supermarkets. Israel's food retail sector is mature and largely consolidated, with the two top retailers comprising more than 40 percent of the market

Market Fact Sheet: Israel

Executive Summary

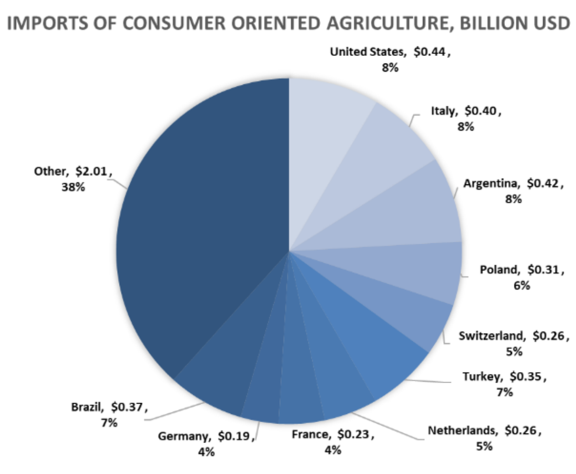
Israel is a technologically advanced, market-oriented economy. According to Israel's Central Bank[1], Israel's real gross domestic product (GDP) grew by 8.1 percent in 2021, and 6.5 percent in 2022. The GDP is expected to increase by 2.5 percent in 2023 and 3.5 percent in 2024. In 2021, Israel's annual GDP reached $413.3[2] billion.

Consumers are sophisticated and enjoy cosmopolitan food tastes. Currently, 15 percent of household expenditures are dedicated to food products. Producers, food processors, wholesalers, retailers, food service operators, and food importers are all part of a well-developed agribusiness sector, contributing to a domestic scenario that is competitive and dynamic. In 2022, imports of agricultural products[3] reached $10.19 billion.

Israel's limited land and water resources preclude a high level of agricultural self-sufficiency which affects local production costs and consumer prices. The country posts sizeable trade deficits in food and agricultural products, importing large volumes of feed grains and sizable volumes of consumer-oriented products.

Imports of Consumer-Oriented Agriculture

In 2022, Israel's import of consumer-oriented agriculture[4] stood at $5.24 billion. The United States is the largest supplier, approximately eight percent of imports were sourced from the United States.



Food Retail Industry

Israeli fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) 2022 sales reached $15.81[5] billion, an estimated $13 billion were from food and beverages products.

The food retail market is made up of supermarket chains, as well as urban convenience stores, gas stations, neighborhood grocery stores, specialty stores, and wet markets. In 2021, over 65 percent of the sales of the total retail market were from supermarket chains. While the top two leading supermarket retailers accounted for over 40 percent of the market. The leading retail supermarkets in Israel are: Shufersal, and Rami Levi.

Quick Facts CY 2022

Imports of Consumer-Oriented Agriculture[4]

Total:($million) $5,244 *USA: ($million) $444*

Top Host Country Food Retailers
Shufersal, Rami Levi – Hasikma Distribution, Merav-Mazon Kol/Osher Add, Yeinot Bitan,Yochananof, Victory, Kol-bow Chazi Hinam, Freshmarket , Machsanei Hashuk, and Tiv Taam.

GDP/Population
Population (millions): 9.66 (as of December 2022)
GDP (billions USD): $415.32 (2021)
GDP per capita (USD): $44,3002 (2021)

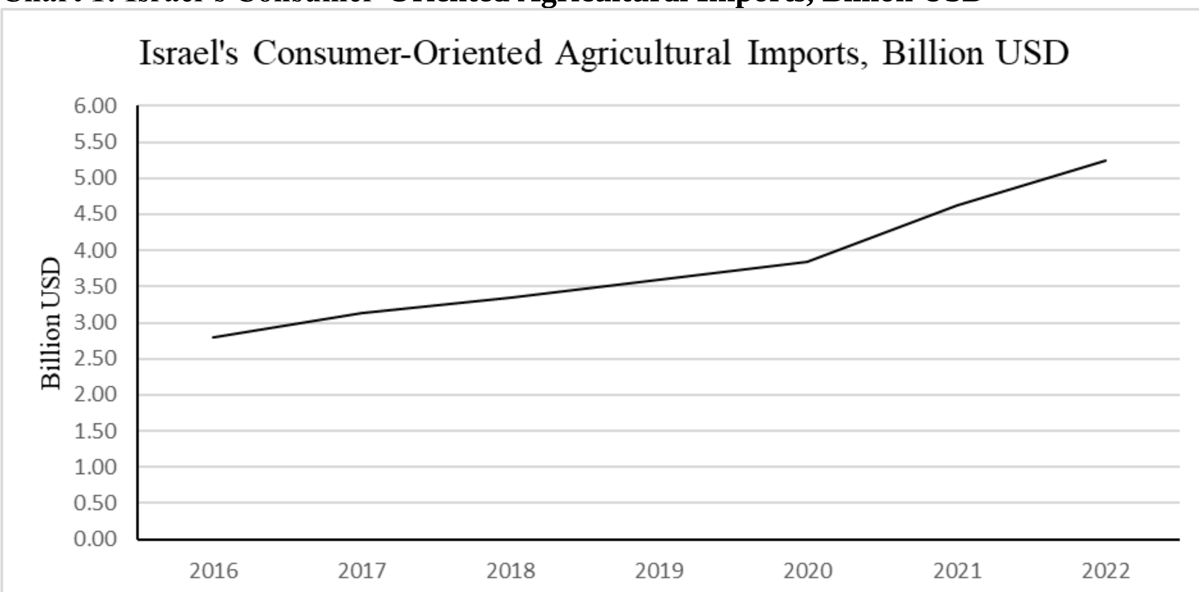
Data and Information Sources: Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), Storenext, Euromonitor, Trade Data Monitor, Bank of Israel, FAS Tel Aviv office research, UN Comtrade Database, Company Financial Reports, CofaceBdi, Israeli Restaurant and Café Association

[1]Research Department Staff Forecast, April 2023 [2] OECD, dollars at current prices, based on PPPs [3] Harmonized Tariff Schedule Chapters 1-24 [4] Trade Data Monitor [5]According to 2022 exchange rate $1= 3.359 NIS

SECTION I. MARKET SUMMARY

Israel is a net importer of all major categories of food products. Israel's limited land and water resources precludes a high level of agricultural self-sufficiency; this affects local production, costs, and consumer prices. The country posts sizeable trade deficits in food and agricultural products, importing large volumes of feed grains and sizable volumes of consumer-oriented products. In 2022, imports of agricultural products[1] reached $10.19 billion, while exports reached only $2.41 billion. In 2022, imports of consumer-oriented agricultural products[2] totaled $5.24 billion. Since 2016, the imported value of consumer-oriented agricultural products than doubled.

Chart 1: Israel's Consumer-Oriented Agricultural Imports, Billion USD



Source: Trade Data Monitor

Israel's 2021 fast-moving consumer goods sales reached $15.65 billion, approximately $13 billion was from food and beverages products. Israeli food prices are 19 percent higher than the OECD average and Israeli citizens spend more than 15 percent of their income on food and beverages. A few large companies control most of the market, limiting competition and putting upward pressure on prices. As a result, the Government of Israel is pursuing lower custom fees, increasing import quotas for specific food products, and implementing new regulations to promote competition in the sector and mitigate the high cost of living.

Israel has seen growth in the high-quality food sector, including specialty cheeses, chocolates, high-protein drinks, and imported snacks. While many consumers are very price sensitive, others are willing to pay a premium for high quality products.

In general, consumers choose to shop at supermarkets over neighborhood grocers due to competitive prices and longer hours of operation. Over 65 percent of consumers buy their food at supermarkets.

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[1] Note: HS code 1-24
[2] Note: Trade Data Monitor- Consumer Oriented Agriculture

Table 1: U.S. Supplier's Advantages and Challenges Facing the Israeli Retail Food Sector

Advantages	Challenges
Israeli consumers are paying higher than global average prices for food and agricultural products.	Cost of transportation from the United States is high.
The Ministry of Economy is determined to open the market for more imports to lower the cost of living.	Israel's standards tend to follow EU standards and not U.S. standards.
Products certified as being manufactured under Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) or HACCP will have greater ease of access to the Israeli market.	Many products are yet to be approved for entry by local entities. For example, U.S. gluten-free products are not always considered gluten-free in Israel.
The U.S. Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) list of registered facilities is viewed favorably by Israel's import licensing authority as it provides confirmation that the exporting manufacturer's facility has been inspected by U.S. regulators.	Registration fees and procedures adding to product cost.
Kosher certification is an advantage in the local market and many U.S. manufacturers are already koshered certified.	Low-cost competition from Eastern Europe, Turkey, former Soviet Union, South America, and Asia.
U.S. products offer high quality.	

For a general overview of Israeli economics, politics, legal and regulatory systems, refer to the Investment Climate Statement and Israel Country Commercial Guide published by the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Department of Commerce, respectively.

SECTION II: ROAD MAP FOR MARKET ENTRY

Entry Strategy

U.S. exporters should review FAS Tel Aviv policy and market reports and private sector analyses.

Find a Local Partner

Exporters should establish business relationships with reliable, experienced, and professional importers or distributers. They will offer advice on issues related to the product positioning, packaging, labeling, and custom clearance procedures. Face-to-face meeting or visits of U.S. firms to Israeli facilities will build relationships and create opportunities to explore business opportunities firsthand.

Exporters that are able to supply sufficient quantities should consider approaching large Israeli food retail chains. Large supermarket chains have their own purchasing and importing divisions to handle food imports. U.S. suppliers should first contact the purchasing or importing divisions of these large food chains, especially for new-to-market food products as they have the most experience with branding and distribution. FAS Tel Aviv has a list of local importers and can help with contact information. U.S. exporters should consider the price sensitivity of their customers, product requirements, purchasing policies, and purchase volumes.

Learn Regulations and Market Requirements

Israeli regulations, standards, and market requirements have to be considered (see [FAIRS - Israel Country Report]). Exporters need to consider kashrut or kosher certification. Certification is not a legal requirement for importing food into Israel (except for meat and meat products); however, non-kosher products have a smaller market. Most supermarkets and hotels refuse to carry them.

Market Structure

There are three main retail food channels in Israel – supermarkets, convenience stores, and neighborhood grocers. In addition, there are wet markets that mostly sell fresh produce and food/drink/tobacco specialty shops.

Supermarkets

- In 2022, two large supermarket chains dominated the Israeli market, accounting for over forty percent of the market. The leading supermarket chains are: Shufersal, and Rami Levi.
- Many of the supermarket chains operate in various formats. For instance, the supermarket chain Shufersal operates larger discounted stores in the outskirts of cities, while in the center of the cities, Shufersal operates smaller and more expensive neighborhood supermarkets. Large supermarket facilities are generally located in the outskirts of the major cities near major highways, in order to service multiple geographic locations. Smaller neighborhood supermarkets located in cities tend to carry many of the same goods at higher prices.
- Most supermarkets are open only six days a week, with Saturday being a mandatory day of rest. Tiv Taam is the only supermarket chain open seven days per week. It is also the only large supermarket selling non-kosher products.
- Large food retail chains have their own purchasing or importing division to handle food imports. Major supermarkets are now importing directly from foreign suppliers to reduce costs.

Convenience Stores

- Convenience stores are normally located on major thoroughfares or in gas stations. Convenience stores inside cities tend to cater to the local neighborhood residents, as parking is difficult or unavailable. Convenience stores within gas stations typically offer parking for commuting consumers. The top eight chains have over 890 outlets.

Neighborhood Grocers

- These small grocers offer a narrower product selection than supermarkets. Similarly, they have shorter hours then the supermarkets and convenience stores. Based on the latest estimates, there are approximately 5,000 outlets.

Large supermarket chains import directly, as well as buy from importers or wholesalers. Others usually buy only through importers or wholesalers. In addition to large supermarket chains, which import directly, there are about 300 importers.

Distribution Channel Flow Diagram

Company Profiles & Top Israeli Retailers

Israel's top food retailers have been ranked by two separate entities, BDi Code and DUN'S 100. See BDi Code's 2022 Supermarket Chains Rankings and DUN'S 100 2022 Food Retail Rankings.

Trends in Retail Food

Trends in Distribution Channels

- Supermarket chains are increasing their activity and presence in the center of cities. In many cases, this is being done through acquiring smaller chains.
- Supermarket chains are increasing their focus on online retailing as internet retail sales continue to increase. Consumers enjoy the ease and convenience of shopping from their homes.
- 20 percent of the Israeli food retail sales are made online, 75 percent of which is by Shufersal.
- Convenience stores and neighborhood grocery stores adapted e-commerce and delivery platforms.
- Local suppliers/distributors to food retailer stores increased/developed e-commerce/online platforms to reach consumers directly.
- Up until 2021, all supermarket chains in Israel were national stores, either privately-owned or traded in the stock market. In 2022, the first foreign supermarket, Carrefour, open in Israel.
- 7-Eleven opened its first store in Israel in early 2023.

Trends in Services by Retailers

- Online food purchasing continued to expand as retailers improved their websites, providing a more user-friendly and smarter shopping experience. All the leading grocery retailers have entered the online channel with designated online stores and even apps.

- Many supermarkets are installing self-service cash points with a stand with a screen, barcode scanner, weighing surface, and bags.
- Supermarket chains are offering private label (PL) branded products. Shufersal is investing significantly in PL and reports a 20.5 percent PL share.
- Many of the large chains offering PL products are importing directly to access prices that are more competitive.
- Fruits and vegetables remain a staple in the Israeli diet. Even with growth in other retail sectors, supermarkets are still dedicating a large portion of their sales area to fruits and vegetables. Most are grown locally, with limited imports during the September and April holiday seasons.
- Sales of vegetarian and vegan products are on the rise and sales of milk substitutes are showing rapid growth. Following the trend, some specialty supermarkets are establishing vegan departments in branches throughout Israel.

SECTION III: COMPETITION

In 2022, Israel's import of consumer-oriented products stood at $5.24 billion. Approximately ten percent of imports were sourced from the United States. The main competitors for U.S. suppliers are EU member states. The U.S. industry's advantages include a good reputation for consistent quality and stable supply. The main advantages of competitors are proximity and price.

Table 2: Israel's Top Ten Imported Consumer-Oriented Product Groups, 2022

Product Group*	**Total Imports ($ millions)**	**Percent of Total Imported Consumer-Oriented Products**	**Main Suppliers in percentage**
Beef & Beef Products	$1,031	19.7%	1.Argentina 33.9% 2.Brazil 25.3% 7. U.S 2.2%
Processed Vegetables	$443	8.4%	1.Brazil 16.4% 2. U.S. 11.1% 3. Ukraine 8.4%
Bakery Goods, Cereals, & Pasta	$430	8.2%	1.Italy 20.5% 2.Turkey 11.6% 3.U.S. 10.3%
Dairy Products	$327	6.2%	1.Netherlands 18.3% 2.Poland 11.4% 12. U.S. 3.3%
Chocolate & Cocoa Products	$294	5.6%	1.Italy 18.5% 2.Germany 16.3% 11. U.S. 2.7%
Tree Nuts	$283	5.4%	1.U.S 53.1% 2. Vietnam 18.3% 3. Turkey 7.3%
MFG Tobacco	$278	5.3%	1.Switzerland 61.8% 2.Turkey 23.9% 19.U.S. 0.1%
Soup & Other Food Preparations	$273	5.2%	1.Ireland 20.7% 2.U.S. 14.21% 3.Netherlands 9.2%
Distilled Spirits	$231	4.4%	1.United Kingdom 46.1% 2.France 13.0% 9. U.S. 2.3%
Coffee, Roasted and Extracts	$196	3.7%	1.Switzerland 29.1% 2.South Korea 20.9% 21. U.S. 0.1%
Consumer Oriented Agricultural Total	$5,244	100%	1.U.S. 8.5% 2.Argentina 8.1% 3.Italy 7.6%

Data Source: Trade Data Monitor

*Product Group : BICO-HS6 Consumer Oriented Agriculture

SECTION IV: BEST PRODUCT PROSPECTS CATEGORIES

Israel is a net food importer. It is a good market for U.S. food exports, such as dried fruits, nuts, fresh apples and pears, cereal products, cheese, frozen and canned fruit and vegetable, food ingredients, and other prepared food products.

Consumers are seeking healthier food options. As a result, the demand for natural and organic foods is increasing. Oils such as sesame, avocado, grape seed, flax seed, hemp, and walnut are also gaining popularity rapidly. Sales of such oils are expected to remain niche. Additional niche products that are experiencing growth in demand include products that target a specific health issue like diabetes or celiac disease (gluten-free food), as well as vegetarian and vegan products. An additional growing food category is high quality, higher-end food products.

Table 3: Israel's Top Ten Consumer-Oriented Products Imported from the World

	HS Code	**Product**	**Total Imports ($ millions)**						
			2016	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**
1	020230	Frozen Beef (Boneless)	$476	$441	$388	$443	$400	$571	$696
2	020130	Fresh Beef (Boneless)	$52	$90	$120	$152	$181	$218	$285
3	210690	Food Preps, Nesoi*	$205	$233	$232	$253	$250	$246	$271
4	240220	Cigarettes	$212	$206	$201	$198	$236	$265	$249
5	071290	Vegetables Dried, Nesoi*	$9	$11	$7	$6	$21	$140	$193
6	230910	Dog or Cat Food	$67	$76	$92	$97	$114	$141	$167
7	180690	Chocolate, Nesoi*	$89	$99	$108	$113	$92	$125	$115
8	190590	Other Bakers Wares	$40	$48	$59	$69	$71	$110	$113
9	220830	Whiskies	$51	$63	$68	$76	$81	$111	$111
10	090121	Coffee, Roasted, not Decaffeinated	$56	$66	$74	$76	$91	$114	98

Data Source: Trade Data Monitor
*Nesoi- Not Elsewhere Specified or Indicated

Table 4: Top Ten Consumer-Oriented Products Imported from the United States

	HS Code	Product	Total Imports ($ millions)						
			2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
1	210690	Food Preps, Nesoi *	$36	$35	$39	$39	$45	$38	$39
2	080212	Almonds, No Shell	$24	$21	$20	$32	$35	$23	$26
3	080251	Pistachios, In Shell	$21	$36	$25	$38	$31	$32	$39
4	080232	Walnuts, No Shell	$28	$34	$34	$32	$30	$30	$41
5	08029	Nuts Edible, Nesoi*	$17	$29	$26	$28	$24	$32	$58**
6	080810	Apples, Fresh	$8	$11	$18	$14	$23	$16	$17
7	190590	Other Bakers Wares	$6	$7	$10	$18	$23	$29	$32
8	230910	Dog or Cat Food	$16	$15	$17	$16	$21	$24	$23
9	200290	Tomatoes Nesoi*, Prepared	$6	$5	$10	$11	$14	$6	$8
10	210390	Sauces and Preparations therefor, Nesoi*; Mixed Condiments and Mixed Seasonings	$7	$8	$9	$10	$10	$12	$13

Data Source: Trade Data Monitor
*Nesoi- Not Elsewhere Specified or Indicated
**HS 08029 was revised in 2022. 2022 revision 080291 080292 080299

Table 5: United States Products Presence

In the market and have good sales potential	Not present in significant quantities, but which have good sales potential	Not present because they face significant barriers
• Nuts • Processed fruit • Dairy products • Alcohol • Grape juice • Pears and apples • Snacks • Sauces • Pet food	• Chilled kosher beef • Frozen cherries and berries • Premium dessert products such as premium chocolate bars, cookies, ice cream, and cheese • Functional drinks • Frozen kosher appetizers • Vegan and vegetarian products • Organic food • Gluten free products	• Non-kosher meats are not permitted for importation • Kosher barriers on crustaceans and mollusks. They are not kosher and most supermarkets will not sell them as well as the major hotels and restaurants • Bananas, fresh cherries, and citrus are not allowed for importation due to phytosanitary restrictions

SECTION V: KEY CONTACTS AND FURTHER INFORMATION

Links to government sources
Israel Tax Authority - Customs Tariff Book
Israel Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) - Exports and Imports
The Standard Institution of Israel (SII) – SII Shop
Ministry of Economy and Industry- Foreign Trade Administration (FTA)
Ministry of Agriculture
Ministry of Health- Food Control Administration

For questions or comments regarding this report, or assistance exporting to Israel, please contact the Foreign Agricultural Service in Tel Aviv. Importer listings are available from the Foreign Agricultural Service for use by U.S. exporters of U.S. food and beverage products.

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Attachments:

No Attachments