

# Entering the European market for dried mushrooms

Sustainable production and collection of mushrooms from wild, unpolluted areas creates a positive image for emerging developing country suppliers. Food safety certification combined with reliable and frequent laboratory tests are important to gain trust with European importers. China is the leading competitor for shiitake and other Asian dried mushrooms. East European countries are strong competitors for dried wild collected mushrooms such as porcini, chanterelle, black trumpets or morels.

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## 1. What requirements must dried mushrooms comply with to be allowed on the European market?

### What are mandatory requirements?

All foods, including dried mushrooms, sold in the European Union must be safe. This also applies to imported products. Additives must be approved. Levels of harmful contaminants, such as radioactivity, pesticide residues and heavy metals, are limited.

### Contaminants control in dried mushrooms

The [European Commission Regulation](#) sets maximum levels for certain contaminants in food products. This regulation is frequently updated, and apart from the limits set for general foodstuffs, there are a number of specific contaminant limits for specific products, including dried mushrooms. The most common requirements regarding contaminants in dried mushrooms are related to foreign bodies (such as insects), radioactivity, heavy metals, pesticide residues and microbiological organisms.

### Contamination with foreign matters

Presence of foreign matters such as live or dead insects, worms, larvae or stones is one of the most common issues in dried mushrooms trade. Therefore, strict control must be performed including checking the presence of poisonous mushrooms. Additionally, some of the mushroom processors use metal detectors to additionally control the presence of foreign matters in drying mushroom facilities. In the European Union, there are no officially set limits for foreign bodies in dried mushrooms, so traders sometimes set limits of 1-2% allowed impurities.

### Contamination with radioactivity

Wild-collected mushrooms easily absorb radioactivity after case of a radiological emergency. Many reports have described the high accumulations of radioactive caesium in wild mushrooms collected around Europe after the Chernobyl nuclear accident and in Japan before and after the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear accident.

Buyers in Europe are commonly asking for radioactivity contamination tests for imported mushrooms. [Food irradiation legislation](#), maximum permitted levels of [radioactive contamination](#) and the European Union [radiation protection legislation](#) are base regulations for laboratory tests for the detection of the increased level of radioactivity in mushrooms.

## Microbiological contaminants

Microbiological contaminants, such as bacteria or viruses, can be transferred from animals or people to mushrooms. European regulation on [microbiological criteria for foodstuffs](#) more specifically defines control, sampling and maximum level of microbiological contaminants in food. In line with this regulation, exporters of dried and fresh mushrooms will be asked by European importers to make laboratory analyses tests for presence of microorganisms such as Salmonella, Listeria, E.Coli and Staphylococcus. Maximum determined limits are the following:

- Salmonella spp.: absence in 25g
- E. Coli: < 20 – 100 cfu/g
- Listeria monocytogenes: ≤ 100 cfu
- Staphylococcus aureus < 20-100 cfu/g

## Contaminants with heavy metals

Apart from the mentioned microbiological testing, the most common tests are for the increased content of heavy metals such as cadmium, lead or mercury.

## Pesticides Residues

The European Union has set maximum residue levels (MRLs) for pesticides in and on food products. Products containing more pesticide residues than allowed, will be withdrawn from the European market. The majority of European importers will request a detailed test on the presence of a large number of pesticides (sometimes more than 500). The European Union regularly publishes [a list of approved pesticides](#) that are authorised for use in the European Union. This list is frequently updated.

## Quality requirements

There is no specific European Union standard defining quality criteria for dried mushrooms, so the applicable standard used in practice is the Codex Alimentarius [Standard for Dried Edible Fungi](#).

The basic quality requirements for dried mushrooms are the following:

- absence of insect damage;
- absence of foreign bodies;
- moisture content (a maximum of 12% for dried mushrooms, 13% for dried shiitake mushrooms and 6% for freeze-dried mushrooms);
- sizing (different for every type of dried mushrooms);
- styles (whole, whole caps without stems or cut into different shapes);
- quality class (defined by uniformity and tolerances).

## Packaging requirements

There is no general rule for export packaging, but dried mushrooms are usually packed in polyethylene plastic bags which are placed inside cardboard boxes. Within Europe, the size of bulk packaging differs depending on the type of mushrooms. Size of bulk packaging can be up to 25 kg, but for more delicate mushrooms such as small morel caps size is usually smaller. The selected packaging size should be such, that the dimensions conform to the conventional pallet sizes (800 x 1,200 mm and 1,000 x 1,200 mm).

Size of retail packaging is usually between 20 and 30g for wild collected dried mushrooms. Cultivated dried shiitake are often packed in somewhat larger packaging of around 100g. Retail packaging includes plastic bags, plastic containers, paper bags, foil bags and glass jars.

The content of the packaging must correspond with the indicated quantity (in weight or volume) on the label. Importers will check size and weight to ensure that pre-packed products are within the [limits of tolerable errors](#).

## Labelling requirements

The label should indicate the name of the dried mushrooms, together with the scientific name of the mushroom. It is common practice to put the name of the variety, crop year, and best before date on the label (often up to 2 years in closed containers). The style should be indicated too, such as "whole", "caps" or "sliced". In the case of dried jelly mushrooms, another style description can be used such as "cluster", "single", "strip" or "square". It is also common to include the harvesting and drying time (year and month) and to indicate if mushrooms are wild collected or cultivated.

In case of retail packaging, product labelling must comply with the [European Union Regulation on the provision of food information to consumers](#). This regulation defines nutrition labelling, origin labelling, allergen labelling and minimum font size for mandatory information. Retail packs must be labelled in a language easily understood by the consumer in the European target country, so generally in the country's official language. This explains why European products often carry multiple languages on the label.

In addition to this regulation, from April 1st 2020 all food in retail packs in Europe must be labelled with the [indication of origin](#). For example, if dried mushrooms are packed in the Netherlands packaging still needs to indicate the origin. This can be done by indicating a country (like China), or by indicating "non-EU" or by declaring "dried mushrooms do not originate from the Netherlands".

### Tips:

Be sure to perform laboratory tests only in [ISO/IEC 17025:2005](#) accredited laboratories.

Review your treatment practices to ensure your dried mushrooms do not contain pesticide residues above the set limits. Pesticide residues should be completely absent if you dry wild collected mushrooms.

Store your dried mushrooms in proper conditions (low humidity, cool temperatures), away from strong odours, grain or other sources of contamination.

Refer to the [Codex Alimentarius](#) for practical guidelines on how to meet the requirements of European food safety legislation. For dried mushrooms, consult the Code of Hygienic Practice for Low-Moisture Foods and the Code of Hygienic Practice for Dehydrated Fruits and Vegetables including Edible Fungi.

## What additional requirements do buyers often have?

Together with the mandatory requirements, many private requests have become equally important. These include compliance with food safety, quality and sustainability standards.

### Food safety certification

European buyers can request mushroom growers (including foreign suppliers) to be certified according to [GlobalGap](#) principles, but GlobalGap certification is not applicable to wild-collected mushrooms. It is more common for dried mushroom processing facilities to be certified. The most recognised private food safety certification schemes include:

- [International Featured Standards](#) (IFS)
- [British Retail Consortium Global Standards](#) (BRCGS)
- [Food Safety System Certification](#) (FSSC 22000)

Please note that this list is not exhaustive and food certification systems are constantly developing.

Although different food safety certification systems are based on similar principles, some buyers may prefer one system over the other. For example, British buyers often require BRCGS, while IFS is more common for German retailers. Also note that food safety certification is only a basis to start exporting to Europe. Serious buyers will usually visit/audit your production facilities within one or a few years.

## Corporate Social Responsibility

Companies have different requirements for corporate social responsibility. Some companies require adherence to their own code of conduct, other companies require adherence to one or more common standards. Examples include the Supplier Ethical Data Exchange ([SEDEX](#)), Ethical Trading Initiative ([ETI](#)) or Business Social Compliance Initiative code of conduct ([BSCI](#)). If dried mushrooms are meant for the retail segment, suppliers will have to follow a specific Code of Conduct developed by retailers. Many retailers have their own Code of Conduct, examples are [Lidl](#), [Rewe](#), [Carrefour](#), [Tesco](#) and [Ahold Delhaize](#).

### Tips:

Get food safety certification. Carefully select a certifying company and consult with your preferred buyers about their certification preferences.

Do a self-assessment through the producer starter kit from the [amfori BSCI website](#).

## What are the requirements for niche markets?

### Organic dried mushrooms

Organic certification schemes are becoming more and more popular in Europe and exporters of those products are achieving better selling prices. However, this price difference is not often very high when it comes to wild-collected mushrooms as the product is already perceived as organic, even without certification.

To market dried cultivated mushrooms as organic in Europe, they must be grown by organic production methods, according to [European legislation](#). Growing and processing facilities must be audited by an accredited certifier before exporters can put the European Union's organic logo on the packaging, as well as the logo of the standard holder, for example, [Soil Association](#) in the United Kingdom and [Naturland](#) in Germany. A specific niche opportunity to sell organic dried mushrooms at a higher price is to follow the rules of the biodynamic certification of [Demeter](#).

To get Organic certification for wild-collected mushrooms, it is possible to certify an area where wild mushrooms are collected. This procedure is quite simple, but collectors of wild mushrooms must be sure that the mushroom are collected in areas that are not close to agricultural fields treated with chemicals. In some countries, forests may be sprayed against invasive moths. Wild-collected mushrooms in those areas cannot be certified as organic.

Importing organic products to Europe is only possible with an [electronic certificate](#) of inspection (e-COI). Each batch of organic products imported into the European Union has to be accompanied by an electronic certificate of inspection as defined in Annex V of Regulation [defining imports of organic products from third countries](#). This electronic certificate of inspection has to be generated via [Trade Control and Expert System](#) (TRACES).

### Sustainability certification

Sustainability is a broad term with many aspects and there is still no world-wide recognised sustainability certification covering all aspects. Wild collection of mushrooms is generally considered a sustainable activity. Another aspect of sustainability is ethical treatment of mushroom collectors and workers in processing facilities.

Fairtrade is the most famous ethical certification worldwide, but for now it is not very often used by producers of dried mushrooms. Because of that it can be considered an opportunity for entering niche markets.

## Ethnic certification

Islamic dietary laws (Halal) and Jewish dietary laws (Kosher) propose specific restrictions in diets. If you want to focus on Jewish or Islamic ethnic niche markets, consider implementing [Halal](#) or [Kosher](#) certification schemes.

### Tips:

Read our study on [Trends on the European Processed Fruit and Vegetables Market](#) for an overview of developments among the sustainability initiatives in the European market.

Consult the [Sustainability Map database](#) for information on a wide range of sustainability labels and standards.

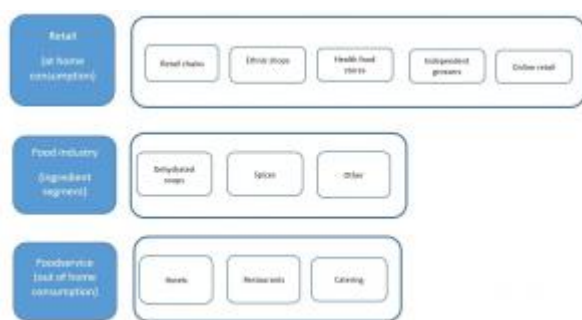
Check the [guidelines for imports of organic products into the European Union](#) to familiarise yourself with the requirements of the European organic market.

## 2. Through what channels can you get dried mushrooms on the European market?

### How is the end market segmented?

In Europe, dried mushrooms are mostly used for home consumption, and as ingredient in the food processing industry. There are no exact data, but the retail segment is roughly estimated to make up for a 70% share of the European dried mushrooms market, leaving the remaining 30% for the food industry. Within the food industry, dried mushrooms are used mostly in dehydrated soups or as an ingredient in dried mixtures (such as for risotto or pasta). In the retail segment, dried mushrooms are mostly sold in supermarkets, but also in ethnic shops (such as Asian) and in health food stores.

Figure 1: End market segments for dried mushrooms in Europe



Source: Autentika Global

### Retail (at home consumption)

Retailers sometimes buy directly from developing country exporters, but in the majority of the cases, they are supplied via intermediaries such as specialised distributors. A recent development is the polarisation of the retail sector into discounters and high-level segments. Consolidation, market saturation, strong competition and low prices are key characteristics of the European retail food market. Currently, online retail sales of dried mushrooms accounts for a small share of the market, but it is increasing, especially after the COVID-19

pandemic.

Several types of sub-segments (points of sale) of the European dried mushrooms retail segment include:

- Retail chains – the most frequent sold types of dried mushroom in mainstream supermarkets include wild collected mushrooms (such as porcini), dried mushroom mixtures, and Asian mixtures. Companies that hold the largest market shares in Europe are: Schwartz Gruppe (Lidl and Kaufland brands), Carrefour, Tesco, Aldi, Edeka, Leclerc, Metro Group, Rewe Group, Auchan, Intermarché and Ahold (Delhaize, Albert Heijn and several other brands).
- Ethnic shops – they are a very important market segment for selling Asian types of mushrooms such as black fungus, white fungus, white back black fungus, shiitake or flower shiitake. Examples of well-established Asian supermarket chains selling dried Asian mushrooms include [Tang Frères](#) (France), [Wah Nam Hong](#) (the Netherlands), [Wing Yip](#) (the United Kingdom), [Go Asia](#) (Germany) and [Hoo Hing](#) (UK).
- Health food stores – often offer collected and/or organic dried mushrooms. They also are the main selling points (aside from pharmacies) for medicinal mushroom products such as powders or food supplements.
- Online retail – often part of the offer of existing retail traders or specialised shops. With the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown measures imposed in many countries in Europe, online retail orders have dramatically increased during March and April 2020. It is expected that online sales will continue to be popular after 2020, compared to previous years.

### **Food industry (ingredient segment)**

Food industry processors use dried mushrooms as an ingredient. The biggest users of dried mushrooms in the European food industry include:

- Producers of dehydrated soups, sauces and mixes – dehydrated mushroom soup is one of the favourite flavours among European consumers of dehydrated soups. Those soups are made with dried mushrooms as an ingredient, including both cultivated and wild collected mushrooms. It must be noted that dehydrated soup producers very often use freeze dried mushroom powders and concentrates but also small pieces of air-dried mushrooms. The leading European brands of dehydrated soups are [Knorr](#) (by Unilever) and [Maggi](#) (by Nestlé).
- Producers of spices and spice mixtures – dried mushrooms are a frequent ingredient in spice mixtures. However, the quantities used are much smaller than those used in dehydrated soups.
- Other users – including dry mixtures for preparation of different meals such as risotto or pasta. Very popular products include brands from Italian based companies such as [Gallo](#) and [Scotti](#).

### **Foodservice (out-of-home consumption)**

The foodservice channel (hotels, restaurants and catering) is usually supplied by specialised importers (wholesalers). World cuisines, healthy food and food enjoyment are the major driving forces in the foodservice channel in Europe. The fastest-growing business types are likely to be new (healthier) fast food, vegan restaurants, street food, pop up restaurants and international cuisines.

Restaurants mainly use fresh or preserved button mushrooms, as they are available throughout the year. They also use rehydrated porcini and morel mushrooms, as their fresh availability is limited to short periods per year.

Dried shiitake and other types of Asian mushrooms are often used in Asian types of restaurants in the same way as fresh' are after rehydration. Some mushrooms provide specific opportunities in niche foodservice segments. One example is matsutake mushroom consumed mainly by ethnic Japanese population and typical for high-end Japanese restaurants. It is preferred fresh but due to low availability, it is sometimes used as dried.

### **Through what channels do dried mushrooms end up on the end-market?**

The most important market channel for dried mushrooms in Europe, is represented by specialised importers. After importing, dried mushrooms reach the market segments as described in Figure 5. In some cases, you can also supply the segments directly, without an importer as intermediary. However, for most exporters of dried

mushrooms from developing countries, specialised importers or wholesalers are the first entry point to Europe.

Figure 2: European market channels for dried mushrooms



Source: Autentika Global

## Importers / Wholesalers

Importers often act as wholesalers. They pack dried mushrooms for retail sale and sometimes resell them to packing companies or to food processors. Importers usually have good knowledge of the European market, and they monitor the situation in dried mushrooms producing countries closely. Therefore, they are your preferred contact, as they can inform you timely about market developments and provide practical advice for your exports.

The position of importers and food manufacturers are put under pressure by retail. The higher requirements from the retail industry, determine the supply chain dynamics from the top down. This pressure is translated into lower prices, but also into added value aspects such as “sustainable,” “natural,” “organic,” or “fair trade” products. As a result, transparency in the supply chain is needed. To achieve this, many importers develop their own codes of conduct and build long-lasting relationships with preferred developing country suppliers.

Usually dried mushroom importers can be specialised in different ways. Common specialisations include:

- Specialised mushroom traders – focuses on mushroom trade and does not trade other products in large quantities. Some examples include [Niklas](#) (Germany), [Borde](#) (France) or [Funghi Funghi](#) (Belgium).
- Traders of wider ranges of food ingredients - examples include [Leathams](#) (the United Kingdom), [Sabarot](#) (France) and [Henry Lamotte](#) (Germany).
- Traders of Asian mushrooms - examples include [Heuschen & Schrouff Oriental Foods Trading](#) (the Netherlands), [Oriental Merchant](#) (the Netherlands) and [SeeWoo](#) (the United Kingdom).
- Importers of spices, dried herbs and dehydrated vegetables - examples include [Euroma](#) (the Netherlands), [Proderma](#) (Germany) or [Fuchs](#) (Germany).

## Agent/broker

Agents involved in dried mushrooms trade typically perform two types of activities. Agents act as independent companies that negotiate on behalf of their clients, and as intermediaries between buyers and sellers. For their intermediary services, they typically charge a commission of 2–4% of the sales price. Another type of activity is the supply of private labels for retail chains in Europe. For most developing country suppliers, it is very challenging to participate in the demanding private label tender procedures. For these services, some agents, in cooperation with their date suppliers, participate in procurement procedures put out by the retail chains.

## Food processing industry

Food processing companies mostly buy dried mushrooms through specialised importers, not by direct trade.



## What is the most interesting channel for you?

Specialised importers of dried mushrooms are in most cases the best contact for exporting dried mushrooms to Europe. This is specifically relevant for new suppliers, as supplying the retail segment directly is very demanding and requires a lot of quality-related and logistical investments. However, for well-equipped and price-competitive producers, packing for private labels can be an option. As the cost of labour in Europe increases, importers of dried mushrooms sometimes search for more cost-effective packing operations, such as in developing countries.

### Tips:

Study exhibitors lists of large trade fairs like [ANUGA](#), [SIAL](#) or [Alimentaria](#) to find potential buyers for your dried mushrooms. To supply the private label of supermarkets, search for opportunities at [PLMA](#).

Look for suppliers at specialised foodservice events such as [SIRHA](#) or [Internorga](#) to reach the foodservice segment.

Search the list exhibitors of the specialised trade fair [Fi Europe](#) to find potential buyers of mushroom products, such as freeze dried mushrooms and mushroom powders.

## 3. What competition do you face on the European dried mushrooms market?

### Which countries are you competing with?

The main competitor for emerging dried mushrooms suppliers in Europe, is China. Aside from China, there are several other competitors depending on the type of dried mushroom. For dried Agaricus mushrooms, the main competitors are Poland and the Netherlands. For wild culinary European mushrooms, the main competitors are East European countries such as Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and North Macedonia. For Asian mushrooms, aside from China, the main competitors are India and Vietnam.

Leading European suppliers also include Germany and Italy, but they are not considered to be the main competitors as they are mostly transit countries for imported dried mushrooms. Germany is an insignificant producer and mainly re-exports dried mushrooms, therefore is not a direct competitor. On the other hand, Italy is producing some quantities of wild collected dried mushrooms, but the produced quantity is not sufficient, so Italian import is much larger than its export. Other emerging competitors include Canada, Chile, Turkey and Peru.

Please note that the leading suppliers below are presented according to the industry insights and are not fully in line with the official statistics shown in Figure 5. Due to ways of calculating export and import values, there are some data inaccuracies. It is important to understand that the Netherlands is not considered a large supplier of dried culinary mushrooms, although the country is producing dried Agaricus mushrooms, both air-dried and freeze-dried, including powders. Production of dried wild mushrooms in the Netherlands does almost not exist.

### China, the leading world's producer of dried mushrooms

China is the leading producer of fresh and dried mushrooms in the world. China's mushroom industry has been developing rapidly over recent years. Major producers are the provinces of Fujian, Zhejiang, Henan, Hubei, Hunan, Sichuan, Jilin and Heilongjiang. Industrial mushroom production facilities are placed in many provinces, but a large number is situated in Fujian, Jiangsu and Shandong.



China is specifically famous for its technology, production and export of shiitake mushrooms. There are several types of dried shiitake which are usually classified according to presence of the cracks and thickness of the caps. Some common types are flower mushroom (the largest cracks), winter mushroom (no cracks present), thick mushroom (with thicker cap) and several others. White flower mushroom is the most expensive type of shiitake.

China produces several other types of mushrooms, many of them are preferred fresh, but are also frequently dried. They include king oyster mushrooms, enoki, shimeji, straw mushroom, cloud ear and others. Also, China is the leading producer of several types of medicinal mushrooms such as cordyceps, reishi or maitake. Yunnan province is famous for its wild collection of expensive matsutake mushrooms which are mostly exported to Japan.

In 2018, China reached a peak of exporting 200 thousand tonnes of dried mushrooms. However, export decreased in 2019 to 140 thousand tonnes. Shiitake accounts for nearly 70% of Chinese dried mushroom exports. The leading destinations for Chinese dried mushrooms sales in 2019 were Vietnam with 26% share, followed by Hong Kong (20%), Thailand (17%), Malaysia (16%) and Japan (6%). Europe accounts for only 2-3% of Chinese dried mushrooms exports, with France as the leading destination, followed by Germany, Italy and the Netherlands.

China has a lot of experience in, and one of the most advanced biotechnology for mushrooms production in the world. Chinese biotechnology companies developed artificial production of wild mushrooms such as morels. China recently also produced the first quantities of cultivated porcini mushrooms, which are normally only found in the wild nature. Since 2018, China also has been artificially producing reishi (Ganoderma) mushroom.

## **Poland, Bulgaria and Romania - the leading suppliers from the European Union**

Poland is the largest fresh button mushroom exporter in the world. However, Poland is still developing its offer of dried mushrooms. In 2019, Poland exported 800 tonnes of dried mushrooms, worth €12.3 million. Poland exported most of its dried mushrooms to Germany (63%), followed by Italy (13%), the Netherlands (9%) and France (6%). Poland is losing market share on the European market. Over the last five years, export of Polish dried mushrooms decreased from 2 thousand tonnes in 2015 to the current level of 800 tonnes.

Some Polish companies took advantage of the large fresh button production to dry some of the quantities. As button mushrooms are less popular as a culinary ingredient, they are often milled or transformed into powders for the production of dehydrated soups or dried ingredient mixtures. Aside from the production of dried button mushrooms, Polish companies also process and export dried Boletus mushrooms ("Borowik" in Polish).

Bulgaria and Romania are two European Union member states that are increasing production and export of dried mushrooms. Bulgaria is slightly ahead of Romania in terms of exported quantities. In 2019, Bulgaria exported 330 tonnes of dried mushrooms, worth €7.8 million, while Romania exported 224 thousand tonnes, worth €7.3 million. Italia is the leading export destination, with 77% export share for both countries. Bulgaria exported some quantities outside Europe, to Canada (4 tonnes) and the United States (3 tonnes).

Bulgarian and Romanian dried mushroom companies specialise in collecting and processing wild mushrooms. Usually, they work with a network of collectors who collect fresh mushrooms from nature and sell them to processing companies. The most collected and processed species are chanterelles, morels, porcini and black trumpets. Some companies are also active in collecting and processing expensive forest truffle mushrooms.

## **Balkan countries, well recognised suppliers of dried wild mushrooms**

Serbia is the leading exporter of wild dried mushrooms from South-East Europe, followed by Bosnia and Herzegovina and North Macedonia. The most exported type of dried mushrooms from the Balkan region is porcini, followed by chanterelles. Other dried wild mushrooms are exported too, such as black trumpets, Lactarius and, to a much smaller extend, truffles. Due to the relatively short distance from the majority of the

European target markets, wild mushrooms are also exported fresh.

Among Balkan countries, Serbia is currently the leading supplier of dried mushrooms to Europe, followed by Bosnia and Herzegovina and North Macedonia. In 2019, Serbia exported 192 tonnes of dried mushrooms, worth €6 million. Export from Bosnia and Herzegovina was 167 tonnes (€5.8 million) while export from North Macedonia was 147 tonnes (€4.7). Italy is the most important market for dried mushrooms for all 3 countries, accounting for more than half of the total export, followed by Switzerland, Germany and France.

## Other emerging suppliers

There are many countries supplying dried mushrooms to Europe. Some exporters are making the first steps in exports, and send trial quantities, but other countries are already gaining ground. Emerging suppliers who are increasing their share on the European dried mushroom market are India, Pakistan, Chile and Peru. India and Pakistan are mostly focused on the export of valuable dried morels. Chile is mostly exporting wild collected dried *Boletus Luteus* mushrooms. Peru started with the export of dried *Suillus luteus* (previously known as *Boletus Luteus*) to Europe. This mushroom, also known as slippery jack, grows in pine forests.

In 2019, India exported 172 tonnes of dried mushrooms, of which 40% to Europe, mostly morels. Pakistan exported 106 tonnes, with the United Kingdom as the main export destination. Export of dried mushrooms from Chile was 194 tonnes, of which 138 tonnes were exported to Europe. Peru exported 663 tonnes, of which 336 tonnes to Europe.

### Tips:

Read more about developments in the Chinese mushroom industry on the specialised portal [China Edible Mushrooms Net](#). Here, you can also read news about the global edible mushroom industry.

Monitor dried mushrooms offers from Chinese competitors on the B2B portal [Alibaba](#).

Stay informed about developments in the medical mushrooms industry by participating in the [Medical Mushroom Conference](#).

To learn more about the cultivated mushroom industry in Europe check the website of the [European Mushroom Growers Group](#).

To learn more about European wild fungi, check the news, members and articles of the [European Mycological Association](#).

## Which companies are you competing with?

### Companies in China

There are many dried mushroom producers in China. The majority of dried mushroom processors also export fresh mushrooms, but some of them are specialised in dried mushroom production only. According to industry estimates, there are around 500 mushroom processors. Aside from the production of culinary mushrooms, China is famous for its wild collection of medicinal mushrooms such as cordyceps or reishi.

It is important to mention that Chinese companies are also providers of mushroom production technology, and exporters of inoculated shiitake mushroom spawns. Notable examples include the company [Qihe Biotech](#), with more than 800 employees and production facilities in China, the United States and China. The company is exporting shiitake inoculated sticks to many countries.

[Baixing Food](#) is one of the most export active companies in the dried mushroom trade in the European market.

Baixin Food is the company with one of the largest organic mushroom farms in China. Since its establishment in 1996, they invest in edible mushroom research and in the production of mushroom enzyme. The company is exporting several types of wild and cultivated organic mushrooms, but also cultivated morels. For the export market, Baixin Food developed the retail brand “Vigorous Mountains”.

Examples of other notable dried mushroom exporters from China include: [Dalian J&N Foods](#), [Zhejiang Tianhe Food](#), [Denis Food Processing](#), [Jinzu Manjiang](#), [Yimen Kangyuan Fungal Industry](#) and [Fortune Foods](#).

## Companies in Poland, Bulgaria and Romania

Many companies in Poland are specialised in the production of cultivated mushrooms. Some of them also dry parts of the produced quantities. On the other hand, there are several important suppliers of wild collected dried mushrooms. Companies that offer dried cultivated mushrooms usually also offer other dried mushrooms (from their own or other production) to increase their offer range.

A notable example of a company exporting dried cultivated mushrooms is [Jantex group](#). Jantex is exporter of fresh mushrooms to many countries. Aside from dried cultivated mushrooms, the company also exports dried wild mushrooms. In its export offer Jantex recently introduced retail packed “ready to cook” mixtures of dried mushrooms with rice and buckwheat. The company is certified with several food safety and social compliance standards.

Another example of a strong Polish exporter of dried wild mushrooms is the company [Jampol](#). Jampol supplies dried wild mushrooms to a number of international markets, including several leading European retail chains. In the United Kingdom they work with an exclusive distributor - the [Progressive Food Company](#). In order to supply demanding retail chains in Europe, they are certified with IFS and BRCCG standards. In order to be more competitive on the United States market, the company follow specific heavy metal limits rules – [Coneg](#).

Examples of Polish producers and exporters of dried wild mushrooms (mostly porcini and chanterelles) include [Kasol J.A](#), [Fungopol](#), [Danex](#), [Nasza Chata](#), [Tagros Polska](#) and [Polgrzyb](#). In addition to air dried mushrooms, some Polish companies produce and trade dried mushrooms in powdered form as an ingredient for dehydrated soups, spices and meals. Examples include [Paula Ingredients](#) and [Royal Brand](#).

Bulgarian and Romanian companies mostly export dried mushrooms. Some of those companies have joint-venture partnerships with foreign companies from Italy, Germany and Spain. Italy is the main buyer of Bulgarian and Romanian forest dried mushrooms, specifically dried porcini, but also other species such as morels or chanterelles. Examples of export companies are:

- Bulgaria – [MID Biotrade](#), [Paris Direkt](#), [Fungorobica](#), [Denely Comerc](#), [Thracian Truffles](#) and [Hide](#).
- Romania – [Gradina Paduri](#), [Hongos Basoan](#), [Verovita](#), [Rom Funghi](#), [Ecotravio](#), and [Claufunghi Mario](#).

## Companies from the Balkan

Companies from Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and North Macedonia are working in a similar way like companies in Bulgaria and Romania. They usually buy wild mushrooms (mostly Boletus) from collectors and process them through air-drying. Some of them also developed a business of wild fruit and herbs, and some also produce frozen berries. In promotions it is characteristic that many wild dried mushroom producers make use of imaginary that underlines the connection of the product with forests and wild nature. Examples of dried mushroom exporters are:

- Serbia – [Interfood 60](#), [Strela](#), [Inter Funghi](#), [Pamin](#), [Interfood 20](#), and [Moravac](#).
- Bosnia and Herzegovina – [Smrcak](#), [Gljiva Komerc](#), [Frutti Funghi](#), [Bosnaplod](#), [Keystone](#) and [Bole tus](#).
- North Macedonia – [Intermak](#), [Val Funghi](#), [Ekstra Fungi](#) and [Konkordia Food](#).

## Other emerging exporters of dried mushrooms

Several exporters of dried mushrooms successfully reached the European market. Examples from India, Chile

and Peru are:

- India – [Sai Saffron Exports](#), [Kashmir Kesar Mart](#), [Kashmir Forest Foods](#) and [Aries Foods and Fruits](#).
- Chile – [Atlas](#), [Kugar](#) and [Nevada](#).
- Peru – More than 500 farmers from Inkawasi near Cusco are included into collection and processing of dried mushrooms. Important exporters are [Comercializadora Verde de Alimentos](#), [Aromatico Inversiones](#) and [Export Food & Spice](#).

### Tip:

Tell the story about your dried mushrooms to European importers and consumers. Consumers of mushrooms like to hear about the aspects such as wild and unpolluted areas where mushrooms are collected and produced, and about the people and communities collecting those mushrooms.

## Which products are you competing with?

The main products competing with dried mushrooms are fresh mushrooms. With the development of storage and logistic technologies, there are more wild and exotic fresh mushrooms available on the European market. For example, several years ago, shiitake mushrooms were mostly imported dried from China and Japan, but recently they are also imported fresh in large quantities, but also produced within Europe. Importers of fresh mushrooms started to import smaller quantities of fresh medical mushrooms such as cordyceps too.

On the other hand, the most consumed and easily available type of fresh mushroom within Europe is [button \(Agaricus\) mushroom](#). Button mushrooms cannot easily substitute wild mushrooms, as wild mushrooms have more flavour and they are not the preferred option for mushroom culinary lovers. The collection season of wild mushrooms is short, so the need for wild mushroom is commonly satisfied with dried products.

### Tips:

Check the specialised portal [Mushroom Business](#) to stay informed about developments in the fresh cultivated industry in Europe.

To learn more about competitors from the fresh segment, visit the specialised trade event in the Netherlands – [Mushroom Days](#).

Visit the leading fresh produce trade event [Fruit Logistica](#). Here you will learn about competitors from the fresh mushroom segment, but also see some dried mushroom exporters.

## 4. What are the prices for dried mushrooms on the European market?

The price developments are different, depending on the types of dried mushrooms, producing countries and quality of the product. As a result, it is only possible to give a very rough general overview of the price developments for the whole dried mushrooms sector. Very roughly, it can be estimated that the Cost, Insurance and Freight (CIF) price represents around 25% to 50% of the retail price for a retail pack of dried mushrooms, depending on the type of mushroom. Margins for luxury mushrooms, such as morels or forest truffles is higher compared to more common dried mushrooms such as shiitake or porcini.

Retail prices in European supermarkets vary per type of dried mushroom. Price examples for the common retail packs of 1kg of dried mushrooms are:

- Porcini – €65 -€75 p/kg
- Shiitake - €70 - €80 p/kg
- Morels - €400 - €450 p/kg

The export price of dried cultivated shiitake mushrooms from China is generally lower compared to prices of European wild collected dried mushrooms. For example, the average export price of dried shiitake from China (FOB based) during 2019 was €15/kg, while the FOB price of dried porcini from East Europe hovered between €25 and €30/kg.

Cost, insurance and freight (CIF) prices of dried mushrooms represent approximately 50-60% of the retail price of a small retail package. When a final retail product is sold directly to retail chains, that share is much higher.

If you add value to your produce through differentiated quality, food safety, certification and processing steps, your prices will be higher. For example, organic and fair-trade certification may add value to your products.

The price breakdown given below is a very rough indication. There are many factors contributing to the price, like quality, variety, origin, food safety certification costs, consultants, social security, taxes, sales and network margins.

Table 1: Dried mushrooms retail price breakdown


Steps in the export process	Type of price	Price breakdown	Example (porcini), 1kg
Raw material price	Collectors price / Farmer price	35%	€25
Processing, packing and export of dried mushrooms	FOB price	50%	€35
Storing, handling and shipping	CIF price	57%	€40
Selling to retail	Wholesale price (incl value-added tax)	70%	€50
Retail sales of the final packed product	Retail price	100%	€70

Note: the raw material price is based on the assumption that 10kg of fresh mushrooms is needed for the production of 1kg of dried mushrooms.


This study has been carried out on behalf of CBI by [Autentika Global](#).

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