

# Entering the European market for exotic tropical fruit

The European market offers opportunities for both regular exotic fruit in conventional retail and niche products for ethnic and culinary segments. Several Latin American and Asian countries such as Colombia and Vietnam have an ample supply of exotic fruit. To compete in this trade you must be able to supply high quality products at specific times of the year and find buyers that are familiar with the characteristics and the market segment of your product.

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For the product description and HS Codes for exotic fruit, see the CBI study on the European market potential for exotic fruit.

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

Fresh exotic fruit must comply with the general requirements for fresh fruit and vegetables. You can find these in the general [buyer requirements for fresh fruit and vegetables](#) on the CBI market information platform. You can also use the [Trade Helpdesk](#) that provides an overview of export requirements for exotic fruit (code 08109020 or 08109075).

### What are mandatory requirements?

#### Avoid pesticide residues and contaminants

Pesticide residues are one of the crucial issues for fruit and vegetable suppliers. To avoid health and environmental damage, the European Union has set maximum residue levels (MRLs) for pesticides in and on food products. Exotic fruits containing more pesticides than allowed will be withdrawn from the market. The same goes for contaminants such as heavy metals.

Exotic fruits sometimes carry a higher risk of pesticide residues. For some fruits and origin countries there may be increased measures or a temporary increase of official controls at borders. ANNEX I and II of European [Regulation 2019/1793](#) indicate increased physical checks for:

- Pitahaya from Vietnam: 10% is checked on pesticide residues
- Jackfruit from Malaysia: 20% is checked on pesticide residues
- Goji berries from China: 20% is checked on pesticide residues

Note that large retailers in several Member States such as the United Kingdom, Germany, the Netherlands and Austria, use MRLs that are stricter than the MRLs laid down in European legislation. Other channels, such as wholesalers and food services, pay more attention to the physical appearance and taste of the product and follow the general European guidelines.

### Tips:

Find out the MRLs that are relevant for your exotic product by [consulting the EU MRL database](#) in which all harmonised MRLs can be found. You can search for your product (for example “pomegranates”, “carambolas” or “prickly pears/cactus fruits”) or the used pesticide. The database shows the list of the MRLs associated to your product or pesticide.

Reduce the amount of pesticides by applying [integrated pest management](#) (IPM) in production. IPM is an agricultural pest control strategy that includes growing practices and chemical management.

Read more about [MRLs on the website of the European Commission](#). Check with your buyers if they require additional requirements on MRLs and pesticide use.

Make sure that contamination of lead in the fruits remains below 0.10 mg/kg (0.20 mg/kg for berries and small fruit) and cadmium below 0,050 mg/kg, according to the [maximum levels for certain contaminants in foodstuffs](#).

## Follow phytosanitary regulations

In December 2019, the new European regulation for the [trade in plants and plant products from non-EU countries](#) came into force. The [Implementing Regulation \(EU\) 2019/2072](#) (ANNEX XI part A & B) requires all exotic fruits with HS codes 08109075 and 01809020 to have a phytosanitary certificate before being brought into the European Union.

For pomegranates there are special requirements for suppliers in countries on the African continent, Cape Verde, Saint Helena, Madagascar, La Reunion, Mauritius and Israel (see ANNEX VII of the above regulation). Pomegranates with these origins require an official statement that the fruits originate in a country, area or production place recognised as being free from *Thaumatotibia leucotreta* (Meyrick) or have been subjected effective treatment. Information on traceability and official inspection in the place of production may be required.

### Tips:

See the details on the contents of a phytosanitary certificate for the European Union in ANNEX V of [Regulation \(EU\) No 2016/2031](#).

Make sure your plant health authority is able to comply with the phytosanitary requirements before planning your export. Get in contact with the [National Plant Protection Organisation \(NPPO\) in your country](#) and make sure they can issue a phytosanitary certificate on time.

## Maintain high quality standards

All exotic fruit need to comply with the [General Marketing Standards in ANNEX I Part A of Regulation \(EU\) 543/2011](#).

The minimum quality requirements state that these fruits must be:

- intact
- sound; products affected by rotting or deterioration such as to make them unfit for consumption are excluded
- clean, practically free of any visible foreign matter
- practically free from pests
- practically free from damage caused by pests affecting the flesh
- free of abnormal external moisture
- free of any foreign smell and/or taste.

The condition of the products must of a level that enables them to withstand transport and handling, and to arrive in satisfactory condition at the place of destination. This also means paying attention to the minimum maturity requirements:

- The products must be sufficiently developed but not over-developed, and fruit must display satisfactory ripeness and must not be overripe.
- The development and state of maturity of the products must of a level that enables them to continue their ripening process and to reach a satisfactory degree of ripeness.

The [Codex Alimentarius](#), the ‘food code’ of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), provides several specific marketing standards for several exotic varieties:

- [Standard for Pomegranate](#)
- [Standard for Pitahaya](#)
- [Standard for Passion Fruit](#)
- [Standard for Carambola](#)
- [Standard for Litchi](#) (lychee)
- [Standard for Cape Gooseberry](#) (physalis)
- [Standard for Rambutan](#)
- [Standard for Longan](#)
- [Standard for Prickly Pear](#) (cactus fig)

These specific exotic fruits are classified in three classes: “Extra” Class, Class I and Class II. European buyers almost always require Class I fruit as a minimum.

### Tip:

Maintain strict compliance with quality requirements and deliver the quality as agreed with your buyer. Being careless with product requirements or stretching the minimum standards will give buyers a reason to claim on quality issues.

## Check on product size and uniformity

Exotic fruits are often a luxury product. Presentation and uniformity in size are crucial aspects for selling them to your clients. The size for exotic fruit can be determined by the maximum diameter, weight or count.

Table 1: Size codes for pitahaya, passion fruit, carambola, physalis and cactus fig

	Yellow pitahaya	Red/white pitahaya	Passion fruit	Passion fruit	Carambola	Physalis	Cactus fig / Prickly pear
Size code	(grams)	(grams)	(grams)	Diameter (mm)	(grams)	Diameter (mm)	(grams)
A	110-150	110-150	>139	>78	80-129	15.0-18.0	90-105
B	151-200	151-200	>128-139	>67-78	130-190	18.1-20.0	105-140

C	201-260	201-250	>122-128	>56-67	>190	20.1-22.0	140-190
D	261-360	251-300	>106-122	≤ 56*		≥22.1	190-270
E	>361	301-400	>83-106				>270
F		401-500	≥74-83				
G		501-600					
H		601-700					
I		>701					

\* The minimum diameter for golden passion fruit is 56 mm

Table 2: Size codes for rambutan and longan fruit

	Rambutan single fruit	Rambutan single fruit	Rambutan in bunches	Longan	Longan
Size code	(grams)	Number of fruits per kg	Number of fruits per kg	Number of fruits per kg	Diameter (mm)
1	>43	<23	<29	<85	>28
2	38-43	23-26	29-34	85-94	>27-28
3	33-37	27-30	35-40	95-104	>26-27
4	29-32	31-34	41-45	105-114	>25-26
5	25-28	35-40		≥115	24-25
6	18-24	41-50			

Table 3: Size codes for pomegranate

	Pomegranate	Pomegranate
Size code	Diameter (mm)	Weight (g)
1/A	≥81	≥501

2/B	71-80	401-500
3/C	61-70	301-400
4/D	51-60	201-300
5/E	40-50	125-200

Table 4: Size code for lychee

	Lychees
Minimum size	Diameter (mm)
“Extra” Class	33mm
Class I and II	20mm

## Use protective packaging

Packaging requirements differ between different products, customers and market segments. In all cases you must use protective packaging to maintain the freshness and quality of your exotic fruit.

Small exotic fruits such as lychees, rambutan and passion fruit come in cardboard boxes of 1.5 to 2.5 kilos. Physalis are sometimes prepacked in small consumer sized trays, for example 10/12 x 100 grams. Pomegranate and red pitahaya often use 3.5 to 4 kilo boxes. Fresh pomegranate arils can come in wholesale plastic bags or consumer trays of around 150 grams.

### Tips:

Always discuss specific packaging requirements and preferences with your customers.

If your product is pre-packed for retail, check the additional requirements in the [Codex General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods](#) or [Regulation \(EU\) No. 1169/2011](#) on the provision of food information to consumers in Europe.

Find the legal requirements for labelling in the [Buyer requirements for fresh fruit and vegetables](#) on the CBI market information platform.

See also the [Recommended International Code of Practice for Packaging and Transport of Tropical Fresh Fruits and Vegetables \(CAC/RCP 44-1995\)](#) for recommendations on how to maintain produce quality during transportation and marketing.

## What additional requirements do buyers often have?

### Obtain commonly used certifications

[GlobalG.A.P.](#) is one of the most common certifications in the fresh fruit sector to show buyers you maintain good

agricultural practices. Generally this also applies for exporters of exotic fruit. Only if your products are not destined for demanding market channels such as major retailers in Northern Europe, you may get away without GlobalG.A.P.

Other certifications that can support your activities in handling, packing and processing are HACCP-based food safety management systems such as [BRCGS](#), [IFS](#) or similar schemes. Management systems recognised by the [Global Food Safety Initiative \(GFSI\)](#) are most recommendable to use.

## Apply additional sustainability and social standards

Complying with sustainable and social standards has become common for all fresh fruit and vegetables. Besides GlobalG.A.P. to ensure good agricultural practices, a social certificate is highly recommended to get your product up to retail standards. Common standards are [SMETA](#) (Sedex Members Ethical Trade Audit), and [GRASP](#), a social and accessible add-on of GLOBALG.A.P..

Retailers can also impose their individual standards, such as [Tesco Nurture](#). Especially larger retail chains in Northern Europe are more prepared to buy your product if your compliance to social and sustainability standards is in order.

### Tips:

Implement at least one environmental and one social standard. See the SIFAV Sustainability Initiative for Fruit and Vegetables [Basket of standards](#).

For other additional requirements such as payment and delivery terms, see the [CBI Buyer Requirements for fresh fruit and vegetables](#) and [Tips for doing business with European buyers](#).

## What are the requirements for niche markets?

### Use organic certification to increase product value

Organic certification can be used to emphasise the healthy characteristic of a certain exotic fruit and market them at a higher value. The demand for organic fruit is growing, but the market for exotic fruit remains a niche in a niche. Nevertheless, the exclusive value and higher price segment of exotic fruit could justify the added value of an organic certification.

In order to market organic products in Europe, you have to use organic production methods that comply with [European legislation](#), and apply for an organic certificate with an accredited certifier. Note that the new [Regulation \(EU\) 2018/848](#) will come into force in January 2021. You must use sustainable and organic production methods and apply for an organic certificate with an accredited certifier.

### Tips:

Strive for residue-free exotic fruit and only certify your production as organic if possible. It will broaden your market opportunities, but remember that implementing organic production and becoming certified can be expensive. You must be prepared to comply with the whole organic process.

Download the [current list of control bodies and authorities](#) to see which certifiers are active in your region.

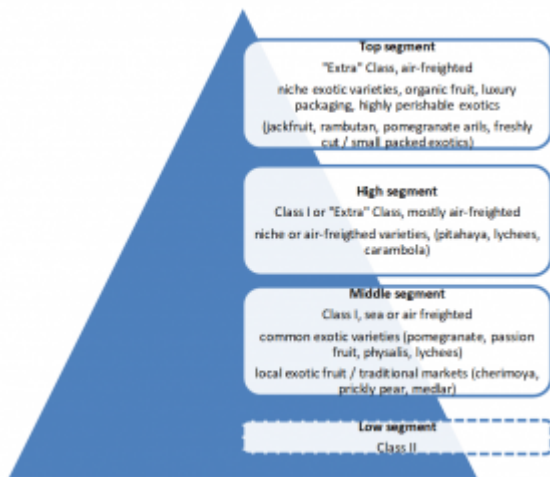
## 2. Through what channels can you get exotic fruit on the European market?

Fresh exotic fruits are typically sold through specialised channels. Specialised traders and wholesalers supply a variety of large to small markets, including ethnic and culinary segments. Supermarkets often prefer doing business with a limited number of suppliers and partner with service providers that arranges their exotic assortment.

### How is the end-market segmented?

There are different factors that define the segmentation of the exotic fruit market and where your product will be sold. The type of fruit is a main factor, but you can also use quality and presentation to target specific market segments. Organic labels or product transformation can create additional value.

Figure 1: Market segments for exotic fruit in Europe



The top segment consists of well-presented, high-quality exotics. Examples are highly perishable niche products and air-freighted fruit such as jackfruit, rambutan and yellow pitahaya. These exotic fruits must appear flawless, which is characteristic for the "Extra" Class. They are air-freighted to preserve their quality and freshness and are sent to luxury or ethnic food retailers and culinary professionals.

The middle and high segments are divided in niche and more common exotic fruits. Most of these are sold in specialised segments, but the variety in conventional supermarkets is increasing as well. For example lychees are typical fruit in Asian shops and Chinese restaurants, but are also available in several supermarkets during Christmas.

Common tropical and exotic fruit such as pomegranates and passion fruit have a much higher coverage in conventional supermarkets than niche exotics (see table 5). Some of the high-value products that you can typically find in larger supermarkets include fresh pomegranate arils, exotics with organic label and a seasonal offer of lychees, pitahaya or carambola.

Other commonly sold exotics are traditional and locally grown products, mostly in the south of Europe. Fruit such as cactus figs, cherimoya and medlars may be exotic to the Northern European market, but they are common in Mediterranean food culture. They have a typical traditional and seasonal consumption. Local cultivation makes import less necessary and consumption more affordable.

Table 5: Presence of tropical and exotic fruit in French conventional supermarket sector

Banana, pineapple, avocado, mango	100%
Lime, pomegranate	88%
Purple passion fruit, coconut	81%
Physalis	50%
Victoria apple, plantain, kumquat	44%
Chayote, papaya	38%
Carambola	31%
Pitahaya, mangosteen	19%
Guava	13%

Source: FruiTrop 2017

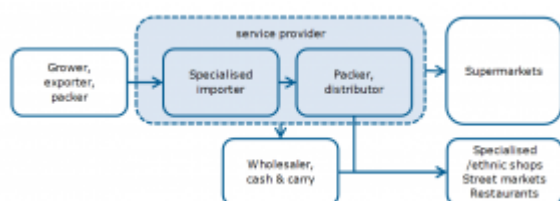
### Tips:

Adjust your focus and timing: For the niche exotics you may need to focus on special holidays or ethnic markets. For common exotic products it is best to maintain supermarket standards. For exotics that are also produced in Europe, time your fruit before or after the local season.

Look at the online assortment of different European supermarkets to see what type of exotic fruit they typically sell to consumers. You can find an [extensive list of supermarket chains in Europe on Wikipedia](#); many of these show their fresh products online.

## Through what channels does a product end up on the end-market?

Figure 2: European supply channels for exotic fruit



### Specialised importers

Most exotic products are brought to the market by specialised importers. These importers are used to working with small volumes and different sourcing countries. They have an important responsibility in introducing new



exotic fruits to the European market. Specialists have a strong network of retail clients, wholesale, food services and ethnic buyers and often supply these directly with small or large orders, including mixed pallets.

Throughout Europe you can find many exotic fruit traders, with a relatively high number of importers in the Netherlands such as [BUD Holland](#), a true specialist in exotic fruit and vegetables, and [TFC Holland](#), an international trader with over 200 tropical and exotic fruits (see table 6).

Table 6: Importers and their assortment of fresh exotic fruit

	Bud Holland	TFC Holland	Yex	OTC Organics	SpecialFruit	Asia GmbH	Roveg	Nature's Pride	Minor Weir Willis & Exo-Fresh	Greenyard Fresh France	Cultivar	Spreafico
	NL	NL	NL	NL	BE	DE	NL	NL	UK / DE	BE/FR	ES	IT
							incomplete		incomplete			
pomegranate	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x		x
passion fruit	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
physalis	x		x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
lychees	x	x	x		x			x		x		
rambutan	x	x	x					x		x	x	
pitahaya	x	x	x		x		x	x	x	x	x	x
cherimoya	x	x		x	x	x						
carambola	x	x	x	x	x		x	x		x	x	x
cactus fig	x	x						x				
jackfruit	x	x						x			x	
medlar						x						
granadilla	x	x		x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
feijoa	x							x			x	
soursop	x							x			x	
kiwano	x	x					x	x			x	
kumquat	x	x	x		x			x		x	x	
tamarillo		x			x		x	x			x	
tamarind		x									x	
maracuyá	x	x						x			x	x
pepino	x	x			x		x	x			x	
mangosteen	x	x	x					x		x	x	

Sources: company online listings

## Service providers

Several fruit companies have a wide assortment of tropical and exotic fruits and use their own packing facilities to become full service providers. These companies can position themselves as suppliers of large retailers and supermarkets. They can fulfil an exotic fruit supply programme for a longer period and offer a more stable market for their foreign supply relations.

Importing companies that pack for supermarkets include [Nature's Pride](#), [Roveg](#), [Greenyard Fresh](#) and [Minor Weir Willis \(MWW\)](#). Supermarkets that have a wider fresh assortment and exotic fruit are often leading national supermarkets such as [Waitrose](#) in the United Kingdom, [Rewe](#) in Germany and formulas with a strong focus on

fresh products such as [Grand Frais](#) in France.

## Wholesalers

Wholesale channels are very relevant for exotic fruit because they reach typical niche markets such as culinary professionals and ethnic shops. A majority of the wholesalers focus on typical local produce or purchase exotics through their import or ethnic trade relations. They do not often have their own import of exotic fruit, but maintain close relations with import specialists instead.

### Tip:

Find wholesalers with import activities and ethnic fruit traders at specific wholesale markets such as [Rungis in Paris](#), [New Spitalfields Market in London](#) and [Marcabarna in Barcelona](#).

## What is the most interesting channel for you?

Specialised exotic fruit importers cover both the wholesale and retail channels/sales/markets. Therefore they are the most interesting channel for exporters of exotic fruit.

The type of importer and their network are important. For niche exotics your importer must have relevant clients in food service industry or ethnic markets. Small distribution and knowledge. Margins in the wholesale channel and spot market will strongly depend on your timing and the market situation (supply and demand). You will need an importing or service partner that can represent and defend your product on the European market. Therefore they must be knowledgeable about your product and their potential in the market.

For common exotic fruit such as pomegranates and passion fruit you can also rely on the regular retail channels and their service providers. The programmed supply to retailers may provide more stability, although the requirements will also be more extensive.

### Tip:

Go to trade fairs to find buyers and gather information from different specialist buyers. The main trade fairs for fresh fruit are [Fruit Logistica](#) in Berlin and the [Fruit Attraction](#) in Madrid.

## 3. What competition do you face on the European exotic fruit market?

Competition in the exotic trade is especially strong from Latin America and Asia. Peru, Turkey and India compete mainly in the pomegranate sector and Madagascar in lychees. Colombia and Vietnam have a more diverse exotic supply. The competitive field is diverse, but there is a common thread throughout: high product standards and pro-active commercial strategies.

## Which countries are you competing with?

Table 7: Description of Europe's main suppliers of exotic fruit

Colombia	Peru	Turkey	Madagascar	Vietnam	India
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specialised in exotics (physalis, pitahaya, maracuyá).</li> <li>• Considered to be an upcoming supplier in fresh fruit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developed an image of being a professional and high volume exporter (mainly pomegranates in exotics).</li> <li>• Buyers are aware of the potential but also the potential oversupply.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Valued as price competitive supplier (mainly pomegranates).</li> <li>• Not a real reputation in rare exotic fruit.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good reputation in lychees (especially with French buyers), but barely a player in other exotic fruit.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Well-known as diverse exotic fruit supplier.</li> <li>• Not always an easy country for buyers to find the compliant suppliers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High volume producer (mostly pomegranate)</li> <li>• Issues with residues often impacts India's reputation.</li> </ul>

### Colombia: number one in exotics

Colombia supplies the highest value of exotic fruit to Europe. With different microclimates the country can produce a wide variety of exotic fruit. According to a [news publication in Agronegocios](#) in 2020 (in Spanish) Colombia still has large potential to expand its cultivation area.

The main fruits exported to Europe are passion fruit (27.0 million euros in 2018) and physalis (22.5 million euros). Other exported fruits include granadilla, tamarillo, (yellow) pitahaya and maracuyá. The total European import value increased from 69.4 million in 2015 to 96.8 million euros in 2019, a five year increase of 40%. The main destination markets in Europe were the Netherlands, Germany, Belgium and United Kingdom.

The forecast for Colombian exotic fruit exports to Europe is positive. Because of the [trade agreement between Colombia and the European Union](#), there are no import tariffs on exotic fruit anymore. Meanwhile more and more producers have aligned their supply to European standards.

### Peru: increasing in pomegranates

In the last decade Peru has developed into one of the strongest competitors in the global fresh fruit business. In the exotic fruit segment Peru mainly competes in pomegranates, which are the primary reason for Peru's fast export growth to the European market. The export to Europe has more than doubled in five years' time, reaching a value of 54.3 million euros in 2019. Peru has become the main competitor in pomegranates in the months between February and May, leaving behind South Africa and Argentina.

The country has potential in other exotic fruits as well, but its current export share in fruits such as passion fruit and carambola is currently very minor. However, Peruvian companies have proven that they are able to increase cultivation in new fruits and have them export ready in a short amount of time. That is why it is important for other suppliers to keep following the developments of exotic fruits in Peru.

### Turkey: nearby supply of pomegranates

Just like Peru and India, Turkish exotic exports mainly consist of pomegranates. But unlike its competitors the supply to Europe has not increased much over the past years and fluctuates around the 50 million euros. The main advantage of Turkey is its proximity to the European market. Turkey is an important supplier to Eastern Europe and Germany and this is not likely to change. In terms of quantity, Turkey is still the number one

supplier of pomegranates to Europe.

## **Madagascar: competes mainly in lychees**

The reason that Madagascar is among the main exotic fruit exporters is because of Europe's seasonal demand of fresh lychees. The export of lychees fluctuates, but over the years the average supply has not changed much and remains around 50 million euros. It is a high value for a seasonal fruit that is concentrated mainly in the December month. Madagascar also produces passion fruit, jackfruit and tamarinds, but there is no indication that these are included in the export value. France is by far the most important end-market for lychees from Madagascar.

## **Vietnam: diversity of exotic fruits**

Vietnam is an important supplier of exotic fruits. The fruit diversity is great with exports in passion fruit, pitahaya (mainly red), lychees, rambutan, jackfruit, carambola, among many others. The diversity of commercial exotics and a good air-freight route to Europe are competitive strengths.

Europe is a relevant and increasing market for Vietnam with a total value of 35 million euros of exotics in 2019. But this value is not even close to the value of Vietnam's most important export market China, which is over 30 times bigger and often less demanding than Europe.

To reduce its dependency on China there is an active search for new markets and more and more producers are able to comply with the high-quality requirements of European markets. The export to Europe is expected to continue its growth with the prospect of the [European Union – Vietnam Free Trade Agreement \(EVFTA\)](#) that will soon come into effect, dropping the import tariffs on Vietnamese fruit and vegetables to zero.

## **India: window of opportunity for pomegranates**

India has made a tremendous effort to increase the export of pomegranate. Pomegranates are India's prime exotic fruit for the European market. Other exotic fruit export is limited to a few hundred tonnes of tamarinds and sapodillas.

India is the largest producer of pomegranates in the world and production takes place almost year round. The bulk of the export to Europe takes place from December to February, a supply window between the Turkish season and the start of the Peruvian season. Despite of this small window Europe imported 27.6 million euros of Indian pomegranates in 2019, which is many times more than the 3 million euros five years earlier.

India may not be able to compete on the same price level as Turkey, Peru or Spain, but it has gained a good export reputation in pomegranate arils. Companies such as [INI Farms](#), [SamAgri](#) and [Frestrop](#) have all entered the business of packing and exporting fresh pomegranate arils.

### **Tips:**

Compare air-freight costs on [freightos.com](#). Air-freight is often a major influence on the price of your exotic fruit. See if and how you can compete in logistical efficiency.

Be inventive! If you have difficulty competing, explore additional markets such as fresh processing or combining exotic fruit shipments. A good example is the initiative of Indian companies to export high quality pomegranate arils.

## Which companies are you competing with?

Strong competitors are highly professional. They try to differentiate their product offer, but also maintain high quality standards and invest in marketing and commercial activities.

### The Fruit Republic - Vietnam

[The Fruit Republic \(TFR\)](#) in Vietnam was able to grow into an international supplier in a matter of years. The company started with pomelos and limes, and expanded with a number of other fruit and vegetables, including passion fruit and pitahaya.

Besides a clear focus on product quality and social compliance, they have invested in commercial activities such as trade fair participation in Europe and a dedicated logistic service provider in the Netherlands. This gives them the advantage of meeting new clients and allows them to supply these clients by the pallet.

### Ocati - Colombia

According to the [SICEX top 10 principle fruit exporters in Colombia \(excluding bananas\)](#), [Ocati](#) is the second largest with an export market share of 9.65%. They have checked all the boxes for becoming a successful exporter to Europe:

List:

Product range: Offering a wide selection of exotic fruit such as passion fruit, physalis, pitahaya, maracuyá, granadilla, tamarillo, cactus fig and feijoa, among others.

Product quality: Managing precisely the product quality and food safety with IFS certification and pesticide usage kept at a minimum

Social and environmental responsibility: Paying attention to social and environmental responsibility and certifying with GlobalG.A.P., SEDEX and ETI

Marketing: Participating in important trade fairs in Europe such as Fruit Logistica.

### Grupo Athos - Peru

The company [Grupo Athos](#), also known as Exportadora Fruticola del Sur, was the largest exporter of pomegranates in Peru with an FOB export value of 13.7 million USD in 2019 according to [recent export data of AgroDataPeru](#).

Grupo Athos is a professional family business. They cultivate fruits that prosper well in their region: pomegranates, dates, figs, blueberries and asparagus. With these products they offer something different from the exotic fruit countries Colombia and Vietnam. Using the ample space of the Peruvian coast they, as well as other Peruvian farms, are able to compete strongly in the pomegranate trade during the first six months of the calendar year.

### **Tips:**

Become as good as your most important competitors. Selling your exotic fruit is not just about offering a well-priced product. It is about teamwork with your buyer and being able to maintain excellent communication, product quality and compliance.

Find your strength as a company. Analyse which fruits are most suitable for production in your region and find ways to differentiate, for example by focusing on specific supply gaps (seasons), improved varieties, additional services or packing options.

## **Which products are you competing with?**

The key factors on which exotic fruits compete with one another are consumer experience and fruit attractiveness, familiarity and seasonality.

### **Consumer experience and fruit attractiveness**

Unique features such as taste, appearance or health benefits can help exotic fruit to obtain a competitive advantage over common tropical fruit such as mango or papaya. For example pitahaya and physalis (with decorative leaves) have a unique appearance and are excellent fruits for culinary presentation. Pomegranate is an attractive and healthy ingredient in salads and drinks, which gives them an advantage over other tropical or exotic fruit. Health benefits could also increase the competitiveness of passion fruit, carambola and physalis.

### **Familiarity**

Unknown exotic fruits often need promotional effort to compete with products that are more familiar to the general consumer. For example, (purple) passion fruit is much more known as a fresh fruit than the similar maracuyá and granadilla. The same can be said for lychees compared to rambutan and longan.

Practicality and information to consumers also play a role. Consumers need to know how to eat or prepare the fruit. For example jackfruit is a difficult fruit to introduce to the average consumer due to its size, unusual flesh and lack of familiarity. In regular retail markets it will have to compete with fruit that is more practical and better known, like pieces of watermelon for example. In the ethnic market, however product loyalty is strong and jackfruit is not easily replaced by other fruits.

### **Seasonality**

Imported exotic fruit is most popular during holiday seasons. Outside the holiday season there is more competition with tropical fruits as well as typical local seasonal products like stone fruit or strawberries, especially during the summer months. Local fruit is considered more environment friendly and is often more affordable. During specific periods there may also be competition from local exotic fruits such as cactus figs from Spain and Italy from August to October and cherimoya from Spain in October-November.

### **Tip:**

Make exotic fruit accessible and acceptable to consumers. Work out a strategy with your buyer relations, for example by supplying smaller portions of large exotic fruit or by communicating potential uses and recipes.

## 4. What are the prices for exotic fruit?

In general, prices for exotic fruit are high compared to those of regular fruit. Expensive air-freight and small-scale distribution can drive up the prices significantly. The availability and the season of the fruit is another important factor. In the end the market (supply-demand) will determine the final price.

The trade value per kilo of the product group with HS code 08109092 (lychees, pitahaya, physalis, etc.) has been increasing more than that of product group 01809075, which mainly consists of pomegranates. This is probably because of the pressure on pomegranate prices. The market for pomegranates has increased, but so has the supply from Peru, India and several other producing countries.

Wholesale prices for pomegranate and locally grown cherimoya can be between 2 and 3.5 euros per kilo, while air freighted exotics pay up to 6 to 10 euros per kilo. Importers generally maintain a net profit margin of around 8% over the wholesale price, excluding handling and packing costs.

Retailers calculate between 50% and 100% on top of the purchasing price to cover sales costs and margin. The margins and mark-up on exotic fruit can be considerably higher due to the higher distribution costs and often shorter shelf-life. The prices for local exotics such as cherimoya and cactus fig are often lower in Southern European retail.

Table 8: Price indications in wholesale and retail channels, in euros

	Wholesale (selling prices of importers)	Retail (supermarket prices)
Pomegranate	2.15 - 3.20 /kg	1,25 - 2.50 a piece
Passion fruit	4.50 - 6.25 /kg	0.60 - 1.20 a piece
Lychees	+/- 8.00 /kg	11.00 - 13.00 /kg
Physalis	3.30 - 3.75 /kg	20.00 - 22.00 /kg
Pitahaya	3.70 - 6.15 /kg	3.00 - 6.00 euros apiece
Cherimoya	+/- 2.50 /kg	3.50 - 6.00 /kg
Carambola	+/- 6.00 /kg	1.50-2.50 apiece 14/kg??
Cactus fig / prickly pear	3.00 - 5.00 /kg	
Rambutan	7.00 - 8.50 /kg	18.00 /kg
Maracuyá	+/- 7.00 /kg	17.00 /kg
Medlar		3.00 /kg

### Tip:

Find indicative fruit prices (in France) on [the Market News Network of FranceAgriMer](#) from producers, importers, wholesalers (“gros”) and retail (“détail”).

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

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