Exporting dried ginger to Europe

Europe is an interesting market for exporters of dried ginger. The demand is expected to grow in the coming years and prices are rising or relatively stable. China is the main supplier of both whole and ground ginger to Europe, and it is your main competitor on the European market.

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1. Product description

Ginger is the irregularly shaped root (rhizome) of the ginger plant (Zingiber officinale). The plant is cultivated in the tropics. The main producing countries are China, India, Nigeria and Peru.

Ginger is mainly used in:

- oriental and Indian cooking;
- bakery and confectionery products;
- liqueurs.

This fact sheet focuses only on dried ginger (both whole and crushed/ground). Fresh ginger is not included in this fact sheet, since it belongs to the fresh fruit and vegetables market. It is included in our studies of Fresh fruit and vegetables. The markets for fresh and dried ginger are closely connected, however, and fresh ginger exports are even larger than dried.

Drying of fresh ginger generally takes place in the countries of origin.

Within the Combined Nomenclature (CN) classification, dried ginger is covered under the following codes.

- 0910.1100: ginger, neither crushed nor ground
- 0910.1200: ginger, crushed or ground

2. What makes Europe an interesting market for dried ginger?

Growing imports of dried ginger in Europe

The worldwide consumption of ginger is increasing. The global and European market for ginger is
expected to show significant growth until at least 2020. Especially in the winter of 2016-2017, the European demand for ginger peaked due to the colder weather. Consumers buy ginger during the winter because of its health properties. For example, consumers use ginger as a sore throat remedy. The growing ginger market in Europe provides opportunities for you as an exporter. Buyers are increasingly willing to invest in long-term relationships or collaborations with their suppliers to ensure sufficient supplies.

In 2017, the total European imports of dried ginger reached 160 thousand tonnes. Since 2013, the import volume has increased by 12% annually. The import value increased in that same period by 13% annually, reaching €250 million in 2017.

In 2017, more than 70% of the total European imports were sourced directly from developing countries. Please note that Figure 1 below excludes countries other than European or developing countries. In 2017, these other countries accounted for only 0.12% of the total European imports.

Since ginger cannot be produced in Europe, the European supplies illustrated in Figure 1 are based on re-exports. European re-exports accounted for 29% of the total imports in 2017.

**Figure 1: European dried ginger imports from developing countries and other European countries (re-exports) 2013-2017**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Year</th>
<th>Developing countries</th>
<th>Europe</th>
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<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>125</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Eurostat, 2018

Tips:
- Invest in establishing long-term trade relationships with your buyers. Demonstrate that you can deliver stable supplies which meet the requirements for food safety and product quality.
- See the final section of this fact sheet for more information on prices.

The Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Germany are the most interesting markets for dried ginger in Europe

Figures 2 and 3 show the leading European importers of dried ginger and their consumption (consumption is calculated as imports minus exports). Please note that the data in these figures are
an indication of the European ginger market, and that they include both industrial and private consumption. Actual consumption may differ, due to long-term storage of stocks and unregistered trade. In addition, consumption includes the use of ginger in the food processing industry. This fact is important, since a large share of ginger is used in this industry; namely for bakery products (such as gingerbread and cookies), Asian food products and various drinks (e.g. ginger ale or ginger beer).

Figures 2 and 3 illustrate that the most interesting markets for you are the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Germany. You can find a more extensive analysis of the most interesting markets below.

**Figure 2: Leading European importers of dried ginger 2013–2017**

in 1,000 tonnes

![Leading European importers of dried ginger](source)

**Figure 3: Per capita dried ginger consumption by leading importers 2013–2017**

in grams per capita

![Per capita dried ginger consumption](source)
Interesting markets for you as an exporter include the following:

- The Netherlands is the largest importer and trader of ginger in Europe. Its imports have increased significantly in volume by 13% annually between 2013 and 2017. In 2017, 97% of Netherlands imports were sourced directly in developing countries. The country has a high and relatively unstable per capita consumption. Since 2014, consumption increased significantly. This instability and sharp increase could be caused by the country’s important role as a trade hub for intra-European trade, since consumption is calculated as imports minus exports. While consumption is not expected to be that instable, imports and re-exports of ginger varied significantly during the last years, due to stockpiling. The volume of stock is not accounted for in these figures.

- Since the United Kingdom sources 93% of its ginger from developing countries, it is an interesting export market for your products. The country is also the secondlargest importer of ginger in Europe, which could be caused by the relatively substantial population of Asian descent. Its consumption per capita is significantly higher than the European average and has been increasing slightly since 2014.

- Germany is the thirdlargest importer of ginger. Its total imports in volume increased by 14% annually since 2013. The German per capita consumption is slightly higher than the European average.

- France is a large importer of ginger and its imports have increased in volume by 13% annually since 2013. In 2017, the imported volume in France reached 6,400 tonnes.

- Italy is an important trade hub for ginger. Since 2013, imports of ginger in Italy have increased significantly by an annual rate of 39%.

- Spain is a fastgrowing market for ginger. Imports into the country increased by 29% between 2013 and 2017.

- Many other smaller importers are increasingly importing ginger directly from developing countries over the last five years. Examples are Portugal (growing by 33% of imports annually), Austria (25%), Sweden (20%), and Poland (17%).

**Tips:**

- Visit or participate in trade fairs to test whether the market is open to your product, obtain market information and find potential buyers. The most relevant trade fairs in Europe are Food Ingredients Europe, BioFach (for organic products), Anuga and SIAL.

- See our tips on Finding buyers and Doing business for additional information.

Local value addition is becoming more important

European exporters or re-exporters add value to dried ginger by further processing and packaging. However, the processing of ginger is also done in the country of origin. Especially heat treatments, such as steam sterilisation, are becoming an important buyer requirement.

The trend in local value addition is illustrated in Figure 4, which depicts ground ginger as a form of value addition.
Supplies of ground ginger are relatively low (8% of the total ginger imports in 2017) but the volume increased on average by 10% annually between 2013 and 2017.

China has been excluded from the figure, as its supplies are out of proportion compared to the other supplies. Of all ground ginger imported from developing countries, 29% comes from China. However, China still mainly exports whole ginger to Europe.

Several countries have increased their exports of ground ginger to Europe. Between 2013 and 2017 Peru’s exports to Europe increased from 1.4 tonnes to 285 thousand tonnes (+280% annually), Indonesia’s by 45%, Thailand’s by 26% and Burkina Faso’s by 280%.

Tip:
- Explore opportunities to work together with European processors, especially large ones that have the size and resources to invest. You can find these processors in the member lists of national spice associations in Europe. Go to the member section of the European Spice Association (ESA) for an overview of associations.

Search for healthier ingredients
The growing demand for dried ginger on the European market is stimulated by consumers searching for healthier ingredients.

Healthy living is one of the most important trends in Europe. Consumers perceive food ingredients such as salt, sugar and synthetic additives as unhealthy. These products are increasingly replaced by other products that also add flavour, such as spices and herbs.

Consumers use dried ginger for its promoted beneficial effects to health. For example, journals and food bloggers state that the consumption of ginger helps with digestive problems, the flu and stress.
Dried, ground ginger is sold by retailers in the spices segment; for example:

- **REWE in Germany**;
- **Albert Heijn in the Netherlands**.

Due to its popularity, ginger is also increasingly used as a health supplement as well as in other food products such as tea and snacks. Examples are:

- **Ginger root health supplement** at Holland & Barrett (the United Kingdom);
- **Organic ginger tea** at Albert Heijn (the Netherlands);
- **Ginger Nuts (biscuits)** at Morrisons (the United Kingdom).

**Tips:**

- See the website of **Food Ingredients Europe**, an important international trade fair for the food ingredient and health sector in Europe.
- Have a look at the website of **FoodNavigator** to learn more about food health trends and other developments in the food sector.
- Do not make any health claims regarding the consumption of ginger if you cannot use reliable and scientific sources. **European legislation** is very strict in terms of health claims on consumer packaging.
- Be aware of the **buyer requirements for natural ingredients for health products** if you want to sell your ginger as a health product. These buyer requirements are stricter than the requirements for food.

**Growing popularity of ethnic cuisines**

The demand for ethnic food in Europe is rising. Since dried ginger is an important ingredient in Asian dishes, it is becoming increasingly popular on the European market.

Examples of Asian recipes that are popular in Europe and that contain ginger are:

- hot meals such as **“Ginger and Hoisin Glazed Pork”** and **“Ginger Beef Stir-fry”**;
- snacks such as **ginger cookies**, often consumed during the Chinese New Year.

There are two main causes for the increase in the popularity of ethnic cuisines:

- The multicultural population in Europe is growing. In 2014, **20%** of newly immigrated Europeans were of Asian descent.
- Other Europeans are increasingly interested in exotic cuisines. They are linked with the rest of the world through the internet and travelling. They can easily search for Asian recipes online and bring back recipes from their holidays to Asia.

**Tip:**

- See our study of **Trends for spices and herbs** for more information on trends on the European market for spices and herbs.

**Sustainability is on the rise**

Sustainable sourcing is an important trend in Europe, especially in the United Kingdom, the
Netherlands and Germany.

As a supplier, you will be increasingly faced with sustainability requirements from your buyer. Many buyers see sustainable sourcing as a must.

By certifying your ginger, you can proof your compliance with sustainable sourcing. However, certified ginger is still a niche market. It represents only a small section on the total European market for ginger. In addition, most buyers in the mainstream market are unwilling to pay more for certified products. As a result, it is important to discuss the opportunities for certification with your buyers before you become certified.

Certification does give you a competitive edge. For dried ginger, the main certifications are Organic and Fairtrade. For Organic certified ginger, the most interesting markets are Germany and the Netherlands. For Fairtrade certified ginger, the most interesting market is the United Kingdom. However, ginger represents only 3% of all spices and herbs certified by Fairtrade International in Europe (31 tonnes in 2015). Such data are unavailable for organic ginger.

**Tips:**
- Determine whether it is feasible for you to certify your ginger. Can you find enough buyers for your product to offset your investments? You can look for buyers online; for example, on the website of the International Trade Centre or by looking for exhibitors at BioFach, the organic trade fair.
- Work together with European buyers, non-governmental organisations, national or international governmental organisations to make it economically feasible for you to receive certification. Further information is available on websites such as the Sustainable Spice Initiative, the Netherlands Enterprise Agency, the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and Cordaid.
- See our study of Buyer requirements for spices and herbs for additional information on certification standards.
- See our study of Exporting sustainable spices and herbs to Europe for additional information. This document also includes long-term expectations of the market for certified sustainable products.
- See the website of the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) for more information on Organic certification in Europe.

3. Which requirements should dried ginger comply with to be allowed on the European market?

You can only export dried ginger to Europe if you comply with buyer requirements for spices and herbs. Below, you will find more information on requirements that are specific to dried ginger.

**Legal requirements**

When exporting dried ginger to Europe, you have to comply with the following legally binding requirements.

- **Food safety:** traceability, hygiene and control as specified in the General Food Law;
- **mycotoxins contamination:** for ginger, the maximum level of aflatoxin is between 5.0 μg/kg (aflatoxin B1) and 10 μg/kg (total aflatoxin content B1, B2, G1 and G2). For ochratoxin, the maximum level is 15μg/kg;
- **maximum residue levels of pesticides**: if your ginger contains more pesticides than allowed, it will be withdrawn from the European market;
- **microbiological contamination**: your ginger is banned from the market if salmonella is found;
- **food additives and adulteration**: spices and spice blends are rejected by custom authorities if they contain undeclared, unauthorised or excessive levels of extraneous materials;
- **maximum levels of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons** (PAHs): contamination with PAHs stems from bad drying practices;
- **irradiation**: this process is allowed but not commonly used.

European buyers are increasingly requiring their suppliers to use steam sterilisation in order to combat the microbiological contamination of ginger. You could earn a significant premium if you can supply ginger that is sterilised at the source. However, investments in the necessary equipment can be very costly, at up to €1 million.

Research is being conducted into alternatives to steam sterilisation, as this treatment negatively affects the taste of ginger. Currently, it is still the cheapest and safest method to combat microbiological contamination.

**Tips:**
- Check the [Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) database](https://ec.europa.eu/food/food/safety/alerts) for examples of ginger withdrawn from the market and the reasons behind these withdrawals. Withdrawals of ginger do not occur often. However, you should keep in mind that withdrawals can occur and avoid them at all costs. A withdrawal will influence the reputation of your ginger as well as the reputation of your country as a ginger supplier.
- Comply with the requirements listed above. Your buyer will transfer the costs for cleaning contaminated ginger to you if you do not.
- Always discuss with your potential buyers whether they want steam sterilisation. If you cannot sterilise your ginger yourself, look for local sterilisation companies that can provide this service for you.
- Comply with food safety requirements during drying, storage, processing (such as sieving, mixing, grinding or crushing), packaging and transport. If you do not comply, steam sterilisation will not work.
- You also need to prevent contamination with mycotoxins and other contaminants, because steam sterilisation cannot take these substances out.
- Keep up to date on the development of alternatives to steam sterilisation by checking online sources such as [GreenFooDec](https://www.greenfooddec.com).

**Additional requirements**

Consider complying with the following non-legal requirements to ease market access. European buyers can use these requirements as selection criteria.

- **food safety certification as a guarantee**: the most important food safety management systems in Europe are British Retail Consortium ([BRC](https://www.britishretailconsortium.com)), International Featured Standards ([IFS](https://www.ifs-world.org)), Food Safety System Certification 22000 ([FSSC 22000](https://www.fssc22000.com)) and the Safe Quality Food programme ([SQF](https://www.sqf.com)). Always verify your buyer’s preference for a specific food safety management system, as some may prefer one system over the other. For example, BRC is developed by retailers in the United Kingdom and more commonly demanded on this market. If you want to target the United Kingdom, BRC may be more important;
Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR): companies have different requirements for CSR, such as signing their code of conduct or following common standards including the Supplier Ethical Data Exchange (SEDEX), Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) or the Business Social Compliance Initiative code of conduct (BSCI).

Requirements for niche markets

If you want to enter a nice market such as organic or Fairtrade, it is essential that you comply with the following standards.

- sustainable product certification: the major certification systems are Organic, Fair Trade and Rainforest Alliance;
- selfverifiecation: suppliers assess their own compliance with the sustainability code of buyers. Examples include Unilever’s Sustainable Agricultural Code (SAC) or the Olam Livelihood Charter.

Quality requirements

Product quality is a key issue for buyers in Europe. You need to comply with the Quality Minima Document published by the European Spice Association (ESA). This document is leading for the national spice associations affiliated with the ESA and for most key buyers in Europe. The Quality Minima Document specifies the chemical and physical parameters dried that ginger needs to comply with when sold in Europe before crushing and grinding (after drying).

- ash: maximum 8%
- acidinsoluble ash: maximum 2%
- moisture: maximum 12%
- volatile oil: minimum 1.5 ml/100 gr
- SO2: maximum 150 ppm

The ESA has not developed cleanliness specifications. As a result, European buyers often use the specifications for cleanliness stated by the American Spice Trade Association (ASTA).

Tips:

- Check ISO standard 5564-1982 for general guidelines on the grading, handling and packing of ginger.
- Check ESA’s Quality Minima Document for more information on the chemical and physical parameters that your unprocessed ginger needs to comply with when it is sold in Europe.

Labelling requirements

Correct labelling is important for European buyers. To this end, pay extra attention to labelling your product.

For bulk ginger, you have to include the following information:

- the name of the product
- details of the manufacturer (name and address)
- batch number
- date of manufacture
- product grade
- producing country
- harvest date (month-year)
- net weight.
Other information that exporting and importing countries may require include the bar, producer and/or packager code, as well as any extra information that can be used in order to trace the product back to its origin.

**Tip:**
- See our study of the [European market for consumer packed spices and herbs](https://answers.practicalaction.org/ourresources/item/ginger-processing) to find requirements for consumer packaging and labelling. In Europe, there are very strict requirements for the packaging and labelling of consumer products, which differ from the requirements mentioned here.

**Packaging requirements**

For shipping, bulk whole dried ginger roots should be packaged in jute sacks (36-65 kg). It is less common but also possible to pack the roots in wooden boxes or linen corrugated cardboard boxes (60 kg).

Ginger processed in the form of slices or powder is packaged in multi-wall laminated bags of different weights ranging from 1 to 25 kg. Common weight classes are 12.5 kg and 25 kg.

**Tips:**
- Always ask your buyer for their specific packaging requirements.
- Store packaged ginger in a dry, cool place to prevent quality deterioration.
- If you offer Organic certified [ginger](https://answers.practicalaction.org/ourresources/item/ginger-processing), physically separate it from ginger that is not certified.
- See the website of [Practical Actions](https://practicalactions.org) to learn more on improving preharvest handling and processing for ginger.
- Make sure that the materials which you use for packaging are impermeable to moisture and air. Sealing machines can be used to seal the bags.

## 4. What competition do you face on the European market for dried ginger?

Your main competitors are other suppliers from developing countries. In 2017, these suppliers exported 113 thousand tonnes of dried ginger to Europe, accounting for €153 million. Of these imports, 93% was whole ginger.

China is Europe’s main supplier of ginger and also your most important competitor. The country accounted for 79% of all supplies from developing countries to Europe in 2017.

Other suppliers of ginger from developing countries are:
- Peru (11% of total supplies by developing countries in 2017)
- Nigeria (3.2%)
- Brazil (2%)
- Thailand (1.7%).
Peru’s market share has increased significantly, though its supplies are small compared to China. Fresh ginger is an important substitute for dried ginger. Fresh ginger is used for cooking, at home or in restaurants, and in food and beverage manufacturing.

The production of ginger in China is mainly mechanised. Other small suppliers, such as Peru, conduct their production manually. As a result, China is able to produce and export large quantities of ginger compared to the other suppliers from developing countries. This fact makes it difficult to compete with China if you are a smaller supplier. If you want to compete with China, you should be able to:

- deliver stable supplies of ginger, both in quantity and in quality;
- comply with delivery times;
- comply with food safety requirements.

You can also explore opportunities on niche markets such as organic and Fairtrade, or for specific applications such as beverages, which have specific requirements.

If you want to sell your ground ginger to Europe, you are competing directly with European processors. Your buyers could ask you to provide the same service as European re-exporters. You will have to make sure that you comply with their requirements such as short supply times and steam sterilisation.

### Tips:

- See our study of [Competition on the European spices and herbs market](#). Competition on the ginger market does not differ significantly from competition on the market for other spices and herbs.

- Check the harvesting calendars at the website of [Nedspice](#) to understand the different harvesting periods in large producing countries. This information is important to know, as harvesting periods in different ginger-producing countries vary considerably, which has a major impact on your competitive position throughout the year.

- Stay up to date on worldwide harvests and stock levels. Look for crop reports, which are often shared by industry players during specific spice events. [Nedspice](#) and [ITC Trade Map](#) also publish up-to-date information on national and international prices for ginger.

- Explore opportunities to cooperate with European processors, especially large ones that have the size and resources to invest. You can find European processors in the member lists of the national spice association in Europe. See the [member section of the European Spice Association](#) (ESA) for an overview of associations.

- Check the [Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations](#) (FAOSTAT) website for ginger production data.

### 5. Through which channels can you get dried ginger on the European market?

See our study of [Channels and segments on the European market for spices and herbs](#). The channels for ginger do not differ significantly from those for other spices and herbs.

### Tip:

- See our [Tips for finding buyers](#) on the European market for spices and herbs.
6. What are the end-market prices for dried ginger?

Ginger is an annual crop. Its prices fluctuate between one harvesting season and the next. The price of dried ginger also depends on the price of fresh ginger.

In early 2018, dried ginger prices were relatively stable, in combination with ample supply of good quality ginger. In the beginning of 2017, international prices ranged between US$ 6,000 and US$ 7,000 per tonne.

Global market prices for ginger are strongly influenced by the largest producer of both fresh and dried ginger, China. However, traders often prefer ginger from more expensive suppliers in Peru and Brazil, for example. They prefer these suppliers because of their higher quality.

![Figure 5: Indicative price breakdown for ginger](source: ProFound, 2016)

Figure 5 gives an indicative price breakdown for ginger. European retail prices for ginger are much higher than global trade prices. However, exporters from developing countries do not necessarily profit from these trade prices. European processors and retailers add large price margins.

The margins that you can receive as an exporter may differ. These margins are influenced by various factors such as:

- Country of origin;
- Current and expected future harvest situation;
- Quality of the raw material;
- Level of processing;
- Level of demand;
- Trends in prices.

Margins and profits can be higher for you as an exporter if you are able to add value locally. For example, by further processing or certification, you can create a competitive edge and benefit more.

**Tips:**

- See the websites of [Spices Board India](http://spicesboardindia.gov.in), [Nedspice](http://www.nedspice.com) and [ITC Trade Map](http://www.itctrademap.com) for up to date information on national and international prices for ginger.

- Establish longlasting relationships with your buyers. Buyers are willing to pay higher prices to suppliers that are able to help secure supply and comply with delivery times as well as food safety requirements. They will also be more willing to invest in your partnership.

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