



## [Exporting coffee to France](#)

France is a large and mature coffee market with a long tradition of coffee consumption. In recent years, concerns about the effects of caffeine consumption on health have put the French coffee sector under pressure. The larger companies in the sector are mainly focusing on convenient single-serving packaging to maintain French consumer interest in the mainstream market. Meanwhile, smaller companies are developing the specialty coffee market. This offers opportunities to suppliers of green coffee beans who can provide high-quality coffee not requiring blending with coffees from other origins.

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## 1 . Product description

There are two main types of green coffee beans:

- *Coffea arabica*: Plantations are generally at altitudes over 1000 metres, with the coffee referred to as a highland coffee. The average length of coffee beans of this variety is around 9 mm. Their colour is greenish to bluegreen. The coffee beans have a strong, full flavour. Arabica beans have a caffeine content of approximately 1.2%.
- *Coffea robusta*: Robusta coffee can be considered a lowland coffee. Its plantations are below 1000 metres. Robusta beans are small, round and generally brownish to yellowy green. Their beans have a higher water content than Arabica coffee. They generally have a less powerful flavour. Robusta beans have a caffeine content of approximately 2.3%.

### Codes used in customs & international trade

In Europe, the Combined Nomenclature (CN) uses Harmonised System (HS) codes to classify products that are traded. The HS codes for green coffee beans are given below. The available data do not distinguish between conventional and specialty coffees.

Specialty coffee is defined by the Speciality Coffee Association of Europe (SCAE, [integrated into the Specialty Coffee Association \(SCA\) in 2017](#)) as the art of manufacturing a quality cup of coffee, which is judged by the consumer to have a unique quality, characteristic taste and personality,

superior to the common beverages on offer. This beverage consists of coffee beans which have grown at a designated location and have been processed under the highest quality standards for raw processing, roasting, storing, and finally the preparation into a beverage.

| HS Code | Description                            |
|---------|--|
| 090112  | Coffee, not roasted, decaffeinated     |
| 090111  | Coffee, not roasted, not decaffeinated |

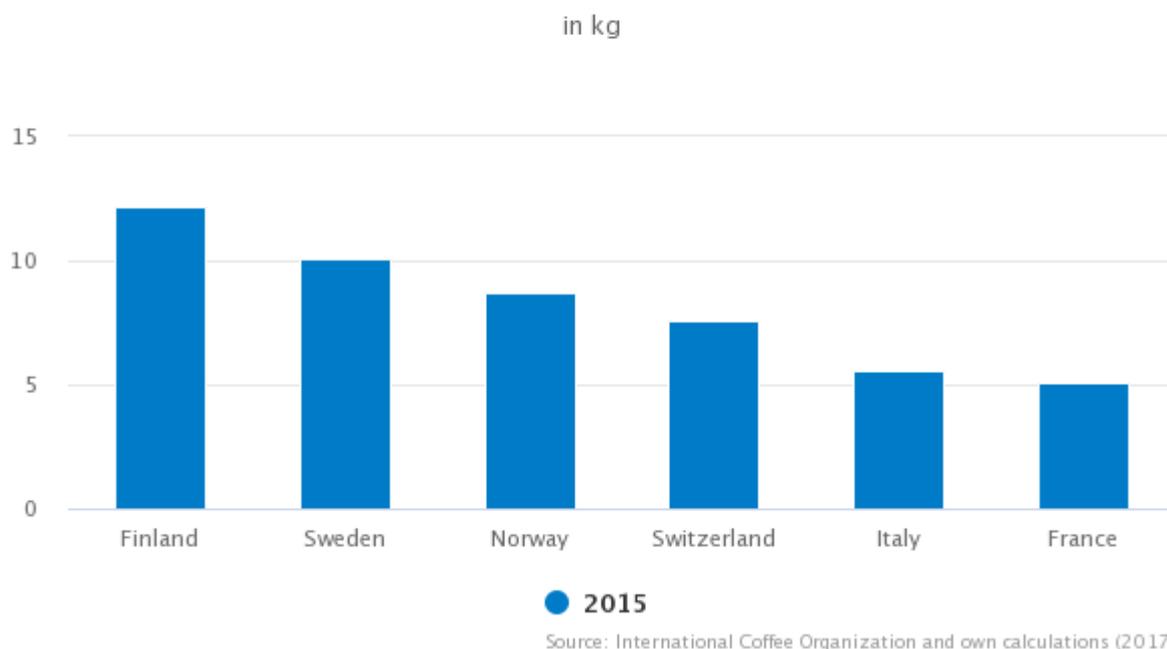
## 2 . What makes France an interesting market for coffee?

### France is a large coffee market in Europe

France, with over 67 million inhabitants, accounted for approximately 13% of total European Union consumption of green coffee in 2015. It consumed around 366 thousand tonnes of green coffee ([5.6 million 60 kg bags](#)). France is the third largest coffee consuming country in Europe, after Germany and Italy ([European Coffee Report, 2017](#)).

[French per capita coffee consumption](#) is close to the European average of 5.41 kg per year. Consumers in France consumed 5.1 kg of coffee per person in 2015 (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Per capita coffee consumption in selected European countries, in kg, 2015 (average consumption in Europe: 5.41 kg per capita / year)



### A new boost to the specialty market in France

In France, the market for specialty coffee ("cafés fins") [follows the developments of more pioneer markets](#) such as the United Kingdom and Scandinavia. The [share of specialty coffees is 1-2% of the country's total coffee market](#). In spite of representing a small niche in France, specialty coffees have great potential for growth, mimicking the well-established wine sector - in terms of increasing attention to elements such as origin, *terroir*, production, preparation, etc. In 2017, the association of French coffee roasters estimated an annual increase in sales of *terroir* coffees at 30% ([Les Journées de Café, 2017](#)).

Small artisanal roasters, coffee enthusiasts and coffee festivals (e.g. [Le 1er Coffee Fest Français](#)

and [Les Journées du Café](#)) play an important role in promoting specialty coffees and in expanding this segment in France. The number of coffee shops where coffee is roasted on a small scale increased from 850 in 2010 to 1,060 in 2017 ([Comité Français du Café](#), 2018). Small roasters often use online blogs to tell the stories behind their specialty coffees, educate consumers about origins and to share their coffee passion.

Some specialty roasters such as [Mokxa](#) and [Lomi](#) provide barista workshops to train coffee enthusiasts in the art of preparing specialty coffee. These baristas frequently establish coffee shops where they brew specialty coffees and tell the stories behind their coffees to consumers.

### Tips:

- When communicating with your (potential) buyer, provide information such as the origin of the coffee beans, *terroir*, exact place of production, agro-climatic conditions, methods, people, culture, local benefits for the producers, tradition, artisanal quality, labour involved, seasonality, etc.
- Read the blog of [Bongoo Café](#) to learn [how small artisanal roasters in France promote their specialty coffees](#).

## Declining coffee consumption due to health concerns

Between 2015 and 2017, French coffee consumption declined from [163 thousand tonnes to 161 thousand tonnes](#). Health concerns largely explain the decrease in coffee sales. Many consumers have concerns about caffeine in coffee and the effects of caffeine on their health. The French coffee union sponsored scientific research on the relation between coffee and health to generate and disseminate knowledge on this topic.

### Tip:

- Learn more about the relation between coffee and health on the [website Science & Coffee](#).

## Consumers are switching from fresh-ground coffee to coffee capsules

A decrease in sales of standard fresh-ground coffee largely explains the general decrease in coffee consumption. A growing number of French people living in cities tend to consume meals on the go. They consume fewer traditional products, such as fresh-ground coffee during breakfast at home.

Instead, French consumers are drinking more coffee away from home. Sales of coffee beans, fresh-ground coffee capsules and instant coffee are thus increasing slightly. The chapter on market channels provides more information on out-of-home consumption.

Demand for convenience products is stimulating sales of coffee pods and instant coffee. Coffee capsules are the fastest growing category in the coffee market in France. Between 2015 and 2017, the [share of pods and capsules in total sales increased from 26% to 30%](#). In 2017, 8 out of 10 French consumers had drunk coffee from capsules ([France televisions](#), 2017). With a market share of 85%, Nestlé dominated the capsules market with its brand Nespresso.

### Tip:

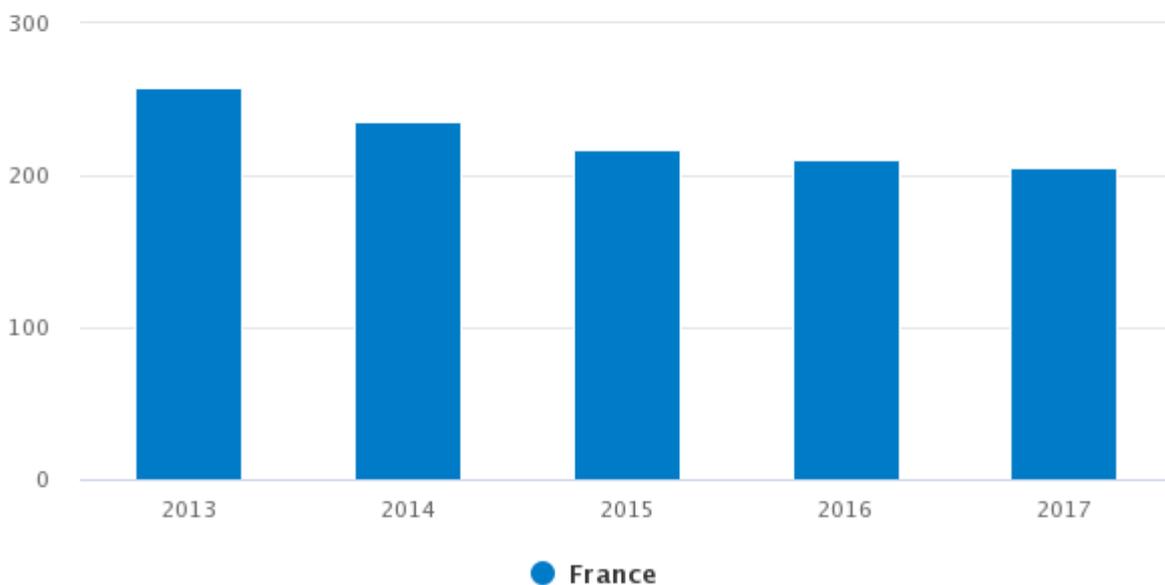
- It is generally not viable to export roasted coffee (in capsules or pods). Instead, build a relation with roasters who manufacture this type of coffees and learn about their requirements.

## Declining imports reflect a decrease in consumption

France is the fifth largest importer of green coffee beans in Europe, with a share of 6%. Total French imports of green coffee beans in 2017 amounted to 205 thousand tonnes (€ 534 million). Between 2013 and 2017, imports decreased by 6% annually.

Figure 2: Imports of green coffee beans to the Netherlands

in 1.000 tonnes



Source: Eurostat, 2019

The main coffee port in France, and one of the most important in Europe, is Le Havre. It is located at the mouth of the River Seine. Many coffee importers are located here.

### Tips:

- Visit the website of the [Port Le Havre](#) to learn more about its facilities and potential trade partners based there.
- Explore opportunities to work together with French importers, whether they are traders or roasters. Check out the [members](#) of the French coffee association [Syndicat Francais du Cafe](#). The association represents key industry players and represents more than 85% of the coffee market in France.
- Exporting coffee to France means that you have to be proactive and take your business seriously. Approach traders (use internet, use [LinkedIn](#)), communicate correctly and respond to emails. Set realistic expectations and act as you say. Send corresponding samples and batches. For more tips, refer to [Top 10 Tips for Doing Business with European Coffee Buyers](#).

## France is not a trade hub for green coffee beans

The role of France as a trade hub in Europe is limited. France is the ninth largest re-exporter of green coffee beans in Europe. In 2017, France accounted for only 0.8% of European re-exports. The re-exports amounted to 5.7 thousand tonnes (€ 16 million).

### Tip:

- See our study on [trade statistics for coffee](#) for more information on Europe's coffee trade dynamics. Or explore databases such as [Eurostat](#) and the [International Trade Centre](#) to gain a better understanding of trade flows between European countries and your own country.

## Increasing sustainability certification

Sustainability labels, such as Fairtrade, UTZ Certified / Rainforest Alliance and organic labels are gaining importance in France. To meet consumer demand, a growing number of brands, like Malongo, Maison du Café Royal Café, Meo, Lavazza and Illy, comply with sustainable certifications. This is also the case for French retailers such as Auchan, foreign retailers such as Lidl, Migros, Hema and Ikea, as well as coffee chains like Starbucks.

Fairtrade is the best known sustainability label among French consumers. In 2016, the [turnover of Fairtrade France from sales of Fairtrade coffee amounted to € 274 million](#). The sustainability labels UTZ and Rainforest Alliance do not play an equally strong role as in countries such as the Netherlands and Belgium. None of the mainstream supermarkets in France [have an UTZ certification](#) for coffee. However, UTZ works with [Jacobs Douwe Egberts, Lavazza, Nestlé and Système U](#), amongst others, to increase their sales of various products including coffee.

### Tips:

- Learn more about sustainability standards in France under the section below on Sustainable Sourcing.
- Consult the website of the [Global Coffee Platform](#) to learn more about global sustainability efforts.
- Promote sustainable and ethical aspects of your production process. Support claims with certification. See our study on [doing business with European buyers of coffee](#) for more tips on marketing and promotional aspects of your coffee.
- Contact [Fairtrade \(Max Havelaar\) France](#), the French labelling initiative for Fairtrade if you want to learn more about opportunities for Fairtrade certified coffee on the French market.

## 3 . What requirements should coffee comply with to be allowed on the French market?

Compared to other European countries, buyers in France have similar quality requirements. However, the specialty coffee roasters often show more interest in the terroir of coffees than buyers in other countries. You can find a detailed analysis of the requirements shared by buyers in

different European countries in our study on [buyer requirements for coffee](#).

## Legal requirements

You must follow the European Union legal requirements applicable to coffee. These mainly deal with food safety. Traceability and hygiene are the most important themes. Special attention should be given to specific sources of contamination. Pesticides, mycotoxins and *Salmonella* (although coffee is considered low-risk) are the most common for green coffee beans. France applies the same legal requirements as other European Union countries.

## Quality criteria for coffee

Green coffee beans can be classified using two methods:

- [the Specialty Coffee Association \(SCA\) green coffee grading protocols](#)
- [the Brazilian/New York green coffee classification](#) (applicable to Brazilian coffee only)

Grading is usually based on the following criteria:

- Altitude and/or region
- Botanical variety
- Preparation (wet or dry process, washed or natural)
- Bean size (screen size), sometimes also bean shape and colour
- Number of defects (imperfections)
- Roast appearance and cup quality (flavour, characteristics, cleanliness)
- Density of the beans.

Higher quality coffee (specialty coffee) is graded according to a cupping score. Fragrance, flavour, aftertaste, balance, acidity, sweetness, uniformity and cleanliness are important topics in the grading process (see below for more information).

The definition of specialty coffee has not been formally established within the coffee industry. A cupping score below 80 is considered standard quality and not specialty. This is in line with the Coffee Quality Institute, which states that [coffee graded and cupped with scores above 80 are considered specialty coffees](#). The [cupping protocols of the Specialty Coffee Association](#) also consider a score of 80 as being below specialty quality. However, the exact minimum scores defining specialty coffee differ per country and buyer. Some buyers consider 80 as too low and demand a cupping score of 85 or higher.

### Tips:

- See the website of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) for [more information about grading coffee](#).
- Do you sell specialty coffee? It is important for buyers to know what the cupping score of your coffee is. Learn more about cupping scores at the website of the [Specialty Coffee Association](#) (SCA). You can also consider getting a [Q-grader certificate](#) to be able to cup and score your Arabica coffee through small and taste according to international standards. If you also produce and/or export Robusta coffees, [it's also possible to become an R-grader](#).

## Labelling requirements

Labels of coffee exported to France should contain the following information in order to ensure traceability of individual batches:

- Product name

- [International Coffee Organisation \(ICO\) identification code](#)
- Country of origin
- Grade
- Net weight in kg
- *Certified coffee*: name/code of the inspection body and certification number.

Use the English language for labelling, unless your buyer has indicated otherwise.

Photo: Example of labelling



Source: [Homeroastcoffee.com](http://Homeroastcoffee.com)

## Packaging requirements

Green coffee beans are sensitive to water absorption. They are therefore transported in woven bags made from natural fibre (jute or hessian). These allow free air circulation.

Most green coffee beans of standard quality imported into France are packed in container-sized bulk flexi-bags. These hold roughly 20 tonnes of green coffee beans. The rest of the green coffee is transported in traditional 60-kilo jute sacks, which will have a net volume of around 17–19 tonnes of coffee.

Materials such as [Grainpro](#) or other innovative materials can be used to pack specialty coffees.

### Tips:

- Check the website of the [International Jute Study Group \(IJSG\)](#) for manufacturing specifications of jute bags for the food industry (IJO Standard 98/01). Take these specifications into account when exporting to Europe.
- Learn [how to calculate the cupping score of your coffee](#) at the website of the Specialty Coffee Association (SCA).
- Ensure preservation of the coffee quality. Thoroughly clean and fumigate containers before loading the beans. Protect the cargo from moisture during loading, to avoid mould. Ensure appropriate temperature, humidity/moisture and ventilation conditions during processing and transportation. Protect the cargo from pests such as beetles and moths. Prevent contamination of beans by foreign materials (such as dust) by keeping facilities and equipment clean.

## Additional requirements

### Certified food safety management

Some coffee buyers might also require exporters to have a quality or food safety management system in place. These systems are based on hazard analysis and critical control points ([HACCP](#)). Examples of more demanding food safety management systems are [ISO 22000](#), [International Featured Standards: Food \(IFS\)](#) or [British Retail Consortium \(BRC\)](#). Adherence to these standards is however more commonly required for exporters of roasted coffee beans.

#### Tips:

- Familiarise yourself with food safety and quality management systems (QMS). Read more about HACCP and health control at the [EU Trade Helpdesk](#) and on [the website of the European Commission](#). Read more about how to manage HACCP for coffee on the website of [International Trade Centre: Coffee Guide](#).
- Coffee exporters might also find it useful to refer to the website of [SGS](#), the world's leading inspection, verification, testing and certification company, for further information on HACCP and other food safety standards.
- Read more on the different Food Safety Management Systems at the [ITC Standards Map](#).

### Corporate responsibility

French buyers may expect you to comply with their supplier codes of conduct regarding social responsibility. These are often based on the [ILO labour standards](#). The adoption of those standards is most common among large-scale importers, roasters, manufacturers and retailers, such as [Starbucks](#) and [Nespresso](#).

#### Tips:

- Look for sector or joint company initiatives to further understand the sustainability strategies in France. Search for initiatives that match your own core strategy and values.
- Check whether you can adhere to the guidelines laid down in the industry agreements. They can be a good starting point if you want to certify products. Consider participating or visiting roundtable meetings (via conference call) or seminars to meet industry players and other interesting stakeholders.

### Sustainable sourcing

Sustainability covers environmental, economic and social aspects, including health and safety issues. Many leading roasters in the French coffee market have a sustainability strategy, including [Jacobs Douwe Egberts](#), [Nespresso](#) and [Lavazza](#).

In the mainstream coffee market, the most relevant certification schemes and consumer labels for sustainable sourcing are:

- [Rainforest Alliance: Sustainable Agriculture Network](#) (merged with [UTZ](#) in 2017)
- [4C \(the Common Code for the Coffee Community\)](#), which is a verification rather than certification scheme and which was [acquired in 2018 by MEO Carbon Solutions](#)
- [C.A.F.E. Practices](#)

- [Nespresso AAA](#).

UTZ Certified merged with Rainforest Alliance in 2017. The certification schemes will continue under the name Rainforest Alliance. Rainforest Alliance addresses sustainability of the mainstream market and is by far the main consumer label in the global coffee market. In France, some major companies selling coffee from Rainforest Alliance certified farms include [McDonalds](#), [Jacques Vabre](#), [Nespresso](#), [Lavazza](#) and [Bristot](#).

### Tips:

- Before engaging in the aforementioned sustainable-sourcing schemes, verify with your (potential) buyer(s) whether they are required and/or whether they will provide you with a competitive advantage over other suppliers to the French market.
- See the list of [UTZ registered coffee actors in France](#) to identify interesting players and learn who is certified and thus qualified to buy your UTZ-certified coffee.
- Consult sustainability strategies of important coffee companies active in France. They dictate the certification market back to the level of the producer (see section below “Sustainability initiatives of individual companies”).
- Try to combine audits if you work with more than one certification scheme. The combination of audits can save time and money. Also investigate the possibilities for group certification with other producers and exporters in your region.
- Learn more about individual sustainable-sourcing schemes by referring to their individual websites, and/or to CBI’s [Buyer Requirements for Coffee](#).

## Requirements for niche markets

Compliance with certification standards focusing on strict and/or specific sustainability principles provides access to niche segments of the coffee market.

### Organic certification

Organic certification is not a legal requirement for coffee. However, marketing a product as “organic” in the French market requires compliance with the [European Union’s legislation](#) for organic production and labelling.

The market for organic coffee is growing, but still accounts for only a small share of the total coffee market in France. This reflects the relatively low demand for organic food and beverages in France when compared to Germany or Scandinavia.

### Tips:

- Implementing organic production and becoming certified can be expensive, especially for smallholders. In the current market the return on investment may not be high. On the other hand it can increase yields and improve quality. Consult your (potential) buyer(s) in order to verify whether organic certification is required by them.
- There are several different organic labels. The labels that fall under umbrella organisation International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements ([IFOAM](#)) [harmonised](#) to a great extent.
- Learn more about the French national logo for organic products on the website of [AB \(Agriculture Biologique\)](#).

- Consult the [ITC Standards Map](#) database for the different organic labels and standards.
- Search for a certification body whose standards are recognised by the European Union. This will ensure that your organic certification is recognised. The European Commission's [Agriculture and Rural Development website](#) provides a thorough explanation of import regulations and other related issues.

### Fair trade certification

French consumers appreciate corporate social responsibility (CSR) of coffee companies. Fair-trade certification is widely recognised as proof that a company is taking social responsibility in the supply chain. After certification by an independent third party, you are allowed to put the logo of the respective fair-trade scheme on your product. In addition, you can benefit from a price premium and you are protected from price collapses through establishment of minimum prices by the independent scheme owner.

- [Fairtrade International](#) is the leading certification scheme for fair trade. Products which carry the Fairtrade label indicate that producers are paid a Fairtrade Minimum Price. The current minimum prices and premiums for coffee, whether organic-certified or conventional, can be found in the [Fairtrade Minimum Price and Fairtrade Premium Table](#).
- Other fair-trade standards available are [Fair Trade Ecocert](#) and IMO's [Fair for Life](#).

### Biodiversity-focused certification

Besides the organic and fair-trade certification schemes, there are multiple certification standards that focus on biodiversity:

- [Demeter](#): a biodynamic certification label and regarded as the highest grade of organic farming in the world
- [SMBC Bird Friendly](#) certifications
- [Forest Garden Products certification](#).

Above niche sustainability concepts are still in their infancy in France. Consumer recognition of these concepts is very low.

### Tips:

- Before engaging in a fair-trade or other sustainability certification programme, make sure to check (in consultation with your potential buyer) whether there is sufficient demand for this label in your target market and whether it will be cost-beneficial for your product.
- Besides certification, transparency of the supply chain is an asset in the specialty segment. Communicate a traceable and clear, direct link between producer and consumer.

## 4 . What competition do you face on the French coffee market?

### Saturated market

France is a mature coffee market and total coffee consumption is declining. This reduces opportunities for suppliers. Especially new suppliers will find it difficult to gain entry to the French market. Most large roasters have a list of preferred suppliers. They are only interested in buying from new suppliers when their existing suppliers cannot deliver on their request.

Opportunities in the specialty market

The emergence of small and medium-sized roasters in the French market, such as [Belleville](#), [Les Comptoir Thé Café](#) and [Caffee Cataldi](#), can open up opportunities for suppliers of speciality coffee. These companies must distinguish themselves from larger roasters and are looking for suppliers who can meet their specific requirements in terms of cupping scores and terroir.

Competition in the specialty market focuses less on price and much more on unique qualities. The market is only accessible to suppliers who can prove that the unique quality of their coffee is related to the conditions under which their beans are grown. This requires transparency about supply chains and investments in relationships with buyers. Specialty coffee buyers must be able to tell a rich story about specialty coffee.

Small-scale trade in micro-lots is inherent to the specialty market. This provides opportunities for small-scale coffee growers who cannot meet the volume requirements of conventional importers.

## Six main suppliers dominate the market

Brazil, Vietnam, Honduras, Colombia, Ethiopia and Uganda are the main suppliers to France. Between 2013 and 2017, these suppliers increased their share in imports from 50% to 68%.

Brazil consolidated its position as leading supplier to France in terms of both volume and value at around 25% of total French imports. Brazil is a large supplier of both Robusta and Arabica varieties.

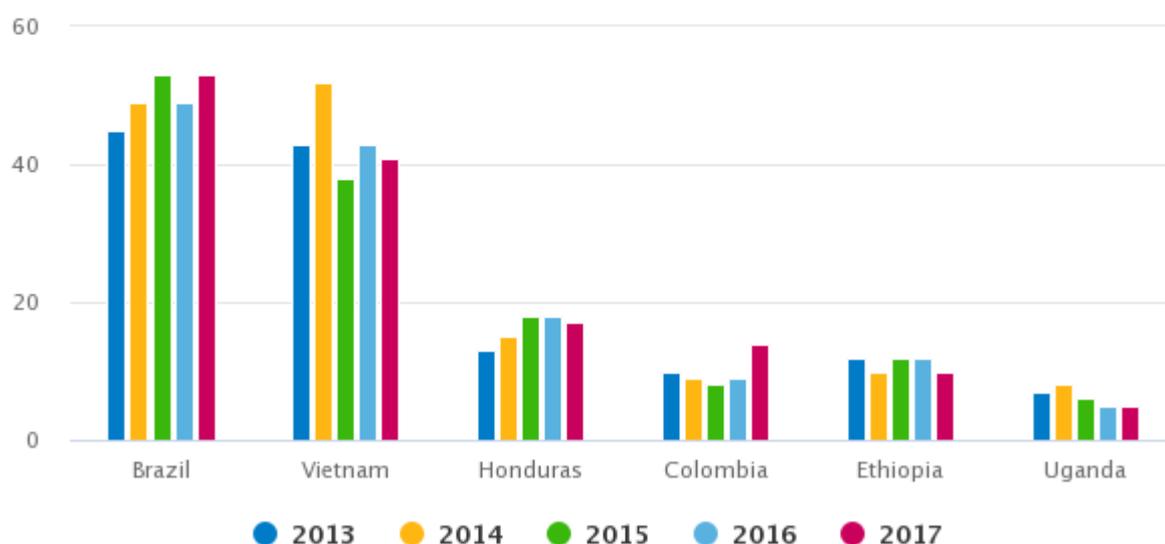
Supplies from Vietnam fluctuated. After an impressive 23% increase in 2014, Vietnamese supplies dropped even harder in 2015. In the years after (2016 and 2017) supplies stabilised at the 2013 level. In 2018, Vietnamese coffee production consisted of 95% Robusta coffee and 5% Arabica.

Supplies from Honduras to France increased at high annual rates of 7% in volume and 11% in value between 2013 and 2017.

Colombian supplies increased at an average annual rate of 8% in volume and 12% in value between 2013 and 2017. This represents an [increase in coffee production and exports](#) from Colombia. Read this article to learn more about the [incentives given to Colombian farmers to boost the industry](#).

Figure 3: Main developing country suppliers of green coffee to France

in 1,000 tonnes



Source: Eurostat, 2019

## Tips:

- Refer to our [10 tips for doing business with European coffee buyers](#) and tips for [finding buyers for coffee](#) for more information on market entry strategies. A wide variety of coffee and/or company characteristics can attract smaller roasters, particularly those who are looking to buy from the original source.
- Identify your potential competitors and learn from them in terms of marketing (website, social media, trade fair participation), product characteristics (origin, quality) and value addition (certifications and processing techniques). Wellstructured websites where you can learn from your competitors include [O'Coffee \(Brazil\)](#), [Bourbon Specialty Coffees \(Brazil\)](#) and [La Meseta \(Colombia\)](#).
- Define your unique selling points and what you have to offer to French buyers. This depends for a large part on the type and quality of your coffee, as well on the quantities you have available for export.
- Build a strong story to promote your company. When based on substantiated facts, a good story can help a supplier in gaining the trust of a (potential) buyer and in creating a long-term trade relationship. Read the [story of Nordic Approach on their Colombian coffees](#) to learn how to build a strong story.
- Learn more about the profile of smaller roasters in France, such as [Belleville](#), [Caffee Cataldi](#), [Darboven](#), [Lobodis](#) and [Meo](#).

## 5 . Which channels can you use to put coffee on the French market?

### Market segments

The French coffee sector can be divided into two segments: in-home consumption and out-of-home consumption.

#### In-home consumption

In most European countries, including France, retail sales for in-home consumption generally account for most of the overall market. Retailers account for [82% of total coffee consumption](#) in France. The market for in-home consumption is becoming increasingly diverse as a result of new, innovative coffee consumption methods such as coffee pads and cups. [Nestlé](#), [Jacob Douwe Egberts](#) and [Lavazza](#) are the largest players on the mainstream market for in-home coffee consumption.

The French retail market is highly concentrated. Large grocery retailers E.Leclerc (21% market share), Carrefour (20%), Intermarché (15%), Casino (12%), Systeme U Group (11%) and Auchan (10%) dominate the retail market ([Statista](#), 2017).

#### Out-of-home consumption

Out-of-home consumption accounts for 18% of total coffee consumption. The out-of-home consumption segment mainly consists of offices, coffee bars and restaurants. Major players in this segment include [Segafredo](#) and [Café Richard](#).

The coffee culture in France has a long tradition and cafés have always been a gathering place for people to meet. Despite the preference for home consumption, cafés are still very popular among French consumers. Besides the traditional cafés in France revolving around French coffee, the country has seen a rapid rise in specialty coffee shops in recent years. The coffee movement is predominately present in the capital Paris, where specialty coffee shops like [Ten Belles](#), [Hollybelly](#) and [Télescope](#) bring different tastes and types of coffee to the French consumer.

Large international chains, such as Segafredo, McCafé and Starbucks, are on the rise. Segafredo

has [600 coffee shops](#), McCafé has 176 and Starbucks has 95 in France. Starbucks is expected to grow even more in France ([Business Insider, 2015](#)). Nevertheless, smaller coffee houses and cafés are more popular. Overall, France now has about 515 branded coffee stores, such as [Columbus Café](#) and [Café Richard](#).

### Segmentation by quality

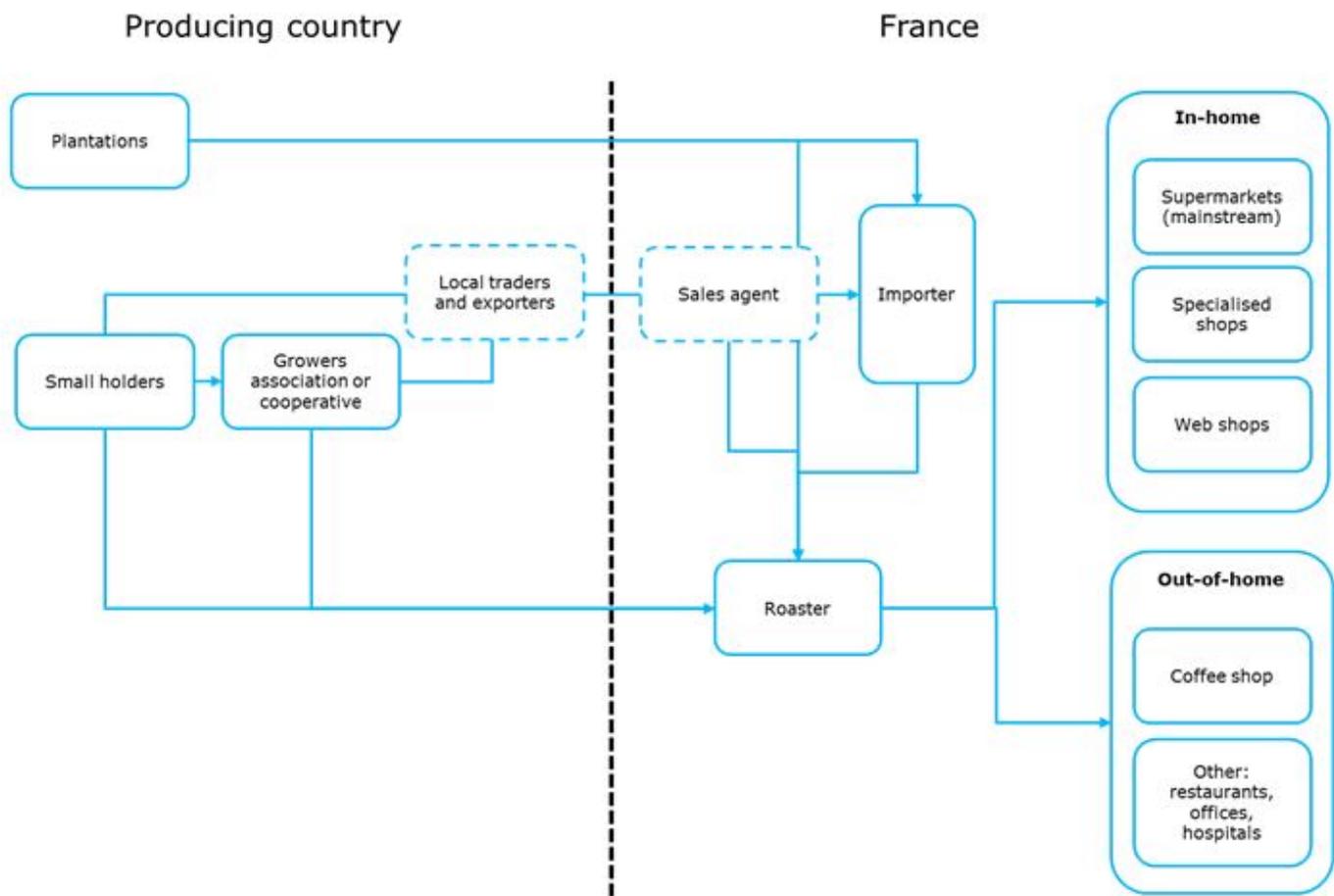
The coffee market can also be segmented according to quality (e.g. the percentage of high quality Arabica coffees in blends, single origins, micro-lots, marketing aspects, etc.) and related prices (see the section on prices below). The French market reflects the segments found on the European market (see our study on [channels and segments in the European coffee sector](#)): upper-end, middle range and lower-end segments. Both in-home and out-of-home consumption of coffee incorporate these segments.

#### Tips:

- Are you interested in exporting high quality coffee? Learn more about cupping scores at the website of the [Speciality Coffee Association](#) (SCA). You can also consider getting a [Q-grader certificate](#) to be able to cup and score your Arabica coffee through small and taste according to international standards. If you also produce and/or export Robusta coffees, [it's also possible to become an R-grader](#).
- Learn more about the coffee culture in France on the website of [Café de Flore](#).
- Learn more about the coffee movement in Paris on the website of [Mondomulia](#), a specialty coffee guide to Paris.

## Market channels

Figure 4: Market channels for coffee in France



Imports of green coffee beans mainly enter France via the port of Le Havre, where most importers, agents and some roasters are located. Nice is another important port for coffee imports. Considerable quantities also enter the French market through Belgium, Germany and other European countries that re-export part of their coffee imports to France.

Are you an exporter of green coffee beans? And can you offer higher volumes of 10 containers or more? You should look into entering the French market through large importing companies. Several large coffee importers are based in France. Examples are:

- [BELCO](#)
- [Maison P Jobin & Cie](#)
- [Olivier Langlois](#).

These importers cover a wide range of qualities, varieties and certifications. Some focus exclusively on speciality green coffee beans (thus requiring high-quality beans).

France also has importers who specialise in ethical products, including coffee. Normally these focus on specific organic and fair-trade markets. Examples of specialised French importers are:

- [Alter Eco](#)
- [Ethiquable](#).

If you offer bulk green coffee beans of standard quality, you can also explore supplying large roasting companies directly. The largest coffee roaster in France is [Nestlé France](#). Other large roasters operating in France are:

- [Jacobs Douwe Egberts](#)
- [Lavazza](#)
- [Segafredo Zanetti](#)
- [Meo](#)
- [Darboven](#).

Targeting smaller roasters directly is also a possibility. The number of speciality roasters sourcing

in the countries of origin is increasing. Smaller speciality roasters normally focus on higher quality green coffee beans, and on the speciality market. They give special attention to long-term partnerships and are particularly interested to know the history of the producer and cooperative. Whereas some small roasters import directly, others make use of existing French importers such as BELCO or those based in other countries such as [Nordic Approach](#) (Norway), for example [Placid Roasters](#). Examples of specialised French roasters that import directly are:

- [Coffea](#)
- [Café Brasilia](#)
- [Belleville](#)
- [Esperanza](#) (importing through importers collective [Roasters United](#)).

Several importing roasters in France specialise in ethical products, including coffee. These roasters usually focus on specific organic and fair trade markets. Examples of specialised French roasters are:

- [Lobodis](#)
- [Cafés Errel](#)
- [Malongo](#)
- [SATI Cafés](#).

Is your experience with entering new markets limited? You could sell your coffee beans to an agent who functions as an intermediary between you and the importer or roaster. However, once you have established a trade relationship through an agent, you can no longer establish a direct relationship with a buyer. The sales network of the agent is protected by law.

### Tips:

- Consider which entry channel is most suitable for your company: directly to coffee roasters, through an importer or trader, or through an agent or broker.
- Focus on traders and roasters who also import coffee directly from origin. Consider the use of agents representing importing companies if you represent a company which is not yet known by the larger importers. Contact importers such as the ones mentioned above to check whether they have representation in your country.
- Target specific market segments depending on the quality of your green coffee and your volume capacities. If you have very high-quality micro-lots, consider the possibilities to link up with high-end small roasters. If you work with bulk coffees, discuss certification and linkages to larger roasters operating on the mainstream market.
- Be consistent, punctual and reliable. This is essential when doing business in France. Reply in time to enquiries by possible buyers (within 48 hours). Be open and realistic and do not make promises that you cannot keep. See our [tips on doing business with European coffee](#) buyers for more information.
- Use our study on [how to find buyers on the European coffee market](#) to get into contact with French buyers.
- See the website of [France's national chapter in the Specialty Coffee Association \(SCA\)](#) to learn more about events and publications about France's speciality coffee market. You can also use the website to get into contact with importers and roasters focusing on this segment.

## 6 . What are the end-market prices for coffee?

The end-market prices for coffee vary depend on which segment of the market is targeted. Our study on [channels and segments in the European coffee sector](#) provides an overview of the upper-end, middle range and lower-end in the coffee retail market and their main characteristics. Typically, export prices of green coffee only account for around 5-25% of the end-market prices, depending on the coffee quality, the size of the lot and the supplier's relationship with the buyer.

These are price ranges for the French coffee market:

- Upper-end (specialty coffee): €71.80 per kg (Café Prestige Yémen Rayyan- 250 gram packaging); €42.25 per kg (Jamaïque - Blue Mountain Grains of Meo - roasted beans in 250 gram packaging); €46.00 per kg (Buziraguhindwa from Placid Roasters - roasted beans in 25 gr packaging)
- Middle range: €19.20 per kg (Café Assemblage Réveil Matin - roasted beans in 250 gram packaging); €15.56 per kg (Bio Max Havelaar Grains of SATI Cafés - roasted beans in 250 gram packaging); €14.69 per kg (Café a l'Italienne - roasted beans in 1 kg packaging);
- Lower-end: €4.20 per kg (Le Grand Classique of Carrefour - filter coffee in 250 gram packaging); €10.40 per kg (Pur Arabica - filter coffee in 250 gram packaging).

Sources: [Coffea](#), [SATI Cafés](#), [Meo](#), [Carrefour](#)

### Tip:

- Monitor end consumer prices of coffee to get an idea on price ranges. Good sources for price information are the websites of supermarket chains (such as [Carrefour](#)) and speciality coffee web shops (such as [Coffea](#)).

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