

The European market potential for chia seeds

Nutritional and health properties have made chia seeds popular in Europe, giving it excellent marketing value and a good fit in many special diets. However, it is still a niche ingredient and high risk in terms of fluctuating availability and profit margins. Most direct import is made by German and Dutch traders. New product launches and innovation throughout Europe are necessary to secure its future growth.

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1. Product description

Chia (*Salvia hispanica*) is a plant native to Southern Mexico and Guatemala. Its seeds are speckled blackish-brown and white, have a faint nutty aroma and a crunchy texture. The black-brown seeds are dominant, but with careful selection it is also possible to cultivate only white seeds.

Chia seeds do not grow in Europe. They are primarily produced in Latin America and Australia. There is emerging production in some African countries as well, such as Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania. Chia seeds are all generally the same, with the exception of those from Nicaragua, where the cultivated seeds are smaller and blacker than in other parts of the world.

Chia seeds are oilseeds rich in omega-3 fatty acids, protein and fibre. They can be used as seeds or processed into crushed seeds, oil, as well as defatted flour or extracted protein. Chia is considered a [novel food](#) and the defatted flour is formally not yet allowed to be imported as a foodstuff in Europe.

You can find chia seeds used in Europe as:

- an ingredient in food in pastry, bread products, yoghurts, fruit jellies and dressings
- a nutritional supplement
- a base for beverages

Because of the novel food status and lack of scientific food safety evidence, the [maximum daily consumption recommended by the European Commission is 15 g per day](#). The use of chia in products is also restricted.

Table 1: Authorised use of chia seeds and products thereof

Authorised novel food	Conditions under which the novel food may be used	
	<i>Specified food category</i>	<i>Maximum levels</i>
Chia seeds (<i>Salvia hispanica</i>)	Bread products	5% whole or ground chia seeds
	Baked products	10% whole chia seeds

	Breakfast cereals	10% whole chia seeds
	Fruit, nut and seed mixes	10% whole chia seeds
	Fruit juice and fruit-vegetable blend beverages	15 g per day for addition of whole, mashed or ground chia seeds
	Pre-packed chia seed as such	15 g per day whole chia seeds
	Fruit spreads	1% whole chia seeds
	Yoghurt	1.3 g whole chia seeds per 100 g of yoghurt or 4.3 g whole chia seeds per 330 g of yoghurt (one serving)
	Sterilised ready-to-eat meals based on cereal grains, pseudo cereal grains and pulses	5% whole chia seeds
Chia oil from <i>Salvia hispanica</i>	Fats and oils	10%
	Pure chia oil	2 g per day
	Food Supplements as defined in Directive 2002/46/EC	2 g per day

Source: [European Food Safety Authority](#)

Important: [Extended uses for chia in heated products are currently not approved](#) due to concerns of acrylamide. The use for chia in heated products will likely be re-assessed, which can have consequences for the use of chia in, for example, bakery products.

It is difficult to obtain accurate market statistics on chia seeds. There is no specific Harmonised System (HS) or other code applicable to chia seeds. The European product code HS 12079996 for 'other oilseeds' proves to be relatively reliable for imports from the main chia producing countries.

2. What makes Europe an interesting market for chia?

Chia consumption has increased significantly after its introduction in Europe. Although the hype has passed, Europe has an enormous potential in food innovation, which can help further develop the market for chia.

Chia trade back to normal after booming introduction

The European market opened up for chia seeds after they were authorised to be marketed in Europe in 2009. The initial global hype resulted in an enormous oversupply, forcing larger quantities of chia onto international markets and making the initial high returns disappear. From now on, expect the chia market to follow a steadier development, meaning you must be prepared to comply with higher standards and more competitive prices.

Imports of chia from the known production countries quickly increased from an estimated 3.5 thousand tonnes in 2012 to 13.2 thousand tonnes in 2015 to 17.8 thousand tonnes in 2018. The surplus production in 2014 resulted in a build-up of stocks, both in origin and in destination markets. As a result, trade prices have dropped and remained generally low since.

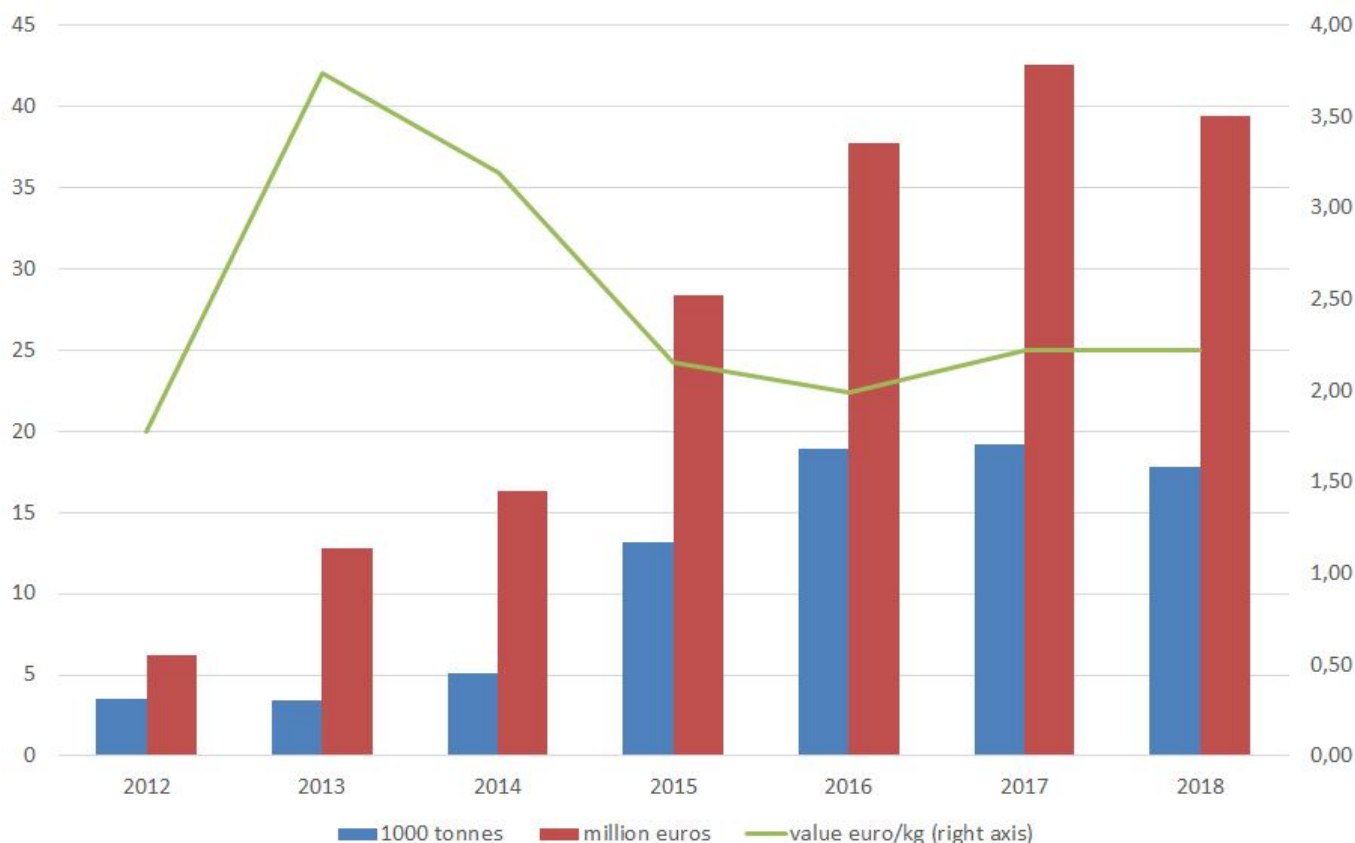
In trade statistics, European imports of chia decreased in 2018 for the first time. The chia buzz may be over, but according to active chia buyers, the forecast is still positive. However, there are also several companies in Europe that stepped out of the chia business due to the many problems in sourcing quality chia and the difficulty in finding a stable market. Another possible reason for the lower import volume is the continuing influence of droughts on South American agriculture, especially in Bolivia.

Chia is a relatively new ingredient in Europe, so you can expect the consumption to increase over time. Many professionals dealing with chia have tried to quantify the potential of chia, but there is no single truth to it.

When comparing chia to other trendy products or nutritious seeds, there is still room for growth. For example, quinoa has reached 26 thousand tonnes of imports into Europe in 2018, and linseeds (a much cheaper bulk product but with similar characteristics as chia seeds) had an import volume of 650 thousand tonnes. The true potential of chia in Europe will depend on its applicability and the marketing efforts of food brands. For example, food applications for quinoa are more extensive and yield higher consumption volumes than for chia. Linseed in turn is cheap enough to be applied outside the food industry, such as in paint.

Although the current price level is not likely to encourage overproduction, you must be careful when planning to supply to the European market. After the volatile market development of the first years, you can expect buyers to be selective when it comes to new suppliers.

Figure 1: Indicative chia imports to Europe from the main producing and supplying countries, Paraguay, Bolivia, Argentina, Peru, Mexico, Uganda, Chile



Source: Eurostat, Market Access Database

Tip:

Make sure you have buyers before encouraging farmers to produce. There is a growing market for chia, but it remains a niche so you must avoid production without having a market for it.

Interest in chia as ingredient fosters future opportunities in food industry

Europe has significant power in food innovation. This will be necessary for chia to become fully adopted in different food applications. You can expect to see chia in healthy food concepts as well as sports nutrition, but you can also experiment yourself with innovative uses for chia seeds.

According to [FoodDrinkEurope](#), Europe's food and drink industry employs 4.6 million people and adds €230 billion in value to a total turnover of €1.1 trillion, making it the largest manufacturing industry in Europe.

A [large number of small and medium-sized enterprises](#) play an important role in the application of new, healthy food ingredients, such as chia. But introducing new food ideas into Europe is not easy. This means market entry for non-European product developers will also be very challenging.

When targeting the food industry or if you have the intention of developing your own chia product, be aware of the limitations of chia as an ingredient as part of the novel food regulation. You can only add up to 10% of chia in your product, but some products such as fruit spreads only allow for 1%. When supplying consumer packed chia, the label must include a recommendation to consumers of a maximum 15 g daily consumption. See also table 1 in the product description.

In 2019, the European Food Safety Authority assessed [several new uses for chia](#), such as in chocolate, edible ices and desserts and found no objection for these new uses. Also an [application for partly defatted chia flour](#) (Xia powder 125 and 435) was approved in May 2019. Expanding uses of chia are a good sign that its demand is developing.

Tip:

Keep yourself up to date on the new authorised uses for chia. You can find all novel foods including chia and their permitted uses as a food in the [Novel Food Catalogue](#).

Chia is a plant-based alternative source of omega-3

Chia is an excellent plant-based source of omega-3 fatty acids. The growing market of European consumers focusing on healthy diets and people looking for vegan or vegetarian alternative sources of omega-3 are potential chia consumers. When you want to join this market, it is important to keep a close eye on the developments in vegan supplements and other specific market segments.

The omega-3 market has seen a [phenomenal growth over the past two decades](#), estimated to be worth €1.3 billion in 2018. According to [Innova market insights](#), 2.5% of new product introductions have an omega-3 claim and the average growth of the application of edible oils in product launches from 2013 to 2017 is 7.3%.

[Grand View Research](#) suggests that the omega-3 market in the United States will increase over the next years in supplements and functional foods, pharmaceuticals and infant formulas. The European omega-3 market is still less developed than the North American market, but Europe is following the global trend. [Market reports predict a compound annual growth rate of 7%](#) for European omega-3 products between 2019 and 2024.

The traditional source of omega-3 EPA and DHA fatty acids is fish oil, but for people who follow a vegetarian or vegan diet, chia oil will be a good alternative. Chia oil contains 63% to 64% of alpha-linolenic acid (ALA) omega-3, which can be converted by the body to EPA and DHA. In Europe, approximately [65% of the population do not get enough EPA and DHA](#) and do not realise it. Chia oil (ALA) can partly fulfil this need as well, especially for vegans. In the European Commission's [Nutrition and Health Claims database](#), omega-3 fatty ALA is in the list of authorised claims for 'contributing to the maintenance of normal blood cholesterol levels'.

Tips:

Stay informed on supplement and nutrition trends in the European market by visiting the [Nutra Ingredients](#) and the [FoodIngredientsFirst](#) websites.

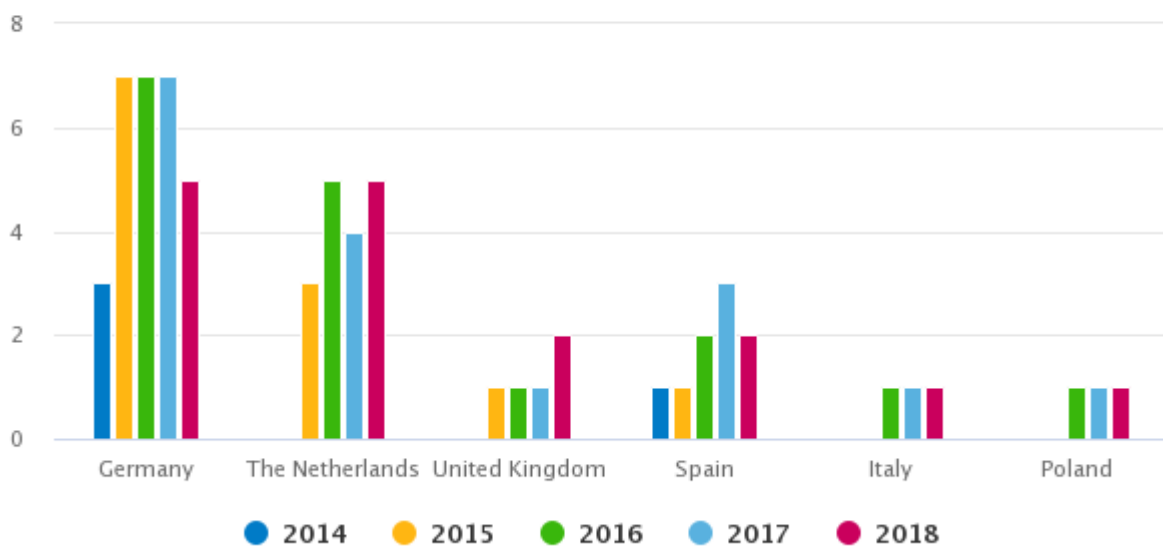
Find specialised buyers of food ingredients at [Health ingredients trade fair exhibitor list](#).

3. Which European countries offer most opportunities for chia seeds?

The countries with the largest import from non-European suppliers are Germany, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Spain, Italy and Denmark. There is no trade data available for Denmark, but Germany and the Netherlands share the first place in largest import volumes. Germany is the main consumption market and the Netherlands, the main trade hub. Upcoming markets include Poland, Austria and France.

Figure 2: Indicative chia import from non-European suppliers by country, in 1000 tonnes

in 1.000 tonnes



Source: Eurostat (2019)

Germany: the largest European end market for chia seeds

Germany offers the largest European end market for chia seeds. With over 80 million potential consumers and a strong focus on natural and healthy food ingredients, Germany imported 5.3 thousand tonnes of chia seeds from producing countries, and possibly another few thousand through traders in the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Denmark. Paraguay currently dominates the direct supply to Germany with a market share of over 40%.

According to [Germany Trade & Invest](#) (GTAI) an ageing population is fuelling the demand for health and wellness as well as functional food products to prevent or overcome conditions including diabetes, high blood pressure and cholesterol. Two-thirds of all Germans see a direct link between nutrition and health. Chia seeds fit very well in their modern-day diet, which includes growing preference for organic certified products.

You can find chia for sale in retail packages from brands such as [Davert](#) and [Naduria](#), but also as an ingredient used in bakery. Baked goods are the third largest segment within the [German food and beverage industry](#).

Quality and food safety requirements are probably your biggest challenges in supplying to the German market. It is one of the strictest countries in terms of pesticide residues and verification of organic certificates. You must be well prepared and understand the mentality of German buyers. The lack of quality and safe chia is probably one of the reasons why the market has shrunk in 2018. In the long term, Germany is expected to remain the largest destination country for chia seeds.

Tip:

Come prepared when supplying to German clients and prioritise food safety. This includes a traceable and transparent supply chain with independent sampling, counter-samples, documentation, product specifications and preferably pre-tested chia on pesticide residues using European or German laboratories or the same lab as your buyer's.

The Netherlands: best place to find traders

The Netherlands is a typical trade country where a large share of chia seeds enter the EU single market. It is an excellent place to find trading companies or set up your distribution or warehouse. But trade activities also helped develop the local consumption of chia seeds, which you can try to tap into.

With the higher production volumes of 2014, the Netherlands has started to play an important role in the distribution of chia seeds. The country hosts a number of large buyers, but also several supplying companies have chia on stock with Dutch logistical service providers. As trade increased, chia also became a common product in Dutch retail. Most Dutch supermarkets have chia for sale, even as private label products in supermarket chains such as [Albert Heijn](#) and [Jumbo](#).

The Netherlands is Europe's second-largest direct importer of chia at 4.6 thousand tonnes. Dutch buyers do not show a clear preference of origin, but in 2018, Argentina and Bolivia were the main suppliers, while Paraguay also played a role. In the European trade, Dutch companies have to be flexible, so established supplier relations are valued by their commercial assortment and compliance with different end market requirements. The import growth in the next years will depend on the development of chia in Europe in general.

Tip:

Include the Netherlands in your export strategy. You can use it as a commercial starting point to enter the European market or as a logistical hub and use warehousing and transport services in the port region of Rotterdam.

United Kingdom: opportunities for product diversification

What makes the UK interesting for chia seeds? The United Kingdom is a well-developed market when it comes to product development and convenience products. Their high acceptance for new products provides opportunities for chia seeds, as well as products that use chia as an ingredient.

The United Kingdom has many international trade relations and you can find a number of chia-related companies and brands. Direct imports of chia from origin are common: Bolivia, Mexico, Paraguay and Peru all export several hundred tonnes of chia seeds to the United Kingdom. Together with Germany, Denmark, Spain and the Netherlands, the UK is also an early adopter of chia seeds and the import from chia producing countries reached nearly two thousand tonnes in 2018.

Being a less traditional market, the United Kingdom offers a potential market for new ingredients in well marketed brands and convenience products. A foreign brand that has had success in the United Kingdom is [The Chia Co](#) from Australia with [chia pods](#) and [packaged chia seeds](#) displayed in Tesco supermarkets. But retailers Waitrose and Holland & Barrett also have an ample selection of chia products, such as [gluten-free wraps](#) and a [chia-blueberry mix](#). This product diversification increases sales of chia seeds.

[New product development and reformulation](#) are core activities of innovation in the British food sector. However, the Brexit process (Britain's exit out of the European Union) is expected to cause inflation and increasing labour costs that could affect the sales of products with high-end ingredients, making it a challenge for chia exporters to find new opportunities in the next few years. On the other hand, it could also be a motive for British buyers to source chia directly from origin instead of buying through European traders. In the end, the United Kingdom's drive for product development will keep a strong demand for special ingredients.

The marketing of new chia products will be a major influence in the development of chia in the United Kingdom. You can either supply chia to importers of ingredients or, if your company is up for the challenge, choose to

integrate your supply chain and try to target food brands.

Tip:

Get more insights on the different channels for chia seeds in the CBI's analysis on entering the European market of chia seeds.

Spain: the Latin American connection

Spain has a strong trade connection with Latin America. As a supplier from Spanish speaking countries in this region, you will find it easier to do business without a language barrier. Spanish buyers' requirements tend to be less stringent than in northern European countries.

According to statistics, Spain has been a relatively large market for chia seeds since the beginning of chia's growth. Spanish companies such as [Primaria](#) were among the first to have chia authorised for import as a foodstuff. With almost two thousand tonnes of chia imports, Spain belongs among the main importers of chia, mostly sourcing it from Latin American countries. Among them, Peru seems to have claimed most of the chia trade with Spain. Peru is not actually one of the largest producers of chia, but a large part of its business consists of re-exporting chia from other South American countries.

While the Netherlands offers an advanced logistical hub, Spain is often the choice for Latin American chia companies. For them, it is relatively easy to set up business speaking Spanish. For example, the [Cartago Group](#) and [Crafters Group](#) from Argentina both have commercial activities and local presence in Spain. As a non-Latin American exporter, Spain may not be your first choice, as competition from Latin America will be strong.

Italy: introducing chia in a traditional market

Food is an important part of the Italian consumer's life, but this especially includes the local traditional cuisine. New ingredients, such as chia, take longer to gain traction. Nevertheless, the characteristics of chia can be a healthy addition to the oil and protein-rich Italian food.

Although Italy is a rather traditional country when it comes to food, there is some acceptance of chia, following the consumption trends in the main importing countries in Europe.

The introduction of chia to Italy was [facilitated by Peruvian trade promotion efforts](#), after which chia and other Peruvian products were being distributed to the [Alí & Alíper supermarkets](#) by [Almaverde Bio](#) in 2016. In addition, large international food companies, such as [Pedon](#), have added chia to their portfolios. In 2018, Bolivia became the main chia supplier to Italy instead of Peru, an indication that purchases take place more directly in larger producing countries.

Italy is the fourth-largest country in population in Europe, and Italian consumers are sensitive to new healthy ingredients such as gluten-free foods. Estimates suggest that [approximately 600 thousand Italians suffer from coeliac disease](#). Chia can contribute to a healthier and gluten-free diet, because it contains gluten-free protein and essential fatty acids. Chia can be used in gluten-free pastas, bread, pizzas and all kinds of other traditional Italian food. That is why you can expect interest in chia to increase gradually in Italy in the years to come.

When orienting yourself in the Italian market, look for innovating food brands besides the regular importers of seeds, grains and pulses.

Tip:

Find potential food innovators that could use chia in their products at the trade fair or in the exhibitor catalogue of [Tuttofood](#).

Denmark: chia pioneer and gateway to Scandinavia

Denmark lacks import data, but it is an important trade country for chia seeds. If Denmark should be your choice for export depends on your ambitions in the Nordic countries and your target markets.

Danish early adopters were one of the first chia importers in Europe. They founded the company [House of Originals](#) (formerly known as Original Chia), and they are actively promoting chia as a core product as well as an ingredient in processed products. You should not be surprised if Denmark adds another one or two thousand tonnes of chia to the European market, on top of the other large importing countries.

Although chia is well promoted in Denmark, it is a very small country of 5.8 million people and the number of importers is very limited. Nevertheless, Scandinavia is a relatively wealthy region and Denmark can be an interesting starting point to supply to other nearby countries, such as Sweden and Norway. The largest organic wholesaler in Scandinavia, [Urtekram](#), has embraced chia and has active sales throughout the region.

If you want to find more local information and chia products in Denmark, use the term *chiafrø*, which means chia seeds in Danish and in Norwegian.

Up-and-coming markets: Poland, France and Austria

Besides the countries where chia has already been developed, there are other up-and-coming markets in Europe. Poland, France and Austria are European countries showing signs of increasing chia consumption and direct supply from producing countries .

Poland is not a frontrunner for new exotic ingredients, but Polish consumers definitely look to the food trends in neighbouring countries. In Poland, chia seeds are considered a luxury health ingredient. Chia consumption is increasing among the trendy and wealthy consumers. The price conscious consumer finds a good alternative in linseeds, which are well known in Poland and growing faster in import volume than chia seeds.

It has taken the French market some time to get chia sales going, and they still lag far behind the first adopters. From a European country as big as France, you can expect they will catch up in the following years, but this development is still slow. Nevertheless, there are chia cultivation initiative in France, which could help consumers to start eating more chia products.

Austria may be smaller in size than France, but health ingredients such as chia are a welcome supplement to the Austrian diet. This is portrayed in the import volume that grew from an estimated 277 to 750 tonnes. This volume is mainly from Peru and Paraguay and does not include any European re-exports. For Austria, natural and organic ingredients are a common standard.

4. What trends offer opportunities or risks in the European chia market?

The attention to healthy ingredients and product development with chia as an ingredient are important trends for the future growth of the chia market in Europe. When looking to participate in the chia trade, you can find opportunities with innovative food brands, although the novel food legislation will continue to restrict its applicability.

Increased focus on healthy lifestyles is good for chia sales

An increasing number of European consumers are looking for a healthier diet. For chia, this is a positive development, because it is rich in fibre, omega-3, calcium and iron. It is still a niche product, but the attention that chia has received from large retailers indicates that it is there to stay. As an exporter, you must take into account that the health food segment often requires organic certified chia.

A large quantity of organic certified chia is being sold in Europe, which is an important segment, but not without risks. The main South American suppliers produce chia in large scale and in a sub-tropical region, which greatly complicates organic cultivation. Although a large amount of chia is sold as organic, there are still regular problems with pesticide residues.

Despite the issues, large European retailers have embraced products with chia and many European supermarkets have a section for special nutrition where you can find almost standard packaged chia. As long as chia is being recognised for its health benefits, it will continue to have marketing value in Europe and European consumers will continue to buy chia or products that contain chia. The only current limitation is that chia is a novel food and the [maximum daily consumption recommended by the European Commission is 15 g per day](#), making it a niche product.

Because of these limitations as a niche product, it makes sense to have more similar ingredients in your portfolio as well as organic certified chia.

Source: Original Chia

Tips:

Promote the various applications and nutritional properties of chia seeds, for example the omega-3 fatty acids, fibres and protein content. However, avoid health or nutritional claims which are not substantiated by scientific evidence. Check the [EU Register of Nutrition and Health claims](#) to find out what health and nutrition claims are permitted and under what conditions you can use them.

Meet with buyers of organic chia at [Biofach](#), the largest organic trade fair in Europe.

Growing free-from market offers opportunities for chia

Chia may have a market among the growing number of European consumers who avoid specific food or allergenic substances, as well as those that follow specific diets. Chia is free from gluten and it can replace dairy and soy protein. Chia is also [vegan](#) and [paleo](#)-friendly. To maintain this special status, you must pay close attention to the processing of chia seeds to avoid cross-contamination.

Image 1: Chia is ideal for porridge free-from lactose and gluten



Source: Pixabay

Food bloggers and organisations promote chia in the free-from segment. For example, the [Celiac Disease Foundation](#) has identified chia as a gluten-free ingredient. Brand that specialised in gluten-free products, such as [Organ](#), exploit this opportunity. The [Rise Of The Vegan](#) website has compared chia as a vegan and more nutritious replacement for chicken eggs. Examples of recipes where chia is used in breakfast or desserts instead of a dairy product abound on the internet (see image 1). All this contributes to people learning to use chia as an alternative ingredient in their special diets.

When looking into chia consumption in the free-from segment, you will find Germany and the United Kingdom to be interesting markets for chia. The demand for chia as a gluten-free superfood stretches from the United Kingdom and Germany to Italy and Scandinavian countries, where it has the highest sales value per capita.

Specific markets like these should not be underestimated. The primary processing of chia seeds after harvest must be done by a clean plant, without traces of soybean, or allergenic substances, such as sesame or gluten.

Tips:

Read the [CBI market statistics and outlook for grains, pulses and oilseeds](#) to learn more about the size of specific market segments.

Check the websites of European trade shows and exhibitions to follow the free-from discussions. Several trade shows and exhibitions have specific areas dedicated to free-from products, such as gluten-free and allergy-free. Some of these trade fairs include [Food ingredients Europe](#), [Health ingredients Europe](#), [SIAL](#), [Anuga](#), [BioFach](#), [Food Matters Live](#), [Vitafoods](#) and the [Free From Food Expo](#).

Product development with chia continues from sports nutrition to convenience

Since its authorisation as a novel food in the European Union, chia has been used in many different ways and companies continue to launch new products with chia. New uses for chia are a positive indication that food brands remain interested in working with chia. The more these professionals get involved with chia, the greater and more diverse your target market will become.

Product development and innovation are important for the future growth of chia. For food companies, chia is an interesting marketing tool due to its nutritional profile, but in products it is often used in very small quantities. To reach larger volumes, chia needs to become part of many new or reformulated products. Innovations can also help to make chia more accessible to consumers and easier to consume. With this in mind, food brands focus on convenience or specific target markets, such as the sports nutrition market.

How is chia used in product development and made available to consumers?

Packaged chia for home use is widely available in Europe. There is also an increasing number of uses and mixes considered safe by the European Food Safety Authority. This allows for companies to become more creative with chia in fruit spreads and peanut butter, such as the following:

- [Active Foods 4 Seed peanut butter](#), including chia, from Bulk Powders in the United Kingdom
- [Mister Kitchen's ChiaFruit spread](#), an invention of the Dutch Mister Kitchen to replace jam

Convenient, instant or ready-made chia products and snacks make it easy for people to consume chia. Convenience is especially well developed in northern Europe, such as the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, but other European markets are also open to healthy snacks.

- [Chia Cups](#) from Germany's Davert
- [SoPure high protein bar](#), a Les Chevaliers brand from the Netherlands
- [Nature's finest Chia pudding](#), by Belgium's NutritionXL

One of the increasing uses for chia seeds is in sports nutrition, such as in protein bars. According to Statista, the United Kingdom had the biggest sports nutrition sector in Europe in 2016 at a value of €743 million, while the second-largest market, Germany, sits far behind at €219 million. Examples of chia use in sports nutrition include:

- [Chia charge](#), a crispy protein bars for athletes
- [Lifebar superfoods](#), sport superfoods bar with chia, by the Czech company Lifefood

Who develops these new products?

Thanks to the expanding market, not only specialty brands use chia as an ingredient but also mainstream and multinational brands have adopted chia in some of their products. These large brand companies include, for example, Nestlé, Danone and Kellogg's, showing the potential for chia as a mainstream ingredient. Some of their products include:

- [Yes! raspberry and chia seeds fruit bar](#) by Nestlé, sold in Germany, Spain and the Netherlands
- [Activia muesli, raspberry and chia](#), introduced by Danone in Belgium and the Netherlands
- [W. K. Kellogg Superfood Crunchy Müsli Sultana & Chia](#), introduced by Kellogg's in Germany, Spain and Italy

How can you participate in product innovation?

As a producer or exporter of chia, you can also take part in innovative projects with chia seeds. With the right resources you can develop your own consumer product, in the same way that Australian chia farmer John Foss has done with his company [The Chia Co](#). However, building your own chia brand will take a large marketing budget, not to mention a local presence in Europe.

Another option is to focus on innovative processing and semi-processed chia such as chia oil and milled chia. This way you can make chia a more suitable and interesting ingredient for food developers in Europe.

One of the more innovative companies in this field is Benexia, which operates from Chile and produces chia in Bolivia and Argentina. Benexia has not only created its own consumer brand of [SOW](#) oil, pastas and powders, but also produces [fibre and protein concentrated powders](#) and [chia oil](#) for the food industry. In its processing, Benexia uses advanced [sterilisation technology](#) to reduce moisture and microbiological contaminants in chia.

If you are planning to work with new extracted ingredients, such as separating protein from chia, or find a new use for chia seeds, you will need authorisation from the European Food Safety Authority to introduce these products in the European food channels. In the next years, you will probably see several other companies requesting extended uses for chia.

In the long term, at least another five to 15 years, chia is expected to lose its novel food status and become a mainstream product. Although it may remain a relatively minor ingredient, it is expected to become part of the knowledge of the average European consumer.

Tips:


Learn how to apply for new uses of chia in the [technical guidance report](#) on the submission of applications for authorisation of a novel food in the European Union. For very innovative uses or sub-products of chia, you will have to provide relevant data and research about their safety.


Find out what trends will influence the demand of grains, pulses and oilseeds in the [CBI trends study](#).


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