

The European market potential for dried ginger

Europe is an interesting and growing market for exporters of dried ginger. The demand is expected to grow in the coming years and prices are slowly rising. The most interesting markets are the top three markets in Europe: the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Germany. These countries import huge volumes of ginger from developing countries, which makes them good focus markets. In addition, also Italy and Spain could be interesting for reasons of size and direct imports coming from Developing Countries.

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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 country is China, while production also takes place in India, Pakistan, Nigeria, Peru, Vietnam, Burkina Faso, Thailand and Myanmar.

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

Note that fresh ginger is also traded under the same code of 09.10.1100. This means that the statistics presented in this study also incorporate fresh ginger.

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

Growing imports of dried ginger in Europe

The worldwide consumption of ginger is forecast to continue to grow in the next 3 to 5 years. This is mainly because ginger is considered to be a healthy ingredient (see “Search for healthier ingredients”). Especially in the winter of 2016/2017, the European demand for ginger peaked due to the cold weather. Consumers buy ginger during the winter mainly because they use it to relieve a sore throat or flu symptoms.

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 2018, the European direct imports of dried ginger from developing countries reached 127 thousand tonnes. Since 2014, the import volume has increased by 12% annually. In that same period, the (direct) import value increased by 2.6% annually, reaching €160 million in 2018.

In 2018, 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. Since ginger cannot be produced in Europe, the European supplies illustrated in Figure 1 are based on re-exports. European re-exports accounted for 27% of the total imports in 2018.

Tip:

Learn more about the European ginger market, as it has grown considerably in the past years and is expected to grow further. Carefully read all the information presented in the factsheet and translate it into an action plan for your company.

3. Which European countries offer most opportunities for dried ginger?

The Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Germany are together the top six most interesting markets for dried ginger in Europe. The Netherlands' #1 position is only because the country is an important European trade hub for spices, while the UK and Germany are simply the two largest markets in Europe for dried ginger. The UK is traditionally the largest market in Europe because the large Asian diaspora living in the country typically consume a lot of ginger. In Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain and France, the market has grown considerably in recent years because of the increasing popularity of ginger as a healthy ingredient in dishes and other food or drinks, such as fruit and nut bars, or tea.

Additionally, it is worthwhile to mention that two of the "larger" small importers are increasingly importing ginger directly from developing countries over the period under review: Greece (+48%) and Denmark (+16%). These countries might also be interesting for you.

The Netherlands

The Netherlands is the largest importer and trader of ginger in Europe by a long way. Its imports have increased significantly in volume by 20% annually between 2014 and 2018. In 2018, 97% of Netherlands imports were sourced directly in developing countries. The country is the leading trade hub for spices in Europe and therefore also the leading intra-European supplier of ginger within Europe.

The Netherlands has a particular high share of imports coming from Peru. In 2018, imports from China dominated with 45 thousand tonnes, but imports from Peru took a firm 2nd position with 5.4 thousand tonnes. Brazil and Thailand exported 4.6 thousand and 1.8 thousand tonnes to the Netherlands respectively. Imports from within Europe are small with Belgium at 621 tons and Germany and France at between 400-700 tonnes per year. The Peruvian volume of 5.4 thousand tonnes developed quickly, as in 2014 Peru only exported 61 tonnes to the Netherlands yet.

The Netherlands has a tradition of spice trade, dating back to hundreds of years ago. This tradition has remained in place until today, as in 2018 Dutch exports of ginger reached almost 49 thousand tonnes. This volume is equal to 80% of the country's import volume. Leading destinations are all European countries with Germany taking the 1st position (12 thousand tonnes, 25% share), followed by France (3.8 thousand tonnes), Poland (3.3 thousand tonnes), Sweden (3.1 thousand tonnes), and Belgium, Italy, Austria and Denmark (each between 2.1-2.7 thousand tonnes each).

In the Netherlands, sustainable sourcing of spices is strongly supported by the [Dutch Spice Association](#).

The United Kingdom

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 second largest importer of ginger in Europe, which is probably the result of the relatively substantial population of Asian descent (Indians, Chinese) in the United Kingdom. Because of the UK's large Asian diaspora, the country has the highest per capita consumption of ginger in Europe.

84% of the ginger is imported directly from China, while the Netherlands and India take a second place with each 3% share. Germany is also an important intra-European supplier of ginger to the UK (2.6% share). In addition to China and India, the UK also sources ginger from Pakistan (391 tonnes in 2018), Nigeria (238 tonnes), Vietnam (204 tonnes), Indonesia (66 tonnes), Thailand (35 tonnes), and Peru (24 tonnes).

The export volume of the UK is rather limited when compared with the import volume; with 1,166 tonnes in 2018 it was good for less than 5% of the import volume. The two leading export destinations are Germany (368 tonnes) and Ireland (351 tonnes). Other destinations receive relatively small quantities.

The export volume of 1,166 tonnes in 2018 was actually a drop from the 1.2-1.5 thousand tonnes per year in 2015-2017. It is unclear what situation caused this reduction in export volume.

Germany

Germany is the third largest importer of ginger. Its total imports in volume increased by 8.4% annually since 2014 to a volume of 22.6 thousand tonnes in 2018. Almost 90% of Germany's imported ginger comes directly from developing countries.

Half (or 11.3 thousand tonnes) of the German import volume is sourced in China, while also Peru has a relatively large share (22%) in German imports. Nigeria is the third large supplier to Germany, good for 12% of Germany's imports. Much smaller volumes come from India (401 tonnes), and Burkina Faso, Brazil, Indonesia, Costa Rica, Nepal Vietnam, Sri Lanka, and Myanmar (ranging from 145 to 66 tonnes). This shows that Germany's supply of ginger is quite diversified, for example much more than in the United Kingdom. With other countries such as Madagascar, Laos, and Uganda also supplying small volumes to Germany, Germany can be listed as a very high potential market for small supplying countries of ginger.

The only substantial supplying country from within Europe is the Netherlands, with 6.7% share in total German ginger imports. Italy comes far behind in second place (1.8% share).

One sixth of the import volume is re-exported to predominantly European countries. Germany's neighbouring countries are the leading destinations: Poland (27% share), Czech Republic (12%), the Netherlands (9%), Austria (7%), Switzerland (4%) Denmark and France (3% each) together are good for 64% of German exports.

France, Spain and Italy

France, Spain and Italy are medium-sized importers of ginger in Europe. Their shares of direct imports are 34%, 83%, and 74% respectively. Highest growth of direct imports was registered by Italy (+44% per year), followed by Spain (+31%), and France (+8%). Conclusion that can be drawn from these data is that France seems to be a bit reluctant to import directly from developing countries until now. For that reason, you could better focus on Spain and Italy.

Spain's import volume of 7.6 thousand tonnes in 2018 was more than double the volume of 2014 (2.9 thousand tonnes). In that period, direct supplies from China grew sharply (from 1.4 to 5.5 thousand tonnes), while the volume from Peru was under pressure and even declined a bit (484 tonnes in 2018). Other direct supplies came from Nigeria (174 tonnes), Brazil (59 tonnes), India (39 tonnes), and Thailand (5 tonnes).

Intra-European supply is dominated by the Netherlands (787 tonnes in 2018). Belgium came far behind (234

tonnes) and the same goes for Germany (90 tonnes).

Spain's export volume was 2.9 thousand tonnes in 2018 (equal to 38% of the import volume). The range of destinations changed over the period 2014-2018, but on average the top destinations were France, Portugal, Germany, Morocco, Netherlands, and Italy.

Italy shows some similarities with Spain. But where Spanish imports showed a consistent growth (which might be caused by the severe effects of the economic crisis in Spain that impacted the Spanish economy until 2014), in Italy imports have remained relatively stable since 2016. Italy's main source is China; Chinese exports of ginger to Italy grew from 1.1 thousand tonnes in 2014 to 5.7 thousand tonnes in 2018. Peru only managed to develop exports to Italy recently, with volumes of 385 and 334 tonnes in 2017 and 2018 respectively.

Italy's imports of ginger also come from many other production countries: Thailand (136 tonnes in 2018), Brazil (116 tonnes), India (54 tonnes), and Nigeria (41 tonnes).

With 1.6 thousand tonnes, Italy's exports are small compared to its' import volume of 8.7 thousand tonnes. The leading destination of Italy's exports is Germany (650 tonnes, 41% share), followed by France (276 tonnes, 17%), and the Netherlands and the United Kingdom (each 128 tonnes, 8% share).

Tips:

Check the latest developments on [ITC Trademap](#) or the [Indian Spices Board](#). ITC Trademap offers details of trade volumes and values per year and per importing and exporting country. The Indian Spices Board's data predominantly cover details of Indian production and exports.

Target leading Western European importing countries of ginger from developing countries. The most interesting are the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Germany, while Italy and Spain could also be interesting.

Also consider targeting smaller, fast-growing importers of ginger. In the period between 2014 and 2018, Greece and Denmark increasingly imported directly from developing countries. This shows that direct exports to markets other than the largest ones are certainly achievable. Although their import volumes are smaller, they may still be interesting, particularly for small to medium-sized exporters.

4. What trends offer opportunities on the European dried ginger market?

Search for healthier ingredients

Consumers searching for healthier ingredients stimulate the growing demand for dried ginger on the European market. This is not a surprise, as healthy living is one of the most important trends in Europe. Consumers perceive food ingredients such as salt, sugar and synthetic additives as unhealthy. Other products that also add flavour, such as spices and herbs, increasingly replace these products. This trend is not only visible in food, but also cleaning products and cosmetics are increasingly based on spices and herbs, fruits and plants.

For this reason, consumers increasingly 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](#). Due to its growing popularity, ginger is also increasingly used as a health supplement as well as in other food products such as tea, beer 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).

In addition, ginger is also increasingly used in aromatherapy and wellness, such as essential (massage) oils and diffusers. Examples are:

- Ginger Pure Essential Oil at Holland and Barrett (The United Kingdom)
- Scent sticks – Ginger and Lime at Bol.com (The Netherlands)

Tips:

Focus on the application of your dried ginger in healthy product ranges, such as herbal teas.

Promote your product as healthy ingredient and stress the benefits of your ginger in people's diets.

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.

Consumers who like to discover new tastes, new cuisines, exotic products, etc further drive this development. This goes hand in hand with some other developments, such as:

- Growth of global tourism. More Europeans travel to Asian destinations every year, and more foreigners come to Europe every year.
- Growing consumption of so-called 'superfoods'. Superfoods are ingredients with a particular benefit and ginger is one of them.
- Ongoing popularity of TV cuisine programs or social media influencers like Master Chef encouraging cooking at home and experimenting with different products.
- The increase of Asian (managed) restaurants Europe, which results in an increase of Europeans becoming acquainted with Asian dishes and flavours.

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 (less than 5%) 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 Switzerland, since these countries are leading organic food markets in Europe. For Fairtrade certified ginger, the most interesting market is the United Kingdom, as that is the #1 country for Fairtrade products. However, ginger represents only less than 5% of all spices and herbs certified by Fairtrade International in Europe.

One example of an exporter that has become very successful in exporting organic and fairtrade certified ginger

to Europe, is the Peruvian cooperative [La Campina](#). Take a look at their website. In the menu of webpage, you can already see that people are the most important for them, as 'People' comes in the first place, and only then their products.

Tips:

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.

See our study of [Trends for spices and herbs](#) for more information on trends on the European market for spices and herbs


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

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