

CBI Product Factsheet:

Fresh Rambutan in Europe

Introduction

The European market for fresh rambutan is dominated by ethnic Asian consumers and specialty fruits and vegetables stores. Demand for specialty fruits is rising in many European countries, providing opportunities for exporters from developing countries.

Product Definition

The rambutan (*Nephelium lappaceum*) is the fruit of trees from the genus Sapindaceae. The trees can reach a height of 25 metres. There are smaller cultivars as well, which make harvesting easier. The fruit is round to oval and 3 to 6 cm tall and 3 and 4 cm wide. It grows in bunches of 10 to 20 berries. The skin of the fruit is spinose and reddish. The fruit itself is white to pale pink and tastes sweet. Rambutan is cultivated mainly in Southeast Asia and Latin American countries. Over a 100 species are grown commercially and ripened on the tree. The shelf life of fresh rambutan is limited and the produce bruises easily. Rambutan is closely related to lychee and longan.

Table 1: Combined Nomenclature (CN) commodity code for fresh rambutan

Number	Product
08109075 (from 2012)	Fruit, tropical fresh, not specified elsewhere. Or: Fresh fruit, edible (excl. nuts, bananas, dates, figs, pineapples, avocados, guavas, mangoes, mangosteens, papaws `papayas`, tamarinds, cashew apples, jackfruit, lychees, sapodilla plums, passion fruit, carambola, pitahaya, citrus fruit, grapes, melons, apples, pears, quinces, apricots, cherries, peaches, plums, sloes, strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, mulberries, loganberries, black, white or red currants, gooseberries, cranberries, fruits of the genus Vaccinium, kiwifruit, durians, and persimmons)
08109095 (until 2012)	Fruit, tropical fresh, not specified elsewhere. Or: Fresh fruit, edible (excl. nuts, bananas, dates, figs, pineapples, avocados, guavas, mangoes, mangosteens, papaws `papayas`, tamarinds, cashew apples, jackfruit, lychees, sapodilla plums, passion fruit, carambola, pitahaya, citrus fruit, grapes, melons, apples, pears, quinces, apricots, cherries, peaches, plums, sloes, strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, mulberries, loganberries, black, white or red currants, gooseberries, cranberries, fruits of the genus Vaccinium, kiwifruit, durians, and persimmons)

Source: Eurostat Comext.

Product Specification

Quality:

- Imports of fresh rambutans from third countries to the EU must conform to general marketing standards for fresh fruits and vegetables. These standards adhere to the [CODEX Alimentarius Standard for rambutan](#) (CODEX STAN 246-2005). Products should be intact, clean and sound, (practically) free from pests, damage, abnormal external moisture, internal browning, and in a condition to withstand transport and handling.
- The rambutans must have reached an appropriate degree of development and ripeness and in such a condition that enables them to withstand transport and arrive in satisfactory condition at the place of destination.
- Rambutans are classified in three quality classes (see Codex Alimentarius Standard for rambutan): "Extra Class", "Class I", "Class II":
 - Extra Class rambutans are products of superior quality. Extra Class produce is free of defects, with the exception of very slight superficial defects. Superficial defects must not affect the general appearance of the produce, the quality, the keeping quality, and presentation in the package.
 - Class I rambutans are of good quality that can only contain slight defects: a slight defect in shape; slight skin defects not exceeding 5% of the total surface area, excluding defects on spinterns.
 - Rambutans that satisfy the minimum requirements, but do not qualify for Class I or Extra Class can enter the EU market classified as "Class II". Class II rambutans may have defects in shape or skin not exceeding 10% of the total surface area, excluding defects on spinterns. However, the market for Class II produce is very limited. The defects must not, in any case, affect the flesh of the produce.
- Rambutan is best stored at 8°C to 15°C with 90% to 95% relative humidity to achieve a storage life of 2-3 weeks. There may be changes in the skin and spine coloration after storage, but the flesh is unaffected. Exposure to higher or lower temperatures results in rapid loss of quality. Large volume shipments of rambutan rarely occur and air freight is common: within 24 hours after harvest, and preferably with refrigeration.

Size and colour:

According to the CODEX Alimentarius standard for rambutan, size is determined by the number of fruits per kilogram, or the weight per fruit.

Table 2 Codex Alimentarius size specifications of rambutans

Size Code	Presented as single fruit		Presented in bunches
	Weight per Fruit (grams)	Number of Fruits per Kg	Number of Fruits per Kg
1	> 43	< 23	< 29
2	38 - 43	23 - 26	29 - 34
3	33 - 37	27 - 30	35 - 40
4	29 - 32	31 - 34	41 - 45
5	25 - 28	35 - 40	-
6	18 - 24	41 - 50	-

- Size tolerance is 10% by number or weight of rambutans corresponding to the indication on the package.
- Skin and spine colouration is the main indication of maturity. Fruits with green skin and greenish-red spines are sour. Rambutans should have red or yellow skin and spines, depending on the variety.

Packaging:

- Wholesale packaging:
 - Rambutans are usually sold in 2.25 kg and 4.5 kg, one-piece, cardboard boxes. Sometimes fruit are pre-packed in plastic trays (punnets). Larger boxes may be used as well, especially if produce is repacked in Europe. Be sure to check the desired packaging with your customer.
 - The contents of each package must be uniform and contain only rambutans of the same origin, variety or varietal type, quality, size, and colour. The visible part of the contents of the package must be representative of the entire contents.
 - The containers shall meet the usual quality, hygiene, ventilation, and resistance characteristics for ensuring the rambutans' suitable handling, shipping, and preservation. Packages (or lot for produce presented in bulk) must be free of all foreign matter and odour.
- Consumer packaging: fresh lychees are sold either right out of the wholesale box or in punnets of 300 or 500gr.
- For export, single rambutans should be packed loosely in a 22 x 31 x 9 cm cardboard box, in uniform rows with the same size, colour, and maturity. The fruit are arranged lying down and in two layers. Net weight of the box varies from 2 to 4 kg depending on importer requirements.
- Rambutans are offered individually or in bunches. In the first case, the pedicel must be detached at the first knot and the maximum length must not extend more than 5 mm beyond the top of the fruit. In the case of bunches, each bunch must be free of leaves and have a number of clusters, each cluster with a minimum of two rambutans. The stem of each bunch must not exceed 20 cm in length measured from the attachment of the highest fruit.

Labelling:

- Consumer package labelling must be in accordance with the rules and regulations applicable in the EU and EFTA market. To protect the EU consumers' right to access useful and appropriate information, [Regulation \(EU\) No. 1169/2011](#) establishes the general principles, requirements, and responsibilities governing food information, and in particular food labelling. Labels cannot contain any toxic ink or glue.
- Each package (non-retail package) must bear the following particulars, in letters grouped on the same side, legibly and indelibly marked, and visible from the outside:
 - Identification: Name and address of exporter, packer and/or dispatcher. Identification code (optional);
 - The nature of the product: Name of the produce "Rambutan" if the contents are not visible from the outside. Name of the variety or commercial type (optional). "Bunch" specification, when applicable;
 - Origin of product: Country of origin and (optional) district where grown or national, regional or local place name;
 - Commercial identification: class, size (code), and/or net weight;
 - Official Inspection Mark (optional).

- In addition, for retail packaging, if the produce is not visible from the outside, each package shall be labelled with the name of the produce "Rambutan" and may also be labelled with the name of the variety or varietal type. Any certification logo or retailer logo may be on the labelling if requested, in the case of private label products.

What is the demand for fresh rambutan fruit in Europe?

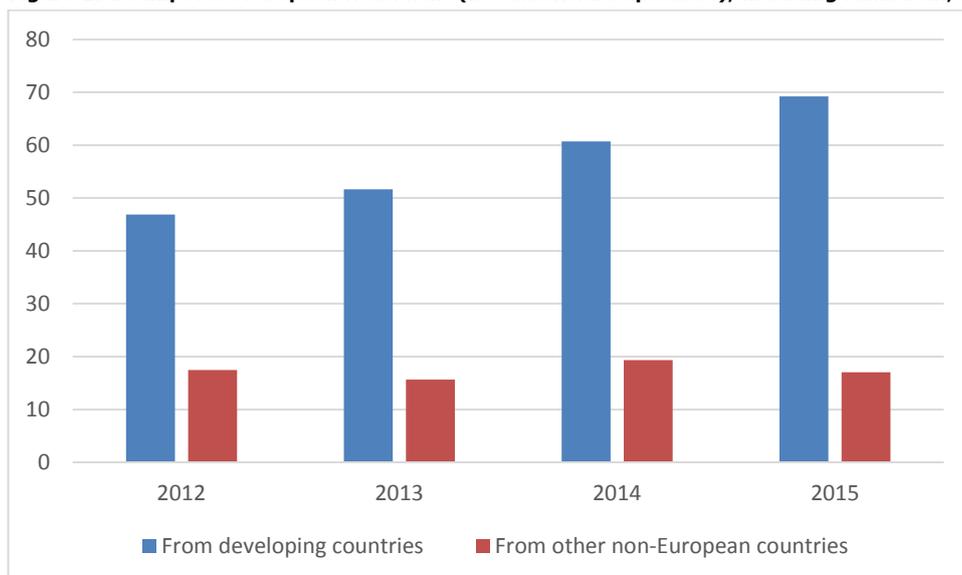
General information and figures about production and trade developments in the European market for fresh fruit and vegetables are provided in the [CBI Trade Statistics for Fresh Fruit and Vegetables](#) on the [CBI Market Intelligence Platform](#).

Specific data about the trade in rambutans is not available. This section provides you with more detailed statistics of production, trade, and consumption of tropical fruit with HS code 08109095 / 08109075, which includes rambutan. See also the *product definition* above. Note that rambutan is a very small part within this product group. Pomegranate is one of the main products.

In 2012 there was a transition in CN commodity codes. Therefore, the statistics below take 2012 as a starting point.

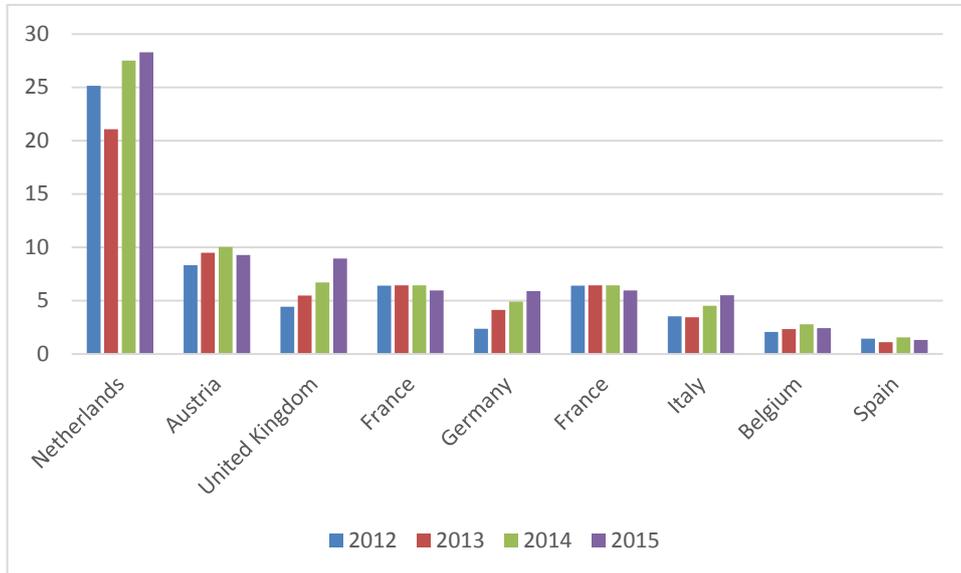
Import

Figure 1: EU imports of tropical fresh fruit (not elsewhere specified), including rambutan, in 1,000 tonnes



Source: [Market Access Database](#) (Comext)

Figure 2: Main European importers of tropical fresh fruit (not elsewhere specified), including rambutan, from non-EU countries, in 1,000 tonnes



Source: [Market Access Database](#) (Comext)

Interpretations and opportunities

- The total size of the European import market for fresh rambutans is estimated at about 500 tonnes in recent years. However, the market is developing and figures about market volumes are difficult to collect. The value is estimated at approximately €4 million.
- Rambutans are mainly imported from:
 - Thailand
 - Malaysia
 - the Philippines
 - Indonesia
 - Vietnam
- Other new or counter-seasonal suppliers include:
 - Ecuador
 - Honduras
 - Guatemala
 - Sri Lanka
 - Madagascar
 - and a few other countries in tropical East Africa.
- Rambutans are available on the European market year-round. However, the bulk of supplies come between November and March. Malaysia is supplying mainly in December and January, and in May and June. The Philippines supply rambutans between March and July, and in October and November. Vietnamese rambutan are supplied year-round.
- In general, the EU applies an 8.8% import duty on rambutans, but there is a list of countries to which different tariff schemes are applied (see: [MyExport](#)). Because rambutans are already a relatively expensive exotic fruit, suppliers that have access to lower-cost air freight have an important competitive edge.
- Rambutans are a very perishable product. Combined with the high quality requirements of European buyers, selecting only the best quality produce and excellent logistics is a key prerequisite for exporting to Europe.
- Importers of rambutans are mainly specialised exotic fruit importers. The Netherlands is one of the main entrance ports into Europe.

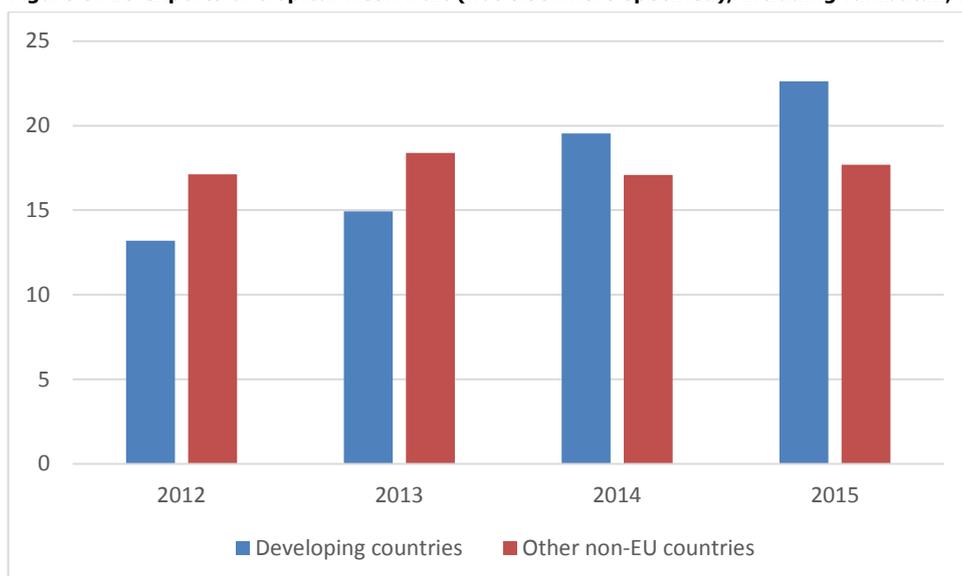
- The import of tropical and exotic fruit from developing countries is increasing. Although the European market volume is small, a gradual increase in market volumes is anticipated as consumers are looking for new and special fruits that fit into a healthy diet.

Tips:

- Inquire about a potential buyer’s demand, both in terms of volume as well as quality, before sending any shipments. The market may easily be oversupplied.
- Build strong relationships with your customers to get the latest information on demand and profit from (temporary) shortfalls in supply.
- Check with [MyExport](#) on the [EU Export Helpdesk](#) to find the import duty scheme for your country.
- Maintain a high quality produce. Low-quality produce may be rejected by end consumers. Supermarkets, but also specialist shops, are increasingly paying attention to the quality of the rambutan, which may result in rejection or penalties if the agreed quality is not met.

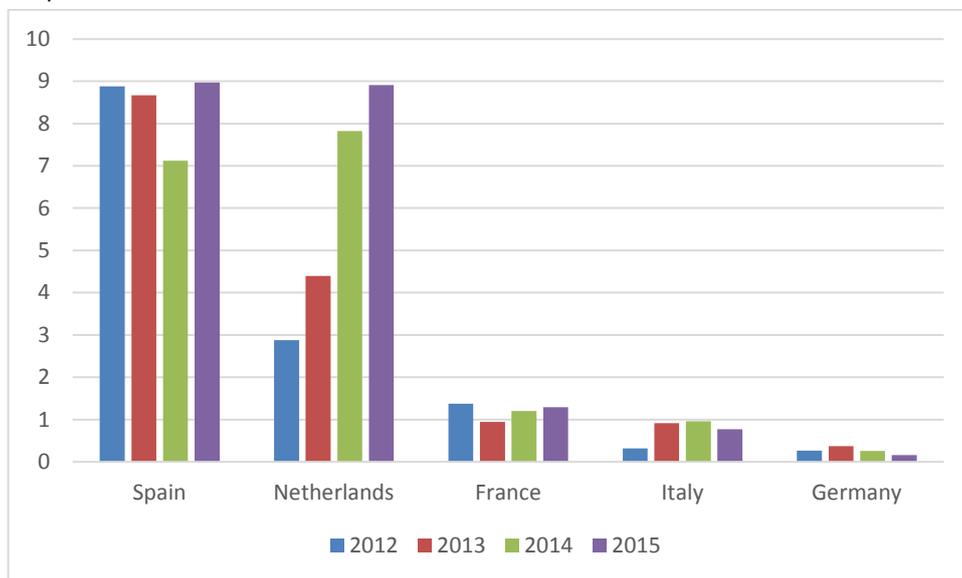
Export

Figure 3: EU exports of tropical fresh fruit (not elsewhere specified), including rambutan, in 1,000 tonnes



Source: [Market Access Database](#) (Comext)

Figure 4: Main European exporters of tropical fresh fruit (not elsewhere specified), including rambutan, to non-EU countries, in 1,000 tonnes



Source: [Market Access Database](#) (Comext)

Interpretations and opportunities

Export of “Other tropical fresh fruit” of EU countries is dominated by Spain and the Netherlands. The Netherlands is an important re-exporter of exotic fruits and are responsible for a large part of the re-exported rambutans. Specialist importers in the Netherlands also repack and re-export rambutans destined for Germany, Scandinavian countries, and other countries in Europe.

Although Spain scores high in the statistics, it is not a large exporter of rambutan. Spain is a producer and exporter of pomegranates, which has the same statistical product group as rambutan. The actual export share of Spain in rambutan is close to zero.

The main destination countries of fresh tropical fruit exports from EU countries, including rambutan, are Germany, Italy and France. For rambutan specifically, France is a growing and important end market.

Tips:

- Find an importer in the Netherlands or Belgium. Importers in these countries are the main entrance points into Europe for exotic fruit and can open a much larger market.
- Keep track of trade developments and statistics on [Trade map](#) from the International Trade Centre.

Production

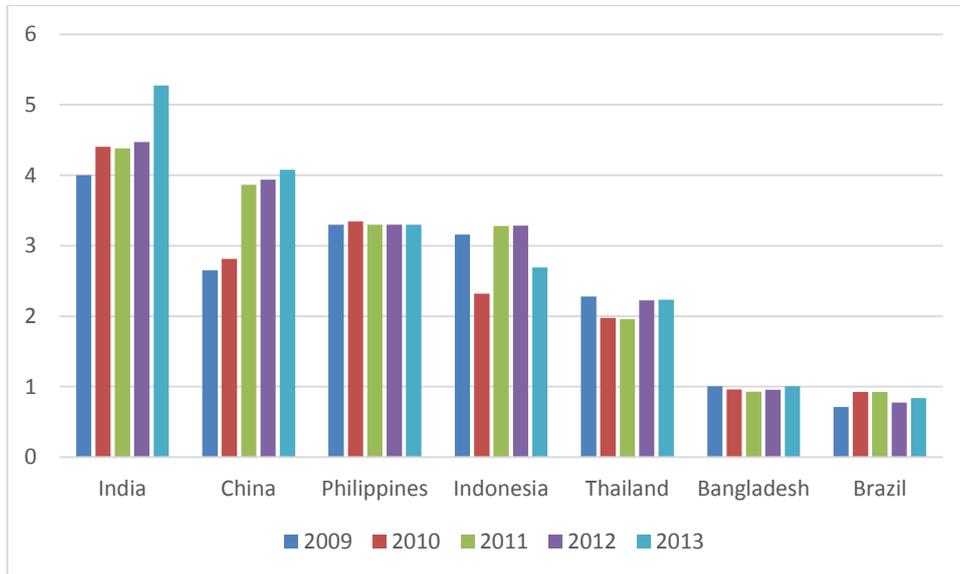
Data on the worldwide production of rambutans is not available. Instead, we show data on the worldwide production of “Fruit, tropical fresh, not specified elsewhere” according to the statistical division of the Food and Agriculture Organization ([FAOSTAT](#)). This category contains tropical fresh fruit that are not identified separately because of their minor relevance at the international level. In some countries mangoes, avocados, pineapples, dates and papayas are reported under this general category.

Table 3: product classification for fresh rambutan

Number	Product
FAOSTAT Classification 0804.50_b	“Fruit, tropical fresh, not specified elsewhere” breadfruit; carambola; cherimoya, custard apple; durian; feijoa; guava; hog plum; mombin; jackfruit; longan; mamee; mangosteen; naranjillo; passion fruit; rambutan ; sapote; mamey colorado; sapodilla; star apple; cainito.

Source: [FAOSTAT](#)

Figure 5: Producing countries of tropical fruit (FAOSTAT 0804.50_b: Tropical fresh fruit), including rambutan



Source: [FAOSTAT](#)

Interpretations and opportunities

- Total world production of rambutans is difficult to assess. Official figures do not exist for most countries. Indonesia produces some 700 thousand tonnes (2007) and Thailand 400 thousand tonnes (2012). Almost all fresh rambutans are consumed locally and only a small fraction is exported.
- The main production countries are Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, and tropical countries in Africa, the Caribbean islands, Central America (Honduras, Costa Rica, Guatemala, and Mexico), and Ecuador, where the fruit is called achotillo. Honduras and Australia are relatively new countries, which increasingly grow rambutan for export.
- Rambutan is an important smallholder crop in Indonesia, where the fruit is a common crop in Sumatra, Java, West Kalimantan, and Sulawesi, and the humid parts of Nusa Tenggara (Lombok and Flores). Rambutan is an important part of rural nutrition in Indonesia.
- Rambutan is the third most important fruit crop in Thailand after durian and mangosteen. The area of rambutan production in Thailand was about 99 thousand hectares in 2010 and decreased to some 53 thousand hectares in 2012. Production is estimated at about 400,000 tonnes ([Office of Agricultural Economics](#)-Thailand, 2012). Only about 1 or 2% of the fruit is exported. The main export destinations for fresh rambutans from Thailand are Vietnam, United Arab Emirates, Malaysia, China, and Japan, as well as Europe.
- In some areas such as Malaysia, rambutan trees can bear fruit twice annually, once in June and with a shorter season ending in December. In other areas like Costa Rica, there is a single fruit season, with the start of the rainy season in April stimulating flowering and the fruit is usually ripe in August and September.

Tips:

- As European buyers only select the best quality produce, select the optimal variety depending on growing conditions.
- Maintain an excellent cold chain and careful handling to improve shelf life.

Consumption

Interpretations and opportunities

- Data about rambutan consumption in Europe is not available. While consumers in Indonesia eat about 4 kilograms of rambutans per year, average European consumption per capita does not exceed a few grams. To most people of European origin, rambutans are a relatively unknown fruit.

- Rambutan is a fruit that is mainly consumed by ethnic Asians, although a growing number of European consumers are looking for specialty fruits. Quantities sold are limited, although specialty fresh fruit stores, open air markets, and ethnic food stores commonly include fruits like rambutan in their assortment.
- The out-of-home markets (restaurants) are also an important destination for fresh rambutans, especially Asian (Thai, Indonesian) restaurants. Such restaurants frequently buy tropical fruit from specialty wholesalers, although general wholesale outlets such as Sligro in the Netherlands also sell tropical fruits including rambutans.
- Consumers in Nordic and Western European countries are more open to specialty fruits in the short run than consumers in eastern parts of Europe. Southern European consumers eat more tropical fruit than other European consumers, but they tend to focus more on locally produced fruit.

Tip:

- Increase sales of rambutans in Europe with promotional activities and product information.

What trends offer opportunities on the European market for fresh rambutans?

[CBI Trend mapping](#) provides you with general trends in the European market for fresh fruits and vegetables. This section provides more details about specific trends in the market for fresh rambutans.

Growing interest in sustainable fruit: Consumption of fresh fruit in Europe is developing towards a more sustainable approach to production and processing. Environmental and social issues are becoming more and more important. Social and environmental certification schemes include actions to strongly reduce and register the use of pesticides, take action on the safety of employees and/or even include price guarantees for producers. Certification schemes that are in line with the [Global Social Compliance Program \(GSCP\)](#) will have a higher chance of being accepted by European supermarkets.

Because fresh rambutans are imported by air, the greenhouse gas emission and CO₂-footprint of the product is relatively high. Although this issue is not yet very important among European consumers, it is expected to become more important in the medium-term future.

Tips:

- Check the [Global Social Compliance Program \(GSCP\)](#) website for more information about social and environmental conduct.
- Assess the performance of your company and your suppliers and learn about social compliance certification labels in the [Standards Map database](#).

Attention to health food: Consumers in Europe are becoming more aware of health issues and pay more attention to their diet. Rambutans are well known for being a healthy fruit. Since European consumers embrace healthy and tasty fruits, health benefits can be the main drivers for market success.

Tip:

- Communicate the health benefits of the fruit to help expand the European market. Be aware of [European Legislation on food health claims](#).

Organic niche: Thanks to the increased attention to health and environment, there is also a growing interest in organically produced fruit and vegetables. Organic rambutan is a niche within a niche, but the combination can be very profitable. There are specialized importers of exotic fruit and organic produce.

Tips:

- If your climate and soil are suitable for organic cultivation, verify with your buyer the possibilities for supplying organic exotic fruit.
- Find specialized importers that have experience with fresh organic fruit through online databases such as [Organic-Bio](#).
- Read more about organic farming on the [Soil Association website](#).

Taste is important: European consumers want tropical exotic fruit to be ripe when bought, so that the fruit can be eaten immediately after purchase. Exotic fruit is generally expensive, thus increasing the importance of taste. The taste of rambutans should be sweet, while the texture of the fruit is firm.

Tips:

- Make sure that supply chain logistics and transport processes do not affect product taste in any significant way.
- Find the right varieties with the preferred taste for the destination market of your choice.
- Discuss with your buyer how to adopt the right mix of certificates, varieties, and ripeness during transport, for your tropical fruit.

Growing demand for exotic products: In general, there is a growing market for niche products in Europe. Rambutan exports can benefit from this trend, provided that the products are marketed well. Attention to the healthiness, special culinary value of the produce, and a fair trade character, will help increase consumption.

Tip:

- Offer rambutans with instructions on how to store and prepare them, include for example home recipes. Many European consumers are prepared to try 'new' products. Health, ease-of-use, price, and enjoyment are important principles that form the basis of consumer purchases.

Ethnic market: Economic globalisation, increased ethnic diversity in Europe, and a greater demand for healthy and more diverse food products have opened a window of opportunity for the commercial production and marketing of tropical fruit, including rambutan. For rambutan, the ethnic Asian population is important. European consumers are gradually becoming more familiar with Asian (and other) cuisines. This increases the market for rambutan. Supermarkets and green grocers are offering a wider variety of exotics to cater to this trend.

What requirements should fresh rambutans comply with to be allowed on the European market?

Buyer requirements can be divided into (1) musts, requirements you must meet in order to enter the market, such as legal requirements, (2) common requirements, which are those most of your competitors have already implemented, in other words, the ones you need to comply with in order to keep up with the market, and (3) niche market requirements for specific segments.

For general information see also the buyer requirements for fresh fruit and vegetables on the [CBI Market Intelligence Platform for fresh fruit and vegetables](#).

Requirements you must meet

Pesticides

Pesticide residues are one of the crucial issues for fruit and vegetable suppliers. To avoid health and environmental damage, the EU has set maximum residue levels (MRLs) for pesticides in and on food products. Products containing more pesticides than allowed will be withdrawn from the EU market. Note that buyers in several Member States such as the UK, Germany, The Netherlands and Austria, use MRLs which are stricter than the MRLs laid down in EU legislation.

Tips:

- To find out the MRLs that are relevant for rambutan, use the EU [MRL database](#) in which all harmonised MRLs can be found. You can search on your product or pesticide used and the database shows the list of the MRLs associated to your product or pesticide. Read more about [MRLs in the EU Export Helpdesk](#).
- Reduce the amount of pesticides by applying [integrated pest management](#) (IPM) in production. IPM is an agricultural pest control strategy that includes growing practices and chemical management.
- Check with your buyers if they have additional requirements on MRLs and pesticide use.

Plant Health

Fruit and vegetables exported to the EU must comply with the EU legislation on plant health. The EU has laid down [phytosanitary requirements](#) to prevent introduction and spread of organisms harmful to plants and plant products in the EU. The requirements mainly imply that:

- Certain listed organisms are not allowed to be imported into the EU, unless specific circumstances apply. EU control measures are subject to change.
- Plants or plant products specified in Part B, Annex V of the Plant Health Directive [2000/29/EC](#) must be accompanied by a plant health certificate. A model phytosanitary certificate can be found through Annex VII of the Plant Health Directive.

Tips:

- Check with the relevant National Plant Protection Organisation (NPPO) or your EU importer what the requirements are for your product. Click [here](#) for a list of NPPOs
- Read more about [plant health in the EU Export Helpdesk](#).

Contaminants

Contaminants are substances that have not been intentionally added to food, but which may be present as a result of the various stages of its production, packaging, transport or warehousing. To avoid negative impact on the quality of food and risks to human health, the EU has set limits for several contaminants.

Tips:

- Find the relevant contaminant levels in the annex of [Regulation \(EC\) 1881/2006](#). All contaminants are presented and maximum levels are provided per product or groups of products.
- Find out more about prevention and reduction of lead Contamination in the [Code of Practice](#) published by the Codex Alimentarius.
- Check the European Commission's factsheet on food contaminants "[Managing food contaminants: how the EU ensures that our food is safe](#)" and read more about [contaminants in the EU Export Helpdesk](#).

Control of food imported to the EU

To ensure food safety and avoid environmental damage, the EU has restricted the use of certain chemicals in several Regulations and Directives. Your products will be subjected to official controls. These controls are carried out to ensure that all foods marketed in the EU market are safe, i.e. in compliance with the requirements applicable to them. There are three types of checks:

- a) Documentary checks
- b) Identity checks
- c) Physical checks

In the event of repeated non-compliance of specific products originating from particular countries, the EU can decide that controls will be carried out on an increased level or lay down emergency measures. Controls can be carried out at all stages of import and marketing in the EU. However, most checks are done at the points of entry in the EU.

Switzerland, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein are not EU members, but are part of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA). Their food laws are to a large extent identical with EU legislation. However, some aspects of legislation may differ.

In Switzerland, import checks are the responsibility of the [Swiss Customs Administration](#) and the [Federal Office of Public Health](#).

Tips:

- Familiarise yourself with the procedures before planning your exports to the EU. Failure to follow the right procedures could cause decrease and delay of orders, increase costs and result in actions by EU enforcement authorities.
- Make sure that the accompanying documents correspond (from A-Z!) with the food products contained in the consignment.
- Read more about [health control in the EU Export Helpdesk](#).
- Consult the [EU Export Helpdesk](#) for a full list of requirements for tropical exotic fruit, including rambutan, selecting the product code: **08109075**

Common buyer requirements

Certification as guarantee

As food safety is a top priority in all EU food sectors, you can expect most buyers to request extra guarantees from you in form of certification. [GlobalG.A.P.](#) is the most commonly requested food safety certification scheme, essential for exporting rambutans to the EU, especially via supermarkets. GLOBALG.A.P is a pre-farm-gate standard that covers the whole agricultural production process, from before the plant is in the ground to the non-processed product (processing not covered).

Examples of other food safety management systems that can be required are British Retail Consortium ([BRC](#)) and International Food Standard ([IFS](#)), [FSSC22000](#) or [SQF](#). These management systems are additional to GLOBALG.A.P. and are recognised by the [Global Food Safety Initiative \(GFSI\)](#).

Tips:

- Anticipate for stricter requirements in the future. For exotics like rambutan, most buyers will not demand certifications yet. However, being certified (e.g. GLOBALG.A.P.) proves good entrepreneurship and trustworthiness of your company and is certainly a plus in the eyes of professional importers.
- Read more on the different Food Safety Management Systems at the [Standards Map](#).
- As food safety is a major issue; work proactively with buyers to improve food safety and be transparent and up-to-date with buyer requirements and regulations.

Quality standards

The General EU Marketing Standards also apply to rambutans. EU buyers often require compliance with the standards of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe ([UNECE](#)) or the [Codex Alimentarius Commission](#) (CAC). It should be noted that quality refers to both food safety and food quality.

As rambutans are harvested ripe and deteriorate fast after harvesting, cold storage, good packaging, and cold chain transportation are very important. Experiments have shown that by choosing optimal packaging and controlling the cold chain, shelf life can be greatly improved. Good handling of the products is necessary to assure the optimal initial quality and the maximum shelf life of rambutans. Gentle handling during harvest and transport minimises mechanical damages and avoids any enzymatic decays of fruits.

Tips:

- Make sure you supply the quality as agreed in the product specifications and discuss with your buyer which additional certificates are required. These requirements vary between countries and market segments.
- Pay much attention to an effective post-harvest chain, including cold storage.
- Work together with other exporters and producers in order to increase the export potential of rambutan from your country and to meet EU buyer requirements in terms of high quality, packaging and timely delivery.
- Apply sustainable production methods. Organising production of small farms in a producer organisation can help to overcome some of the organisational difficulties of limiting the environmental impact of production.
- Improve your market chances by securing an experienced importer with a focus on sustainability and involving him in your supply chain organisation.

Niche markets: Organic and Fair trade requirements

Organic, a growing niche market

An increasing number of EU consumers prefer food products that are produced and processed by natural methods. The market for organic rambutans is still small, but with a growing demand and limited supply. In order to market organic products in the EU, you have to use organic production methods according to [EU legislation](#). Furthermore, you have to use these production methods for at least two years before you can market the fruits and vegetables as organic. In addition, you (or your EU importer) must apply for an import authorisation from EU organic control bodies. After being audited by an accredited certifier, you may put the EU organic logo on your products, as well as the logo of the standard holder (e.g. [Soil Association](#) (especially relevant in the UK), [Naturland](#) (Germany) or [Bio Suisse](#) (Switzerland)). Some of these standards are slightly different, but they all comply with the EU legislation on organic production and labelling.

Tips:

- Implementing organic production and becoming certified can be expensive, so assess the market potential before making any investments.
- Consult the [Standards Map database](#) for the different organic certifications.
- For the export of organic rambutans into the European market, use a competent and specialised importer, who understands the market and knows the way into niche markets with their particular requirements.

Fair and sustainable

A small, but growing, niche market is the market for fresh products produced with more attention for on the social and/or environmental conditions in the producing areas. For rambutan social compliance is important, although product quality is top priority. Examples of social or sustainable labels for fresh fruit and vegetables are [Fairtrade](#) , [Fair for Life](#) and the [Rainforest Alliance Certification Scheme](#).

European buyers can adopt initiatives which may impact you as a supplier. For example the [Ethical Trading Initiative](#) (ETI) in the UK, or the [Business Social Compliance Initiative](#) (BSCI) in North-Western Europe increase the importance of social compliance.

Tips:

- Check your company's current performances. For example by doing a self-assessment on the [BSCI website](#).
- Consult the [Standards Map database](#) for more information and for differences between fair trade labels.

What competition do I face on the European rambutan market?

For general information about market competitiveness for fresh fruit and vegetables you can have a look at the [Market Competitiveness information](#) available at the CBI market intelligence platform. The platform also provides [tips for doing business with European buyers](#).

This section provides information about the market competitiveness of the EU market for rambutans.

Company competition:

- Worldwide production of rambutans is volatile and supplies to the European market varied a great deal in the past. Temporary oversupply has a big impact on prices. In the last few years, prices of Rambutan have been relatively stable, as there are not many new suppliers of rambutans entering the market.
- The majority of fresh rambutans in the European retail channels are sold through specialist grocery stores and ethnic (Asian) stores. These shops may be less powerful than large supermarket retail chains, but still demand only the best quality. For tropical and exotic fruits, MRLs, quality during harvest and shipping and corporate social responsibility (CSR) (e.g. working conditions) are becoming increasingly important, as are supply chain transparency and information sharing. Long-term partnerships are sought by EU buyers to ensure product supply and quality.

Market entry:

- Certification and meeting both legal and non-legal requirements form a major hurdle for producers and exporters wishing to enter the European market. Certification applies to good agricultural practices, legal requirements mainly to MRLs, plant health issues, and food safety. For fresh rambutan, the quality of the fruit is one of the major issues: shelf life, colour, taste.

Product competition:

- In the last decade the diversity of fruit and vegetables supplied to the European market has increased. Exotic tropical fruits compete with other fruits, but can also complement them. They are distinguished by a higher price, a more exclusive image and perceived health benefits.
- Fresh rambutans experience competition mainly from lychees, longan, and similar fruit, but also from other special exotic fruit like star fruit, sharon fruit, and dragon fruit (pitahaya). In addition, fresh rambutans face competition of preserved lychees and rambutan (cans and jars).

Tips:

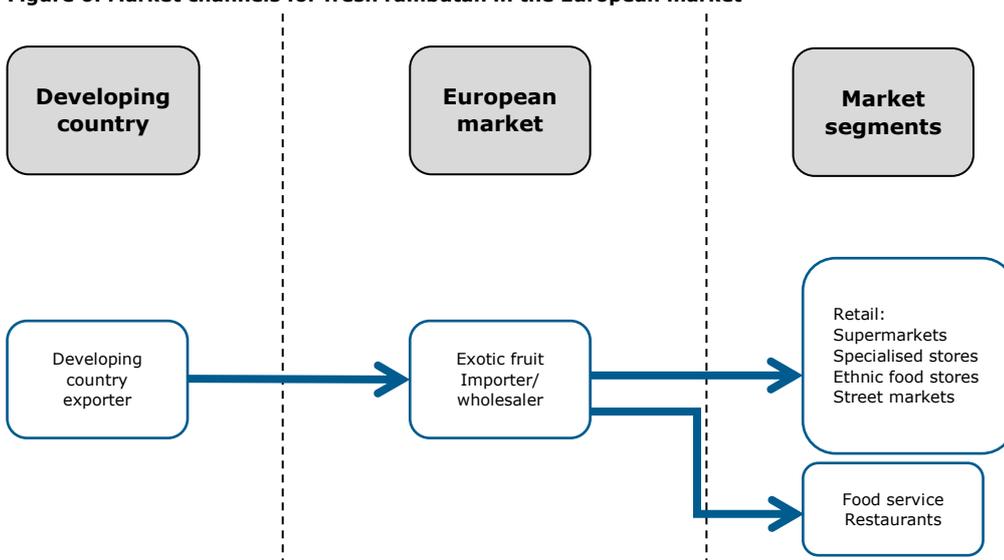
- Plan your supply of rambutan carefully according market demand. Rambutan is a specialty product and volumes in the market are small.
- Do not compete on price alone, but build partnerships with buyers and strive for excellent product quality and handling.
- Establish a credible track record including transparent information on your company and product quality. Being part of a stable partnership and being a trustworthy supplier can help you to establish and maintain your position on the market.
- Use storytelling (e.g. show its origin and producer), novel packaging and premium quality as methods for setting your product apart.

What do the trade channels and interesting market segments look like in Europe for fresh rambutans?

For more general information about market channels and segments, you can have a look at the [Market Channels and Segments](#) available at the CBI market intelligence platform.

This section provides information about the various marketing channels through which fresh rambutan are marketed in Europe.

Figure 6: Market channels for fresh rambutan in the European market



Interpretations and opportunities

Specialised importers: Fresh rambutans are a typical specialty fruit for the European market. Specialised importers buy a whole range of exotics fruits from different countries and redistribute these to wholesalers and other customers in different European countries. In typical trade hubs such as the Netherlands and Belgium there are various importers that have built expertise in the trade of new exotic fruits, including rambutans.

Importers/distributors differ in their relationship with the retail sector. Some are suppliers for private label products; others have their own brand, while others market the brand of a producer (cooperation).

Regional differences in market channels for tropical fruit: In Europe, there are differences between the compositions of market channels. The retail landscape in the south and east of Europe is often more traditional. Northern countries like Germany, the UK, the Netherlands, and Belgium have a very dominant retail channel and tropical fruit is sold by large supermarkets. France and Spain go beyond that with large hypermarkets, alongside smaller specialist shops. Countries in the Alpine region, such as Switzerland and Austria, are more favourably disposed towards small local shops.

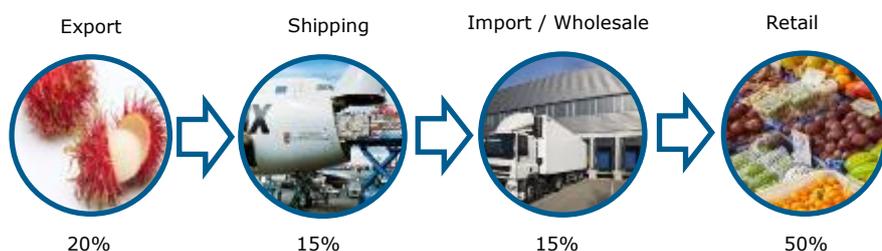
Ethnic segments: Most exotic tropical fruits are sold via the retail channel. Ethnic fruit stores and specialist shops are important retail outlets for rambutans, more so than it is for other types of tropical fruit. For rambutans, the ethnic Asian population is important. Other consumers are also gradually becoming more familiar with Asian (and other) cuisines. Therefore the food service (i.e. restaurants and catering) is also an important market channel for rambutan.

Tips:

- Find a European importer by presenting yourself at trade fairs such as [Fruit Logistica](#). All of the different channels start with a strong relationship with a European partner.
- Choose the importer, based on the size of your company or market strategy.
- If you choose the organic production method, find companies that are specialists in organic products.

What are end market prices for fresh rambutan?

Figure 7: Price breakdown for fresh rambutans



Prices are generally somewhat higher in Scandinavian countries such as Sweden and Norway and somewhat lower in the Netherlands and Belgium, as well as in Southern and Eastern European countries. Wholesale prices of air-shipped rambutans from Thailand and Vietnam usually vary between 7 and 9 euro per kilogram.

Retail prices vary around 18 to 22 euros per kilo, depending on the availability and quality. Rambutans are not always available in supermarkets.

Figure 6: Example consumer prices

	VersBestellen.nl
	Online shop, the Netherlands
	Rambutan
	250g
	5,10 euro

	<p>Tesco</p> <p>Supermarket, United Kingdom</p> <p>Rambutan</p> <p>150g</p> <p>2,80 euro</p>
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Useful Sources

Export and market entry support:

- CBI - <http://www.cbi.eu/>
- CBI market studies on fresh fruit and vegetables - http://www.cbi.eu/marketintel_platform/fresh-fruit-vegetables/136122/buyerrequirements
- EU Export Helpdesk - http://exporthelp.europa.eu/thdapp/index_en.html
- ITC - International Trade Centre of WTO and UN - <http://www.intracen.org/>
- SIPPO - <http://www.switzerland-ge.com/global/export/en/sippo-services>

Certification schemes:

- British Retail Consortium (BRC) - <http://www.brcglobalstandards.com/>
- BSCI - <http://www.bsci-intl.org/>
- FAIRTRADE - <http://www.fairtrade.net/>
- GLOBALG.A.P - http://www.globalgap.org/uk_en/
- ISEAL ALLIANCE - <http://www.isealalliance.org/>
- ITC Standards Map - <http://www.standardmap.org/>
- Rainforest Alliance - <http://www.rainforest-alliance.org/>

Marketing and trade standards:

- Codex Alimentarius - <http://www.codexalimentarius.org/codex-home/en/>
- European Food legislation - http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/organic/eu-policy/legislation_en
- The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe - <http://www.unece.org/>

Statistics and sector information:

- Agricultural Research for Development - <http://www.cirad.fr/en>
- Fruitrop - <http://www.fruitrop.com> (publication of CIRAD)
- Freshfel - <http://www.freshfel.org>
- Freshplaza - <http://www.freshplaza.com>
- European Statistics Eurostat - <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat>
- FAOSTAT - <http://faostat.fao.org/>
- ITC Trade Map - <http://www.trademap.org/>
- United Nations Comtrade - <http://comtrade.un.org/>



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