

The European market potential for black pepper

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Black pepper is the most used spice in the world. Its popularity helps create stable demand. Large markets, such as Germany, the United Kingdom, France and the Netherlands, offer opportunities for suppliers from developing countries. Sustainably produced pepper can improve your chances of successfully entering the market. In the medium-to-long term, there is a growing demand for organic spices known for their health benefits, such as black pepper. In an emerging niche trend, oils, powders and extracts are used in supplements, wellness products and personal care.

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1. Product description: black pepper

Black pepper is the dried berry of *Piper nigrum*. As the name suggests, most traded *Piper nigrum* berries are black, but they are also traded in white or green varieties. For clarity, the term 'peppercorn' is often used instead of 'pepper' for the green and red berries. This is because in English, the terms 'green pepper' and 'red pepper' are also used to describe vegetables and spices belonging to the *Capsicum* and *Pimenta* genera.

Figure 1: Black pepper from Vietnam



Source: [GloballyCool](#), October 2025

Piper nigrum is a climbing shrub, grown in different tropical parts of the world. Because the plant also likes shade, it is sometimes grown together with coffee and tea on plantations. Each plant can produce berries for 40 years. There are also other spices from the genus *Piper*. These include *Piper Longum* (long pepper), *Piper cubeba* (Java pepper) or *Piper guineense* (Ashanti or Benin pepper). However, these are not widely known on the European market.

The main types of *Piper nigrum* pepper are:

- Black pepper – berries with unbroken pericarp (the flesh and skin surrounding the seed). In the production process, berries are harvested once when a certain amount (e.g 10%) of the berries are ripe. At the point of harvest, they can be green to orange / red at its maximum maturity. They darken during drying due to enzymatic oxidation. In most producing countries, pepper is dried by farmers in the sun. Machine-drying is an alternative. You should use this when your environment has high humidity.
- White pepper – ripe berries with the pericarp removed. These are basically the seeds of the peppercorns. White pepper is usually produced by soaking fully ripe berries in water. This process changes the flavour and taste. It also decomposes the pericarp, so it can easily be removed.
- Green pepper – unripe berries. In the production process, blanching and controlled tunnel drying are mainly used to prevent oxidation and preserve the green colour. For the European market, you can use sulphur dioxide as a colour-preserving additive for dried or brined green peppercorns. You do need to keep it to a maximum level of 100mg/kg ([Regulation \(EC\) No 1333/2008](#)), and you need to mention it on the label as allergen. This is important to underline, because sulphur dioxide is not mentioned in the [Codex Alimentarius Standard CXS 326-2017 for Black, White and Green Peppers](#) and the [International Pepper Community](#) pepper standard.

The fruit of *Piper nigrum* is red when it is fully ripe, but it is not traded in this colour, except a very small volume of red pepper in brine. The name 'pink peppercorns' is mainly used for pink berries of [Brazilian pepper](#) (*Schinus terebinthifolia*) or [Peruvian pepper](#) (*Schinus molle*). In some producing countries (such as Vietnam, Madagascar, Seychelles, India), pepper is also sold as red, but quantities are small and mostly for domestic consumption. This product is also very expensive, with a price that is 3-4 times higher than that of dried black pepper.

Black pepper can be used whole, crushed, or ground. It is the most widely used spice in the world, as it gives pungency and flavour to food. The alkaloid piperine gives the pungency, while essential oils give the specific flavour. Ground white pepper is an important spice in light-coloured food, where dark particles are undesirable. Green pepper is also used in brine. Mixes of black, green, white and pink peppercorns are popular in transparent grinders. This is because of the attractive colour combination and rich flavour.

This study covers general information about the market for pepper in Europe. This may interest producers in developing countries like yours. In this study, 'Europe' refers to the 27 member states of the European Union (EU), plus the United Kingdom (UK), Norway, Switzerland, Iceland and Liechtenstein. Table 1 lists the products in the pepper product group and their product codes.

Table 1: Products in the pepper product group

Combined Nomenclature Number	Product
090411	Pepper of the genus <i>Piper</i> , neither crushed nor ground

Combined Nomenclature Number	Product
090412	Pepper of the genus Piper, crushed or ground

Global production increased from 430,000 tonnes in 2016 to over 570,000 tonnes in 2020. The International Pepper Community (IPC) now estimates that [the annual production of pepper ranges between 550,000 and 600,000 tonnes](#). The leading producer is Vietnam, with a 35-45% share each year, followed by Brazil, India, Indonesia, China, Cambodia and Sri Lanka. However, [production is declining and so are stocks](#). This is due to factors like climate change and rising costs, and because of crop competition. This means that from time to time farmers switch to more profitable competing crops.

2. What makes Europe an interesting market for black pepper?

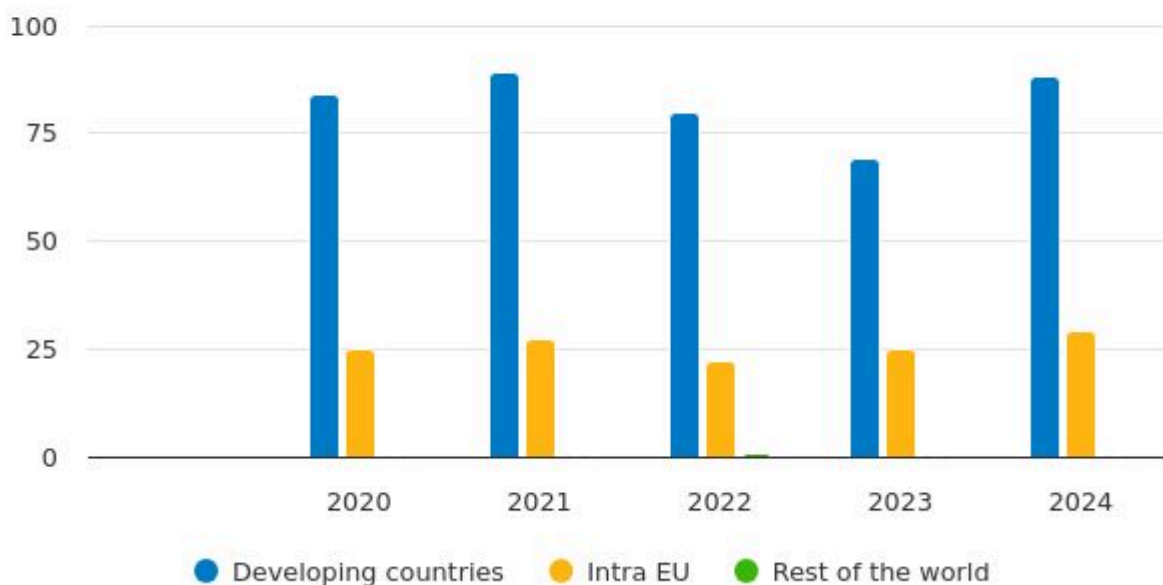
Black pepper is the most important and widely consumed spice in Europe. It is an important ingredient in many dishes. The popularity of black pepper does not decrease over time. Its specific characteristics make it impossible to find a good substitute. Also, European consumers are used to the taste of black pepper. It has been present in European cuisine for centuries. Pepper was so valuable in European history that it was often used as currency. For that reason, black pepper is sometimes called 'the king of spices'.

In Europe, the most-used form of black pepper in food is ground pepper, but 75% of black pepper is still imported as whole. However, ground pepper imports have grown fast to 26% of total black pepper imports in 2024. European importers prefer whole peppercorns because it is easier to test and control their safety and quality. But improving processing skills at origin have led to more crushed pepper exports to Europe. The main challenge for crushing pepper at origin is flavour preservation, as whole peppercorns release their flavour after crushing.

European pepper imports and exports

Figure 2: European imports of black pepper by main origin, 2020-2024

In thousand tonnes



Eurostat and ITC TradeMap

Source: UN Comtrade (August 2025)

Europe and the United States of America (USA) are the largest importers of black pepper in the world, accounting for about 20% of global imports each. Most of Europe's black pepper imports are consumed within Europe. They generally rise or decrease based on production output, at around 100-120 thousand tonnes. For example, in 2022-2023, European imports were relatively low due to a decline in supplies from Brazil. The lower availability also led to an increase in trade prices, as the lower supply led to growing competition among buyers. In 2024, the leading supplier, Vietnam, increased its supplies to Europe to fill the supply gap. They could do this because they imported extra black pepper from Brazil)

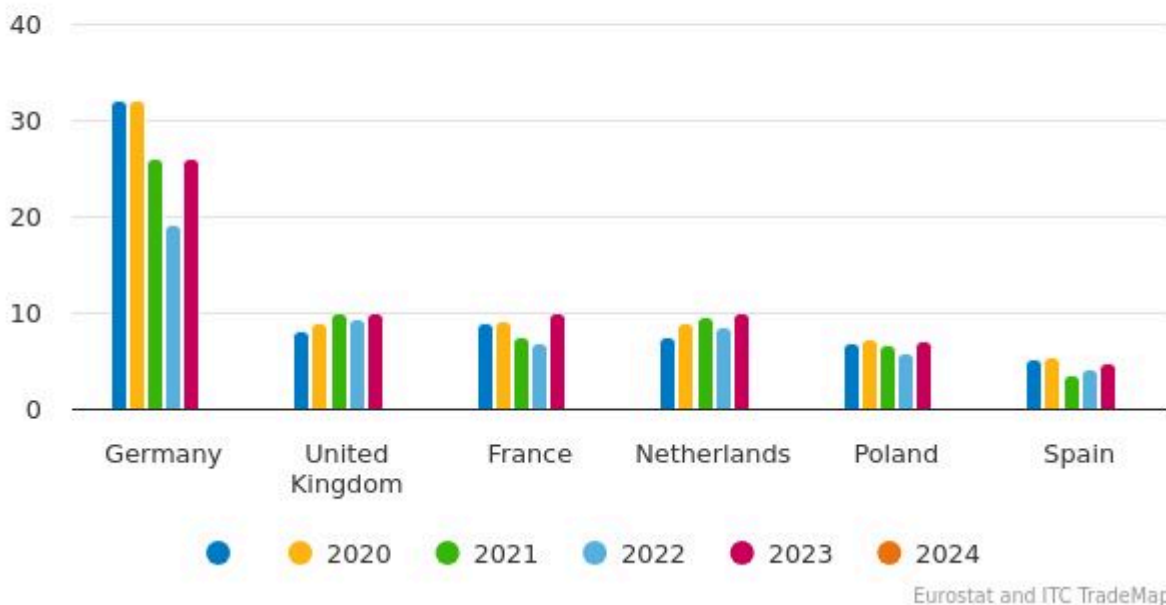
As Europe does not produce pepper, about three-quarters of Europe's imports come from developing countries. Some of these imports are then traded within Europe. Around half of internal European trade consists of simple re-exports of black pepper that originally came from producing countries. The other half includes processed (ground) pepper. Internal European trade in 2024 totalled 29,000 tonnes.

Organic-certified black pepper represents only about 2% of the total import volume. However, organic-certified black pepper imports to the EU27 are still among the largest in the world. This makes Europe an interesting market for exporters of organic-certified black pepper.

3. Which European countries offer the most opportunities for black pepper?

Germany is Europe's largest importer of black pepper, with a 23% share in 2024. The UK follows with 8.9%, France and the Netherlands with 8.6% each, Poland with 6.0% and Spain with 4.0%. Several of these countries also re-export a significant share of their imported pepper, especially Germany, the Netherlands, France and Spain. As Europe's main importer of black pepper, Germany is an interesting focus market. The other leading markets are also promising.

Figure 3: Leading European importing countries of pepper from developing countries, 2020-2024
in thousand tonnes



Source: UN Comtrade (August 2025)

Germany: Europe's largest conventional and organic importer and market

Germany offers good opportunities, being the largest importing country and consumer market for pepper in Europe. Germany's pepper imports declined sharply in 2022 and 2023. This was caused by a combination of lower production in Vietnam and import volume peaks between 2019-2022. There was also lower consumption in recent years due to the economic recession in Germany.

The volume of Brazilian black pepper imported to Germany declined. This was due to numerous Brazilian black pepper consignment rejections at the German/European border since 2019 (because of salmonella). At the same time, Vietnamese traders compensated for the lower local black pepper supply with imports from Brazil. German imports went down for 2 years in a row (2022-2023) but bounced back in 2024. This was thanks to regained consumption growth and increased supplies from Vietnam. Overall, Germany's pepper imports decreased from 32,000 tonnes in 2020 to 26,000 tonnes in 2024, at an average annual rate (CAGR) of -4.5%.

More than 90% of these imports are whole pepper, the remaining 10% is ground pepper. Germany re-exports between 30% and 40% of its imported quantities to other European countries. Germany imports 66% of all organic-certified black pepper imported to the EU27, equal to 980 tonnes. Interestingly, they grew faster (+0.9% per year) than conventional pepper imports.

Vietnam is Germany's leading pepper supplier. Its import market share grew from 39% in 2020 to 62% in 2024. Brazil follows, with a share that declined from 45% to 21%. As mentioned before, there was a problem with salmonella contamination, which led to border rejections. Indonesia generally supplies about 6-7%, and India 3-4%. Other suppliers are Cambodia (2-4%), Sri Lanka (about 2%) and Tanzania (0.6% in 2024).

German companies mainly import black pepper and further process it either by simple crushing and packing. They also use it as an ingredient in spice blends and seasoning preparations. A significant share of black pepper in Germany, as well as in the whole of Europe, is used in the food processing industry and in the food service segment.

Fuchs Group (officially DF World of Spices) has the largest retail market share among independent brands. They

have several brands of spices that include pepper. These include [Fuchs](#), [Ostmann](#), [BioWagner](#) (an organic brand), and [Ubena](#). Fuchs Group is the largest European spice manufacturer and the leading privately owned global spice company. They have branches in several European countries and the USA. They also have purchasing operations in Brazil, Cambodia and China. In Brazil, Fuchs has its own pepper purchasing company, [Tropoc](#). Tropoc collaborates with the Brazilian Ministry of Agriculture to develop more sustainable pepper production.

In addition to its own brands, Fuchs Group also packs pepper and other spices for several German private labels. The main private labels in Germany are Kania (by discounter chain [Lidl](#)), Le Gusto (by [Aldi Süd](#)), Portland (by [Aldi Nord](#)), Gut & Günstig (by [Edeka](#)), and REWE and REWE Beste Wahl (by [REWE](#)). Examples of other companies with their own brands are [Alba](#), [Merschbrock-Wiese Gewürz](#), [Hartkorn](#) (organic), [Brecht](#) and [Nebona](#).

Germany is the [largest European market for organic products](#), so it is a particularly attractive market for organic pepper. Specialised organic food retailers such as [Biomarkt](#), [DM](#) or [Alnatura](#) sell a lot of the organic spices in Germany. Leading mainstream retailers also have their own ranges of organic private labels.

The [German Spice Association](#) has 92 members that are primarily engaged in refining spices and producing spice blends, spice preparations, and other seasoning ingredients. Their combined value in 2018 exceeded €1.2 billion.

Figure 4: Organic-certified black pepper in a 70-gram stand-up pouch in a German health-food store



Source: [GloballyCool](#), October 2025

The United Kingdom: Leading ground pepper importer

The UK is Europe's second-largest importer and consumer of pepper. Its pepper imports grew from 8,000 tonnes in 2020 to 10,000 tonnes in 2024, at a CAGR of 7.0%. About two-thirds of the UK's pepper imports are crushed or ground pepper. Most of the imported pepper in the UK is used for domestic consumption. Only around 6% is re-exported to two other European markets (Ireland and the Netherlands).

Vietnam is the UK's leading pepper supplier, supplying about two-thirds of imports. India follows, with 10% in 2024. Direct imports from Indonesia and Brazil have increased considerably. Indonesia's market share grew from 2.4% in 2020 to 9.4% in 2024, and Brazil's from 0.3% to 7.4%. The UK also used to import an annual 2-3 thousand tonnes from the Netherlands. But these re-exports dropped sharply in 2022 when they were replaced by direct imports.

In the retail segment, private labels of retail chains like [Tesco](#), [Sainsbury's](#), [ASDA](#), and [Morrisons](#) have the largest market shares for black pepper. The UK's 2 leading independent brands selling pepper are [Schwartz](#), owned by McCormick, and [Bart](#), part of the Germany-based Fuchs Group. Other brands include [Santa Maria](#) (a Swedish company, part of the Paulig group), [East End](#) (a specialist trader of spices, pulses and rice), Saxa (by [Premier Foods](#)), [Maldon](#) (a salt specialist) and [Daylesford](#) (an organic food supplier).

The industry estimates that there are around 100 importers of pepper in the UK, some of them trading in small quantities. Several large companies are members of the [Seasoning and Spice Association](#). [Olam Group](#), the largest global pepper supplier, has a trade office in the UK – Olam International Ltd. Some notable examples of other pepper importers and traders in the UK are [British Pepper & Spice](#), [Bart Ingredients](#), [East End Foods](#), [Silk Route](#), [Fiddes Payne](#), [HJ Langdon](#), and Altonpride. Many of the leading importers perform processing activities such as grinding, mixing, blending and packing.

Fairtrade-certified pepper can offer opportunities for new suppliers, as the UK is the largest Fairtrade market in Europe. As of May 2023, there are 4 Fairtrade-certified companies in the UK for the trade in black pepper: [Cotswold Health Products](#), [Dani Organic Foods](#), [The Bart Ingredients](#) and [Tchai Ovna](#). Fairtrade-certified suppliers can enter a niche segment of the British market and avoid competing with the leading suppliers.

France: Culinary traditions drive rising black pepper imports

French imports of pepper grew from 8.9 thousand tonnes in 2020 to 10 thousand tonnes in 2024, at a CAGR of 3.4%. Most pepper is imported whole, 83% in 2024. France's re-exports accounted for 16-24% of total imports, the main markets for French pepper re-exports being Belgium, Italy and Portugal. France is the EU27's 3rd-largest importer of organic-certified black pepper, reaching 150 tonnes in 2025. The organic market, however, was under pressure, resulting in a 5.8% decline in imports.

Vietnam is France's leading supplier of pepper. Its import market share grew from 52% in 2020 to 64% in 2024. Brazil follows, with a share that declined from 26% to 15% caused by Brazilian black pepper's problem of salmonella contamination. Indonesia generally supplies about 14%, and India 3-4%. Other, relatively small suppliers include Madagascar (approximately 3%), India (approximately 2%), and Cambodia and China (approximately 0.5% each).

Most retail chains in France sell pepper under their own private labels, including [Carrefour](#) (Carrefour and Carrefour Bio labels), [Leclerc](#) (Rustica and eco labels), and [Auchan](#) (Auchan and Auchan Bio labels). Leading independent spice brands are [Ducros](#) (now owned by McCormick) and [Fuchs](#). Examples of other brands are [Sainte Lucie](#), [Albert Menes](#) and [Espig](#) (brand of Cepasco that was acquired by [Haudecoeur](#) in 2024). French retailers select packers of private labels in competitive tender processes, so some of the private label pepper is packed in other countries.

Figure 5: Black pepper of a local French brand in a mainstream supermarket



Source: [GloballyCool](#), July 2025

Examples of French pepper importers and traders are [Haudecoeur](#) (including brands like [Spigol](#)), [Arcadie](#), [Beaun'Epices](#), [Le Jardin des Epices](#), [Fuchs](#), [Epicea](#), [Sainte Lucie](#), [Soco Herb](#), [Le Comptoir & Co](#), [Agidra](#) and [Eric Bur](#). Some have developed their own brands, and some act only as wholesalers.

The Netherlands: European trade hub

The Netherlands is an important European trade hub for black pepper. Its imports grew from 7.3 thousand tonnes in 2020 to 10 thousand tonnes in 2024, at a strong CAGR of 8.4%. The Netherlands is a major trader of pepper. They re-export a large but declining share of imports to other European countries, from 75% in 2020 down to 40% in 2024. The balance remained in the country for domestic consumption (6,800 tonnes in 2024). The main markets for Dutch re-export are Belgium, France, Hungary, Germany and Spain.

Vietnam is the leading supplier of pepper to the Netherlands, accounting for more than half of the country's imports. Brazil followed with 22% in 2024, Indonesia with 11%, China with 5.1%, and India with 4.5%. South Africa, Tanzania and Sri Lanka are small suppliers. A small volume of pepper imports is organic-certified: 120 tonnes in 2024. Imports have decreased by 17% per year, with most volume coming from Tanzania, followed by Vietnam and Sri Lanka.

Retail chains such as [Albert Heijn](#) (AH label), [Aldi](#) (De Kruidencompany label) and [Jumbo](#) control a lot of the pepper retail sales in the Netherlands. The leading independent spices and herbs brands in the Netherlands are [Verstegen](#) and [Euroma](#). Examples of other brands are [Drogheria](#) (an Italian brand owned by McCormick), [Santa Maria](#) (a Swedish/Scandinavian brand), [Kerala](#) (a brand by Belgian company [Isfi](#)), [Chan's](#) and [Jozo](#) (salt and pepper supplier).

The leading pepper supplier in the Netherlands is [Nedspice](#). Nedspice owns 2 pepper production facilities in Vietnam and is the main Dutch supplier of Vietnamese pepper. Olam Group, the global leading pepper supplier, has its main European office in the Netherlands, too. Examples of other pepper traders are [Pepperdesk](#) (specialised pepper importer), [Catz International](#), [BCFoods](#), [Euroma](#) (especially after it acquired spice trader [Intertaste](#)), and [AVS Spice](#). Some companies specialise in mixing, such as [Huijbregts Groep](#).

Some companies in the Netherlands have developed spice sterilisation services for suppliers, such as [Red River - Van Eck](#) (part of [Acom](#), just like [Catz](#)). Spice traders in the Netherlands are organised within the [Dutch Spice Association](#), which strongly promotes the sustainable sourcing of spices.

Figure 6: Organic black peppercorns in premium glass jars with indication of origin (North Vietnam)



Source: [GloballyCool](#)

Poland: Steady market dominated by Vietnam

Poland's pepper imports generally fluctuate around 6.7 thousand tonnes. Most pepper is imported whole, accounting for 89% in 2024, and almost all of the volume is conventional product. Between 12-20% of the imported quantities are re-exported, and the estimated domestic consumption in 2022 was 6,800 tonnes.

Polish imports of pepper are very concentrated, with Vietnam dominating and leaving little space for other suppliers. Approximately 90% of Poland's pepper imports originate from Vietnam, followed by India (4.9% in 2024), Indonesia (1.3%) and Brazil (1.1%).

The market share of pepper sold under private label in Poland is increasing, led by retail chain [Biedronka](#) and followed by Lidl, Tesco, ABC, Kaufland and others. Leading pepper brands in Poland include [Kamis](#) (by McCormick), [Prymat](#), and [Kotányi](#). Private-label sales are led by the retail chain [Biedronka](#) and followed by Lidl, Tesco, ABC, Kaufland and others. Polish pepper traders and processors include [Grotex](#), [Saran Enterprises](#) and [Magdal](#).

Spain: Imports are increasingly dominated by Vietnam

Spain's pepper imports generally fluctuate around 4.5 thousand tonnes. They dropped sharply in 2022 but have since bounced back. Most pepper is imported whole. In 2024, just 5% was ground pepper. Interestingly, the volume of organic-certified black pepper reached up to 170 tonnes in 2024 with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 3.8%, with Sri Lanka dominating the supply to Spain.

Vietnam is increasingly dominating Spain's pepper market. Its import market share grew from 55% in 2020 to 78% in 2024. Brazil's share declined from 21% to 3.9%, and India's from 13% to 3.4%. The gain of Vietnam at the cost of Brazil is equally visible in other leading European markets and was due to the same problem of salmonella contamination risks. Other suppliers are Indonesia (4.7% in 2024), Sri Lanka (3.7%), Madagascar (about 2.9%), Mexico (1.5%) and Tanzania (1.4%). Spain re-exports approximately 40% of its imports each year to other European countries, primarily France and Portugal, followed by Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Belgium.

Spanish retailers widely sell cinnamon under both private labels and brand names. There is own-label cinnamon available at Alcampo/Auchan (e.g., [ground organic 'canela molida'](#) shown online) and similar private labels at [Carrefour](#) and [Mercadona](#); branded options include [Carmencita \(Jesús Navarro\)](#) and [Ducros \(McCormick\)](#). Whole sticks and ground formats are commonly available. Organic lines exist but are niche; [Artemis Bio \(Herbes del Molí\)](#) is a notable example. Key Spanish spice traders active in cinnamon and broader spices include [Carmencita/Jesús Navarro](#), [DANI](#) and [Sabater](#).

Tips:

See the member list of the [German Spice Association](#) to find potential importers of pepper.

For contacts of other leading pepper importers, explore the member lists of national associations such as the [Seasoning and Spice Association](#) (UK), the [Royal Dutch Spices Association](#) (the Netherlands) and the [National Union of Processors of Pepper, Spices, Herbs and Vanilla](#) (France). For information about Polish companies, contact the [Polish Chamber of Commerce](#).

See our study on [Market Statistics and Outlook for Spices and Herbs](#) for more information about general trade developments within the European spices sector.

Specifically, check trade statistics of your interest via tools such as ITC [TradeMap](#) or [Acces2Markets](#). Use HS codes 090411 and 090412 to analyse the black pepper trade.

4. Which trends offer opportunities or pose threats in the European black pepper market?

There is a growing demand for sustainably produced and organic black pepper in Europe. European consumers' search for healthier ingredients presents opportunities for spices renowned for their health benefits, such as black pepper. In an emerging niche trend, black pepper is processed into oils, powders or extracts. These are used in food supplements, wellness products and personal care products.

Sustainable sourcing

Sustainability has become an important topic for European buyers. The main sustainability issues in pepper production involve the use of soil fertilisers, irrigation water and pesticide residues. Depending on the country, the production of spices itself involves labour issues affecting women, migrant or child labour. Market leaders are investing in sustainability not only to improve their image. They also get economic benefits, such as cost reduction, shorter supply chains, and easier compliance with European regulations.

In 2022, the European Spice Association (ESA) published guidelines on sustainability codes of conduct for its members. Since many European spices and herbs companies are ESA members, you will likely come across this guideline sooner or later.

Under this [sustainability code of conduct](#), ESA members shall monitor their own operations and those of their suppliers. The code's social criteria state that, for example:

- Companies must conduct business ethically;
- Child labour and forced labour are not allowed;
- Any form of discrimination is forbidden;
- The company and suppliers shall put ongoing efforts into reducing the use of resources, energy and emissions.

Another sustainability initiative in Europe is the [Sustainable Spices Initiative](#) (SSI). The participating companies (mainly large spice companies in and outside Europe) strive to grow the share of sustainably sourced products. The initiative recognises a [basket of sustainability standards](#) as meeting the benchmark for sustainable sourcing. Several pepper suppliers in developing countries are members of this initiative.

Consumers and buyers want to know that farmers are paid fairly and that farming does not harm the environment. Stories about topics like fair trade, reforestation or water-saving practices can make you stand out as a pepper supplier. Buyers often prefer sustainable, recyclable packaging.

The [Ethiopian spices exporter Shochoch](#) has understood the importance of sustainability. They promote environmental sustainability through organic practices and forest preservation. The company collaborates closely with smallholder farmers, so they can generate additional income to enhance their livelihoods. Shochoch connects these farmers with buyers and ensures they receive fair prices for their hand-harvested spices. This way, the company is contributing to sustainable economic growth.

An interesting example of innovative sustainable solutions is the use of gliricidia, a leguminous tree species, to [produce black pepper on live stakes](#) instead of the traditional wooden stake. This technique is used in Brazil, and according to researchers, it:

- Reduces the implementation costs per hectare by up to 46%;
- Consumes half the water used in the traditional model;
- Reduces the use of chemical fertilisers in plantings by up to 30%;
- Improves the quality of the product, with a 14% increase in piperine content.

It also contributes to the conservation of forest resources as it reduces dependence on commercial wood.

Sustainable innovations like this can make you stand out to European buyers.

Tips:

Promote sustainable and ethical aspects of your production process and the transparency of your supply chain. This means that you should be able to prove and communicate a traceable chain back to the raw materials. The more detailed and transparent this information is, the more consumers and buyers will appreciate it.

Read our [10 tips to go green in the spices and herbs sector](#) and [6 tips to become socially responsible in the spices and herbs sector](#) for more insights for producers and exporters to become more sustainable.

Europe is a large organic market

In a related trend, organic black pepper assures buyers that no synthetic pesticides or chemicals are used. This is a smaller but higher-value market, ideal for SMEs that can invest in certification, traceability and sustainability. Overall organic retail sales in Europe reached almost €55 billion in 2023, making it [the world's second-largest region for organic retail sales](#) (after North America). The largest national markets for organic foods are Germany, France and Switzerland. Organic-certified black pepper imports totalled 76,700 tonnes in 2024, with two-thirds of this volume destined for Germany, 12% for Spain and 10% for France.

Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Tanzania lead organic pepper exports to Europe. These three countries are home to several organic-certified exporters that have obtained certification to export to several markets worldwide.

Organic certification strengthens the perception of your product's natural and healthy characteristics. If you want to sell your black pepper as organic in Europe, it must be grown using organic production methods that comply with [EU organic legislation](#). An accredited certifier must audit your growing and processing facilities. This requires an investment, but a higher price can be generated when your product is certified. The price premium also reflects the lower yields and limited supply of organic black pepper.

Many food manufacturers do not prioritise the sourcing of organic spices. This is because European organic legislation allows products with at least 95% of organic ingredients to be labelled as organic. However, certification bodies are becoming stricter about the use of non-certified ingredients in organically certified food products. Certification bodies state that, given the increasing availability of organic spices, European organic regulations for organic labelling should now be fully applied to demand 100% organic content for spices. This could boost demand.

Tips:

Read the FiBL's/IFOAM's latest version of the publication [World of Organic Agriculture \(2025\)](#) to learn more about the global and European organic sector.

Make a cost-benefit analysis to determine if organic production is worthwhile for you. Carefully assess your capacity to apply organic farming principles. Productivity during conversion to organic farming tends to decline, sometimes by as much as 30%. The conversion phase usually takes 2 years, so take this into account.

If you have organic certification, try to combine it with other sustainable initiatives (dual certification)

to increase your competitiveness.

Read our study [What requirements must spices and herbs comply with to be allowed on the European market?](#) for more information about organic (certification) requirements.

Search for healthier ingredients

European consumers are searching for healthy ingredients as they acknowledge the importance of maintaining mental, physical and emotional well-being. This is one of the most important trends in the European food and beverage market. According to the WHO, [nearly 60% of Europeans are overweight](#), and [57 % say they are actively trying to eat healthier](#). Ingredients like salt (sodium), sugar and synthetic additives are increasingly replaced with healthier alternatives that add flavour, like spices.

Over the past few years, and especially since the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a rise in demand for natural products that offer health benefits. This offers growth opportunities for spices known to be healthy. Black pepper is among the most popular spices in Europe in terms of health benefits. Its active compound, piperine, is thought to play a role in enhancing nutrient absorption and improving digestion. It also has anti-inflammatory and antioxidant effects.

Still, the EU does not allow food manufacturers to make any official health claims for black pepper. The [EU register of health claims](#) does not contain any authorised claim for black pepper. If you do put a health claim on the label of your black pepper, national food safety authorities will force you to take your products off the market.

Tips:

Show buyers the research done on the health properties of black pepper. This lets them know about the potential benefits of your product.

Do not make health claims, as EU legislation does not allow it.

Value-added black pepper processing

European buyers are more and more interested in black pepper beyond the kitchen. Its essential oils, piperine content and aromatic properties make black pepper useful in food supplements, wellness products and personal care. To this end, black pepper is processed into oils, powders or extracts via steam distillation for essential oils, solvent or CO₂ extraction for active compounds, or blending into carrier oils. This lets processors create high-value products that get premium prices in the European market.

In this emerging niche trend, black pepper oils, powders or extracts are added to products like:

- Food supplements – Piperine can improve the absorption of nutrients like curcumin (from turmeric) and certain vitamins, minerals or amino acids. As a result, pepper is now used in supplements, sports nutrition products and fortified foods.
- Wellness products – Essential black pepper oils are used as an ingredient in massage oils and aromatherapy products for warming, stimulating and circulation-boosting effects.
- Personal care products – Essential black pepper oils contribute fragrance, antioxidant properties and skin-

stimulating effects to cosmetics, perfumes and shampoos. Piperine is used in shampoo as a component that is thought to help fight dandruff, enhance hair growth, prevent grey hair and improve scalp circulation.

Organic, fair trade and sustainably sourced products are highly sought-after in this segment.

Tips:

Supply raw or semi-processed black pepper with high quality and consistent piperine content. Certified organic, fair trade, and/or sustainably produced peppers are especially suitable for this niche market.

Produce simple value-added products locally, like pepper powders or crushed pepper and cold-pressed or simple oil extracts.

Partner with European processors. Full extraction and formulation are often done in Europe due to strict regulations, lab certifications and consumer safety rules. You can supply European processors with raw material or partially processed material ready for extraction.

Find out more about general trends from our study on [trends in the European spices and herbs market](#).

GloballyCool carried out this study on behalf of CBI.

Please review our [market information disclaimer](#).