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Report Highlights:

This report offers information for U.S. companies interested in exporting agri-food products to Italy, including an overview of the country's economic situation, market structure, export requirements, and best product export opportunities.

Market Fact Sheet: Italy

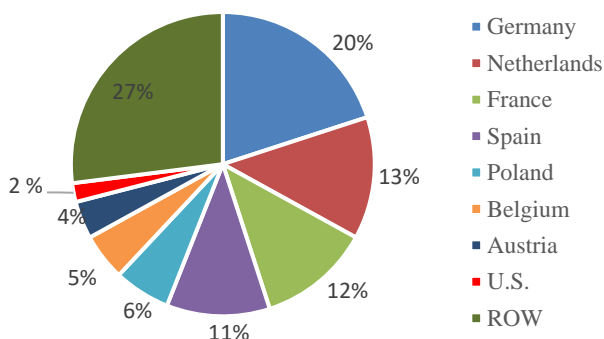
Executive Summary

Italy's economy is the ninth largest in the world and the third largest in the euro-zone, with a GDP estimated at \$2.2 trillion and a per capita GDP of \$38,221 in 2023. Being a net agricultural importer, most raw materials and ingredients are imported, as Italy's economic strength is in the processing and the manufacturing of goods. Italy exports mainly consumer-oriented products to the United States, while the United States exports mostly bulk commodities to Italy. In 2023, U.S. agricultural exports to Italy were \$1.8 billion, while U.S. imports from Italy were \$7.4 billion.

Imports of Consumer-Oriented Products

In 2023, Italy's imports of consumer-oriented products were \$35.7 billion, of which 85 percent originated from other EU-27 member states. Imports from the EU-27 were primarily dairy products, meat, and fruits and vegetables.

Imports of Consumer-Oriented Products, 2023



Food Processing Industry

The Italian food-processing industry continues to be highly fragmented, even with the consolidation of smaller companies. Progress in food technology, marketing innovations, "Made in Italy" products, and exports of finished food products are a mainstay contributing to Italy's increasing demand for food ingredients. Italian consumers have not diverged from their favor for baked goods, processed meat, seafood, and dairy products.

Food Retail Industry

The Italian food retail industry continues to be highly diversified. Hypermarkets, supermarkets, convenience stores, major discount stores, and specialized stores coexist with traditional corner grocery stores and open-air markets. Italy's food retail sales reached \$172.3 billion in 2023. Increased sales were registered by discounters (+3 percent), supermarkets (+1 percent), grocery retailers (+1 percent), and hypermarkets seeing a decrease of -1 percent.

Food Service Industry

In 2023, Italy's consumer food service value sales registered an increase of 8.8 percent compared to 2022, strengthened by tourism which has reached pre-pandemic levels.

Quick Facts CY 2023

Imports of Consumer-Oriented Products: \$35.7 billion

List of Top 10 Growth Products in Italy

- 1) Dairy Products
- 2) Processed Meat and Seafood
- 3) Processed Vegetables
- 4) Baked Goods
- 5) Pasta and Rice
- 6) Chocolate Confectionary
- 7) Tree Nuts
- 8) Sauces, Dressings, and Condiments
- 9) Savory Snacks
- 10) Ready Meals

Food Industry by Channels (\$ billion)

Retail Food Industry	\$172.3
Food Service-HRI	\$88.6
Food Processing	\$154.1
Food and Agriculture Exports	\$69.5

Top 10 Italian Retailers

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1) Conad | 2) Esselunga SpA |
| 3) Coop Italia | 4) Selex Gruppo Commerciale SpA |
| 5) Crai Secom SpA | 6) Gruppo V&Gé |
| 7) Consorzio C3 | 8) DIT |
| 9) Carrefour SA | 10) Despar Italia |

GDP/Population

Population: 59 million
 GDP: 2.2 trillion (2023 data)
 GDP per capita: \$38,221 (2023 data)

Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats

Strengths	Weaknesses
Italy's food consumption levels are among the highest in the world.	Competition from EU countries that export to Italy tariff-free.
Opportunities	Threats
Italy is dependent on raw imports for its processed food industry. Italian food products have a reputation for being of high quality.	Non-tariff barriers, including traceability requirements, can hinder U.S. exports.

Data and Information Sources:

Trade Data Monitor (TDM), LLC;
 Euromonitor; industry contacts

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SECTION I. MARKET OVERVIEW

Italy's economy is the ninth largest in the world down from the eighth largest in 2022, mainly due to geopolitical tension. Italy's economy is the third largest in the euro-zone, with a GDP estimated at \$2.2 trillion and a per capita GDP of \$38,221 in 2023. Being a net agricultural importer, most raw materials and ingredients are imported, as Italy's economic strength is in processing and manufacturing goods, primarily small and medium-sized family-owned firms. Italy exports mainly consumer products to the United States, while the United States exports mostly bulk commodities to Italy. In 2023, U.S. agricultural exports to Italy were \$1.8 billion, while U.S. imports from Italy were \$7.4 billion.

U.S. - Italy Agricultural Trade 2023

U.S. leading exports to Italy	Italian leading exports to the United States
Soybeans: \$992.6 million*	Wine: \$2.3 billion
Tree Nuts: \$315.1 million	Baked Goods, Cereals, and Pasta: \$1.1 billion*
Wheat: \$111.2 million	Olive Oil: \$706.7 million
Pulses: \$64.8 million*	Condiments and Sauces: \$596.7 million*
Distilled Spirits: \$48.2 million*	Dairy Products: \$515 million*
Total: \$1.8 billion*	Total: \$7.4 billion*

Source: BICO

*Highest export/import levels since 1970

Agriculture is one of Italy's key economic sectors, accounting for approximately 2.2 percent of GDP. Italy's agriculture is typical of the northern and southern division found in the European Union (EU). The northern part of Italy produces primarily grains, soybeans, meat, and dairy products, while the south specializes in fruits, vegetables, olive oil, and durum wheat. Even though much of its mountainous terrain is unsuitable for farming, approximately 6 percent of the population (59 million) is employed in farming. Most farms are small, with the average size being eleven hectares.

Advantages	Challenges
High consumer interest in new products.	Price competition is fierce. Italy's inflation rate for 2023 was 5.7 percent.
The tourism industry increases demand for hotel, restaurant, and institutional products.	Competition from similar food products produced in other EU countries that enter tariff-free.
U.S. style food is popular among the younger generation.	Negative attitude towards foods containing or made from biotech products.
U.S. food products are viewed as "trendy, new, and innovative", especially those with health benefits.	Complying with European and Italian regulations.
Italians are becoming more aware of foreign cuisines.	Competition in the Italian food market is fierce and many consumers still prefer traditional Italian products.
Exchange rate fluctuations can affect imports of U.S. products.	Mandatory customs duties, sanitary inspections, and labeling requirements can be onerous.

SECTION II. EXPORTER BUSINESS TIPS

- Survey existing and potential opportunities by reviewing [FAS GAIN](#) reports and consider engaging a market research firm to assist in analyzing market opportunities and challenges.
- Identify a key importer, broker, distributor, agent, or wholesaler, as they know how to best navigate the import and distribution process. They are key to doing business in Italy. Food importing is a specialized business, and an importer plays a pivotal role in navigating the hurdles of Italian and EU food law. Italian importers are mostly small to medium-sized companies and normally carry a whole range of products. The terms and length of association between the U.S. company and the Italian company are normally established by contract.
- Price is always important, although quality and novelty alone do move some imported products.
- Be prepared to start small by shipping a few pallets or cases of a product and recognize that it could take several months or years before an importer is ready to order full containers. Italians place a lot of importance on first building the trust to consolidate the business relationship.
- Scrutinize the purchasing procedures of the larger retail channels.
- Be willing to meet special EU labeling requirements and consider working through a consolidator or participating in mixed container shipments.
- Participation in some of the larger European international food trade shows (ANUGA, SIAL, and TUTTOFOOD) offers a good opportunity to get a sense of the Italian market and provides the opportunity to meet potential Italian importers or distributors.

SECTION III. IMPORT FOOD STANDARDS, REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES

As a member of the EU, Italy applies the “*Community Acquis*”, i.e., the entire body of EU laws and regulations associated with the treaties and international agreements to which the EU is a party. EU member states share a customs union, a single market in which goods can move freely, a common trade policy, and a common agricultural and fisheries policy.

To the extent that EU food laws have been harmonized, Italy’s food laws and regulations follow EU rules. Similarly, Italy employs the same tariffs and border measures as the other EU member states. Products imported into Italy must meet all Italian and EU food safety and quality standards, as well as labeling and packaging regulations. Italy’s Ministry of Health is responsible for food safety, while food production is the primary responsibility of the ministry of agriculture. Italy’s Ministry of Enterprises and Made in Italy covers standards, labeling, and trade promotion, and the Ministry of Economy and Finance is responsible for customs and duties.

For more information, see the latest *Italy Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards (FAIRS)* and *Italy FAIRS Certificate* reports at: <https://gain.fas.usda.gov/#/>. You may also want to review the FAIRS reports produced by the U.S. Mission to the EU in Brussels, Belgium that are available at: <https://usda-eu.org/reports/fairs-report/>.

Most imported food products enter the Italian market through brokers or specialized traders. Imported products from North America often enter Italy indirectly from the Port of Rotterdam or directly via air cargo. U.S. exporters need to work closely with the industry, focusing on the importers and distributors who can best promote U.S. products to the Italian food sector. These groups have an in-depth knowledge of import requirements, such as product certification, labeling, and packaging. They also typically handle shipping, customs clearance, warehousing, and distribution. American exporters who can assist in consolidating shipments from other U.S. sources or have a wide range of products for export have the greatest chance for success on the Italian market.

SECTION IV. MARKET SECTOR STRUCTURE AND TRENDS

➤ **Italian Food Processing Ingredients Sector**

The Italian food-processing industry continues to be highly fragmented, characterized by growing consolidation of smaller companies. In 2023, U.S. agricultural exports to Italy were valued at \$1.8 billion, while U.S. imports from Italy were valued at \$7.4 billion. Italy depends almost entirely on raw material imports, most of which arrive from other EU countries. For additional information, see *Italy Food Processing Ingredients 2024* report at: <https://gain.fas.usda.gov/#/>

➤ **Italian Food Retail Sector**

The Italian food retail industry continues to be highly diversified. Hypermarkets, supermarkets, convenience stores, major discount stores, and specialized stores coexist with traditional corner grocery stores and open-air markets. Italy's food retail sales reached \$172.3 billion in 2023. Increased sales were registered by discounters (+3 percent), supermarkets (+1 percent), grocery retailers (+1 percent), and hypermarkets seeing a decrease of -1 percent. Multi-channel strategies, blending online and in-store sales, are key to success across retailing. Grocery retailers are paving the way towards innovative solutions in this respect, offering e-commerce shopping with deliveries to the consumer's home and in-store lockers for customers to collect online orders. For additional information, see *Italy Retail Foods 2023* report at: <https://gain.fas.usda.gov/#/>

➤ **Italian Food Service – Hotel, Restaurant, Institutional**

In 2023, Italy's consumer food service sales registered an increase of 8.8 percent compared to 2022. Italy's tourism has reached pre-pandemic levels. Italy received approximately 50 million international tourists in 2023, an 85.3 percent increase from 2022. The hospitality industry was one of the hardest hit sectors during the pandemic but bounced back to pre-pandemic levels since the full reopening of the sector in 2022. For more information, see *Italy Food Service – Hotel Restaurant Institutional 2023* report at: <https://gain.fas.usda.gov/#/>

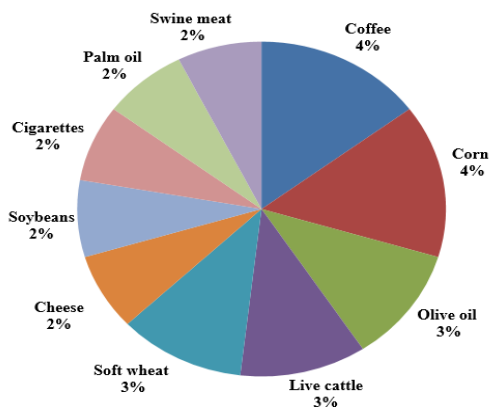
➤ **Competitive situation for select consumer-oriented products**

Commodity	Italy's imports from the world 2023	Italy's imports from the United States 2023	Key constraints over market development	Market attractiveness for the United States
Pork meat and products	\$3.5 billion	\$0	Competition from other EU countries, mainly Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, and Denmark	Growing consumers' demand. Italy's pork imports increased 36.9 percent in 2023.
Bakery goods	\$2.1 billion	\$11.5 million	Competition from other EU countries, mainly Germany, France, Austria, and Spain.	Growing consumers' demand. U.S. bakery goods exports to Italy significantly increased in 2023.
Tree nuts	\$1.5 billion	\$339.9 million	Competition from Turkey, Germany, Chile, and Spain.	Growing demand from manufacturers, confectionary, and snack industry.
Chocolate and cocoa products	\$1.4 billion	\$427,892	Competition from other EU countries, mainly Germany, the Netherlands, France, and Belgium.	Growing consumers' demand.
Distilled Spirits	\$1.0 billion	\$274.6 million	Competition from UK and other EU countries, mainly France, the Netherlands, and Spain.	Growing consumers' demand. Robust demand from tourism.

Source: Trade Data Monitor LLC

SECTION V. AGRICULTURAL AND FOOD IMPORTS

Top 10 Products Imported (Total Imports in 2023: \$64.1 billion)



Best High Value, Consumer-Oriented Product Prospects Categories (based on value)

- **Products present in the market which have good sales potential**
 - Tree nuts
 - Distilled spirits
 - Food preparations
 - Sauces, dressings, and condiments
- **Top consumer-oriented products imported from the world**
 - Dairy products
 - Beef and pork
 - Fresh fruit
 - Processed vegetables
- **Top consumer-oriented products imported from the United States**
 - Tree Nuts
 - Distilled spirits
 - Beef and beef products
 - Processed vegetables
- **Products not present in significant quantities, but which have good sales potential**
 - Functional and health food
 - Free-from products (lactose-free, gluten-free)
 - Beer
 - Organic products
- **Products not present in the market because they face significant barriers**
 - Beef, other than that sold through the High-Quality Beef Quota
 - Poultry (sanitary procedures – chlorine wash)
 - Processed food products containing genetically engineered (GE) ingredients

SECTION VI. KEY CONTACTS AND FURTHER INFORMATION

FAS Italy publishes numerous market and commodity reports available through the Global Agricultural Information Network (GAIN) at: <https://gain.fas.usda.gov/#/>

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Appendix I



U.S. Exports of Agricultural & Related Products to Italy(*)
CY 2019 - 2023 and Year-to-Date Comparisons
(in millions of dollars+)



Export Market: Italy(*)

Product	Calendar Years (Jan-Dec)					January - April Comparisons		
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2023	2024	%Chg
Bulk Total	428.0	465.7	439.7	602.8	1,199.5*	444.9	269.8	-39.4
Wheat.....	186.0	215.9	112.7	136.3	111.2	38.9	52.5	34.9
Corn.....	0.0	0.0	0.0	17.4	5.2	5.2	3.5	-33.5
Coarse Grains (excl. corn).....	7.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-
Rice.....	2.0	1.4	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.3	9.1
Soybeans.....	139.0	177.9	258.5	371.9	992.6*	370.0	187.7	-49.3
Oilseeds (excl. soybean).....	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	-
Cotton.....	4.0	8.2	9.4	7.1	5.5	4.9	2.2	-54.9
Pulses.....	43.0	39.4	46.7	54.1	64.8*	21.9	20.0	-8.3
Tobacco.....	38.0	14.8	4.2	6.0	12.0	1.5	1.1	-25.9
Other Bulk Commodities.....	11.0	8.0	7.9	9.0	7.7	2.2	2.4	11.4
Intermediate Total	175.0	126.7	143.9	136.5	121.8	47.6	80.5	69.1
Milled Grains & Products.....	0.0	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.4	0.3	-19.5
Soybean Meal.....	35.0	0.0	20.8	0.1	0.0	0.0	33.1	-
Soybean Oil.....	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.4	0.1	0.1	0.0	-
Vegetable Oils (excl. soybean).....	8.0	3.4	1.2	1.4	2.6	0.6	0.6	-0.2
Animal Fats.....	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-
Live Animals.....	2.0	1.6	1.2	1.8	2.0	0.6	0.7	2.6
Hides & Skins.....	30.0	16.8	16.9	35.9	33.8	15.1	5.5	-63.4
Hay.....	0.0	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	-
Distillers Grains.....	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-
Other Feeds, Meals & Fodders.....	12.0	8.1	7.8	6.7	8.2	2.7	3.1	14.7
Ethanol (non-bev.).....	0.0	0.8	3.6*	2.0	0.7	0.0	0.6	14097.
Planting Seeds.....	51.0	56.6	56.2	43.7	43.3	14.5	13.5	-6.9
Sugar, Sweeteners, Bev. Bases..	1.0	2.3	1.8	2.8	1.2	0.6	0.4	-28.5
Dextrins, Peptones, & Proteins.....	2.0	1.4	1.7	2.5	1.6	0.7	0.5	-33.1
Essential Oils.....	8.0	6.2	7.4	10.0	8.9	3.1	6.5	108.1
Other Intermediate Products.....	28.0	28.9	24.6	28.4	18.8	9.1	15.6	72.3
Consumer Oriented Total	501.0	443.0	448.8	414.7	472.5	154.9	180.7	16.6
Beef & Beef Products.....	31.0	10.5	19.0	28.8	39.4	9.5	13.0	36.8
Pork & Pork Products.....	1.0	0.4	0.7	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	-45.9
Poultry Meat & Prods. (excl. eggs)	1.0	0.3	0.2	0.8	0.6	0.1	0.5	531.3
Meat Products NESOI.....	1.0	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	36.5
Eggs & Products.....	1.0	0.8	0.3	0.1	1.0	0.1	0.5	237.3
Dairy Products.....	1.0	0.8	0.6	0.9	0.5	0.1	0.1	-16.8
Fresh Fruit.....	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-
Processed Fruit.....	11.0	11.3	13.7	19.8	10.4	4.5	4.7	5.0
Fresh Vegetables.....	0.0	0.3	0.8	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.4	356.5
Processed Vegetables.....	20.0	38.3	21.9	14.4	25.3	1.7	20.7	1107.3
Fruit & Vegetable Juices.....	1.0	1.2	0.6	0.4	0.6	0.3	0.2	-23.5
Tree Nuts.....	363.0*	313.6	321.2	276.5	315.1	116.7	113.4	-2.8
Confectionery.....	1.0	1.5	1.3	0.3	0.4	0.0	0.0	-86.0
Chocolate & Cocoa Products.....	0.0	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.2	-39.0
Bakery Goods, Cereals, & Pasta...	1.0	0.9	1.1	1.5	1.2	0.4	0.3	-31.7
Food Preparations.....	12.0	14.1	16.4*	14.7	14.5	4.3	5.5	27.2
Condiments & Sauces.....	3.0	1.7	2.8	2.4	3.3*	0.8	1.0	24.4
Non-Alcoholic Bev. (excl. juice)....	2.0	1.7	1.7	2.2	2.3	0.6	0.5	-15.5
Beer.....	3.0	1.4	2.2	1.5	1.1	0.4	0.2	-42.2
Wine & Related Products.....	3.0	1.0	2.0	4.1	3.1	1.1	1.1	-2.0
Distilled Spirits.....	42.0	41.2	40.6	44.4	48.2*	12.1	15.6	29.0
Nursery Products & Cut Flowers..	0.0	0.2	0.5	0.2	1.1	1.1	0.0	-98.6
Dog & Cat Food.....	1.0	0.7	0.6	0.8	0.4	0.2	0.4	82.3
Other Consumer Oriented.....	3.0	0.6	0.3	0.6	3.6	0.3	2.3	553.6
Agricultural Related Products	137.0	95.9	147.0	199.3	157.1	49.2	42.8	-13.1
Biodiesel & Blends > B30.....	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	-
Forest Products.....	83.0	55.5	83.9	115.0	78.9	29.6	20.7	-30.1
Seafood Products.....	54.0	40.4	63.1	84.2	78.1	19.6	22.1	12.7
Agricultural Products	1,105.0	1,035.3	1,032.4	1,153.7	1,793.8*	647.5	531.0	-18.0
Agricultural & Related Products	1,241.0	1,131.2	1,179.4	1,353.0	1,951.0*	696.7	573.8	-17.6

Prepared By: Trade & Economic Analysis Division/GMA/FAS/USDA
Source: U.S. Census Bureau Trade Data
Biodiesel aggregate includes only higher-level and pure biodiesel HTS chapter 38 codes; biodiesel blends below 30% by volume (aka. petroleum oils containing biodiesel) found in chapter 27 are excluded.

* Denote Highest Export Levels Since at Least CY 1970

www.fas.usda.gov/GATS
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For more detailed U.S. trade statistics, check USDA's Global Agricultural Trade System (GATS):
<https://apps.fas.usda.gov/gats/default.aspx>

Attachments:

No Attachments