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**Report Name:** Beijing City Report - China's Cultural Capital Fuels Demand for Premium Imports

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**Report Highlights:**

Beijing's economy reached \$743 billion in 2025, supported by being China's political and cultural capital with a highly educated population and international presence. The city remains a leading market for premium imported food, driven by competitive retail and food service sectors with strong digital consumption habits. Its logistics advantages and demand for high quality, health-oriented products make Beijing an important market for U.S. agricultural exporters.

## Executive Summary

Beijing is a critical entry point for U.S. agricultural products due to its strong retail infrastructure, high consumer awareness, and concentration of premium channels. Imported goods entering Beijing are distributed throughout northern China, including Tianjin, Hebei, Shanxi, and Inner Mongolia.

Key advantages include:

- High demand for premium and specialty foods
- Strong presence of international retailers and hotels
- Mature cold-chain logistics
- High consumer acceptance of Western food culture

## Best Product Prospects for U.S. Exporters

- Dairy products: Strong demand from bakeries, cafés, and premium retailers
- Nuts and dried fruit: Widely used in bakery, snacks, and health foods
- Beef and pork: High demand in Western restaurants and premium retail
- Fresh fruit: Apples, cherries, and citrus remain popular
- Wine and craft beer: Growing interest across high-end restaurants, specialty retail outlets, and bars

## Entry & Localization Tips for U.S. Companies

- Brand storytelling: Emphasize origin, safety, and sustainability
- Partnerships with premium retailers: Sam's Club, Ole', Hema, Jenny's Store and Jenny Lou's
- Menu innovation: Collaborate with chefs and cafés to feature U.S. ingredients
- Digital marketing: Leverage Xiaohongshu, Douyin, and WeChat for consumer engagement

## City Overview

As China's capital and its political, cultural, and international exchange center, Beijing plays a pivotal role in shaping national economic and policy development. With more than 3,000 years of history, the city is home to the world's largest number of UNESCO World Heritage Sites and remains one of the country's major engines of economic growth.

By 2025, Beijing's GDP exceeded \$743 billion, expanding by 5.4 percent—0.4 percentage points higher than the national average. Its economic scale surpasses that of countries such as Sweden and Belgium and is comparable to the combined GDP of Vietnam and New Zealand. In the same year, Beijing's per capita GDP reached \$34,142, on par with Japan's level of \$34,000. The city's economic pillars include high-tech industries, financial services, cultural and creative sectors, and a robust service economy. Beijing is also a key hub for imported food.

By the end of 2025, Beijing's permanent population had reached approximately 21 million. The city and surrounding territory, which functions as its own province, continues to host one of China's most highly educated and economically active populations, supported by top-tier universities and leading research institutions. In the same year, Beijing recorded six million entries by foreign nationals through its ports, and around 200,000 foreigners were residing in the city on a long-term basis. More than 170 embassies and international organizations are headquartered in Beijing, contributing to a diverse international presence that has enriched the city's culinary landscape and expanded its global influence.

## Market for Imported Products

Beijing is one of China's most mature and influential markets for imported food and agricultural products. Its affluent consumer base, large expatriate population, and strong preference for premium, safety, and high-quality goods make the city a key entry point for global brands.

Along with Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Shenzhen, Beijing serves as a major hub for imported food



<b>Beijing City at a Glance 2025</b>	
(USD calculated at 7.0exchange rate)	
Population	21.8 million
Land Area	1,420 km <sup>2</sup>
Gross Domestic Product (GDP)	\$743 billion
GDP per capita	\$34,142
Per capita disposable income	\$12,727
Growth in per capita disposable income	4.4 percent
Total Retail Sales of Consumer Goods	\$176 billion
Tourism Revenue	\$102 billion
Total Imports	\$ 366 billion
Total Exports	\$ 90 billion
<b>Source:</b> Beijing Economic and Social Development Report 2025	

distributors. The city benefits from significant logistics advantages—its proximity to Tianjin Port, Beijing Capital International Airport, and Daxing International Airport enables efficient distribution of imported products across northern China. Imported meat, dairy, packaged foods, wine, and fresh fruit are widely available through diverse retail channels, including supermarkets, specialty stores, and e-commerce platforms.

Beijing consumers show a strong interest in health-oriented, organic, and functional foods, as well as products with compelling branding and storytelling. Japan, South Korea, Europe, Australia, and the United States remain leading suppliers of high-value imported food products.

### **Food Processing: Limited Manufacturing, but Expanding Bakery Consumption**

Beijing’s food processing industry remains relatively limited, shaped by strict environmental regulations and the relocation of manufacturing activities to surrounding provinces. Despite this, the city continues to serve as the headquarters for major state-linked food enterprises such as Shou Nong and COFCO, reinforcing its role as a strategic decision-making and branding hub for the sector.

At the consumer level, Beijing’s sizeable middle-class population—supplemented by steady inflows of domestic and international tourists and business travelers—supports a robust and diverse market for bakery products. Annual spending in the bakery sector exceeds \$1 billion, reflecting strong demand and high purchasing power.

Emerging bakery brands have become key traffic drivers for major shopping malls, while premium on-site baking continues to dominate the competitive landscape. Health-conscious consumers increasingly favor low-sugar, whole-grain offerings and products made with natural butter, pushing brands to elevate ingredient quality and transparency.

Given Beijing’s vast scale and fast-paced lifestyle, consumers rely heavily on Xiaohongshu (Red Little Book), Douyin (The Chinese version of TikTok), and Dianping to discover new products, assess quality, and follow market trends. This digital-first behavior accelerates product innovation cycles and intensifies competition among both established and emerging bakery players.

Beijing’s bakery-driven consumption patterns strongly favor U.S. dairy, nuts, dried fruit, and specialty ingredients. The city’s growing preference for high-quality inputs aligns well with U.S. butter, cheese, almonds, cranberries, and raisins. As more bakery brands differentiate themselves through ingredient quality and increasingly highlight the ingredient origin, U.S. suppliers are well positioned to deepen partnerships with premium bakery chains seeking consistent, reliable, and premium-grade imports.



## Retail: A Highly Competitive and Trend-Setting Market

Beijing hosts one of the most competitive and diverse retail markets in China, supported by a resident population of more than 21 million and roughly 4.4 million middle-class households. This large and affluent consumer base continues to drive demand for premium supermarkets, membership-based retail formats, and digitally integrated shopping experiences.

The city's dense urban layout and fast-paced lifestyle have accelerated the adoption of on-demand retail and online shopping. Online retail now accounts for over 42 percent of total retail sales—well above the national average—underscoring Beijing consumers' strong digital purchasing habits. Cross-border e-commerce platforms such as Tmall Global and JD Worldwide are widely used for imported foods, making Beijing a key market for international brands. On-demand retail in the Beijing area has expanded rapidly, with daily order volumes surpassing one million. As consumers shop more frequently and prioritize convenience, on-demand platforms have become a primary channel for everyday purchases.



Despite its scale and sophistication, the retail sector is facing increasing pressure amid a broader economic slowdown. Since 2024, Beijing has recorded negative year-on-year retail growth, driven largely by reduced spending on automobiles and communication equipment. In contrast, consumer expenditure on food products rose by 5.7 percent in 2025, reflecting a shift toward essential and lower cost per item purchases.

Beijing's premium retail landscape offers some of the strongest visibility for U.S. agricultural products in China. High-end supermarkets and membership stores such as Sam's Club, Ole, BHG, Jenny's Store, and Jenny Lou's prominently feature U.S. dairy, beef, fresh fruit, snacks, craft beer, and wine, leveraging the strong consumer association with safety, quality, and consistent supply. Deepening collaboration with these retailers – through private-label partnerships, chef demonstrations, sampling programs, and festival-driven promotions – can feature elevate U.S. product visibility and help exporters expand market share in an increasingly competitive retail environment.

### *Retail Structure and Key Players*

- High-end supermarkets such as Ole, BHG Market Place, Jenny's Store, Jenny Lou's, and AW Supermarket cater to consumers seeking imported, organic, and specialty products.
- Traditional supermarket chains including Jingkelong, WuMart, and Yonghui maintain broad neighborhood coverage and remain essential for daily household purchases.

- Membership warehouse stores—notably Sam’s Club and Fudi—are expanding rapidly, fueled by rising household purchasing power and strong interest in bulk-buying formats.

Key Retail Chain	Store Type	Number of Outlets	Targeted Consumers
Ole	Supermarket	6	Upper-middle-income consumers
BHG Market Place	Supermarket	10+	Upper-middle-income consumers
HeMa Fresh	Supermarket	40+	Upper-middle-income consumers
Sam’s Club	Membership Store	4	Middle-and high-income consumers
Jenny’s Store	Supermarket	7	Expatriates and local upper-middle-income consumers
Jenny Lou’s	Supermarket	6	Expatriates and local upper-middle-income consumers
WuMart	Supermarket	40+	Mainstream shoppers

### Food Service: A Diverse, High-Spending Market Adapting to Economic Pressures

Beijing is one of China’s most diverse culinary markets, offering global cuisines and a consumer base eager to try new foods. Local diners are highly responsive to social media trends, and online recommendations play a major role in shaping dining choices. Despite this strong cultural appetite for food exploration, the city’s food service industry continued to face economic pressure in 2025.

According to the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Statistics, the city recorded \$18.9 billion in catering revenue in 2025, a three percent decline year-on-year. Western cuisine accounted for 3.35 percent of overall catering revenue. The broader economic slowdown has pushed many restaurants to adjust pricing strategies. Between December 2022 and December 2024, 34 percent of establishments that previously charged more than \$110 per person lowered their average spending level to below \$70. To attract mainstream consumers, mid-range and high-end restaurants increasingly rely on group-buying promotions and bundled discount packages.



While the sector as a whole remains under pressure, several categories continue to expand. Coffee shops and food delivery services posted revenue growth of 10.4 percent and 5.8 percent, respectively, during the first three quarters of 2025, reflecting strong demand for convenience-oriented consumption and

lifestyle-driven dining. These segments have become important entry points for new brands and imported ingredients.

Beijing's food service market remains one of China's most influential hotel and restaurant markets. The city's dining landscape blends traditional Beijing cuisine with a wide range of international offerings. A large expatriate population, a concentration of high-end hotels, and a strong presence of Western, Japanese, and Korean restaurants contribute to steady demand for imported meat, dairy, seafood, bakery ingredients, and specialty products. Growth in health-focused, plant-based, and premium café concepts further supports opportunities for high-quality imported foods.

Beijing's internationally oriented food service sector relies heavily on imported ingredients, supporting steady demand for U.S. beef, pork, poultry, dairy products, seafood, frozen foods, craft beer, and wine. As operators adjust to economic pressures and shifting consumer spending, U.S. suppliers can collaborate with distributors and chefs to introduce cost-effective cuts, portion-controlled formats, and menu innovations that preserve premium positioning while meeting tighter budgets. These partnerships help U.S. products remain competitive and visible across hotels, Western restaurants, and cafés even as the sector navigates ongoing economic headwinds.

Overall, Beijing's food service sector is navigating a period of adjustment, balancing economic headwinds with evolving consumer preferences and continued interest in global flavors.

### **Key Contacts and Further Information**

[Exporter Guide Annual](#)

[Food Processing Ingredients Annual](#)

[China Food Service Hotel Restaurant Institutional Annual](#)

[Retail Foods Annual](#)

### **For more information, please contact ATO Beijing:**

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### **Attachments:**

No Attachments.