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Prepared By: Hila Zakay

Approved By: Jenny Morgan

Report Highlights:

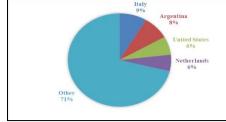
In 2024, Israel's technologically advanced, market-oriented economy achieved an annual GDP of \$541.8 billion, with a modest growth of 0.9 percent. The food retail industry saw significant activity, with sales reaching \$21 billion in 2024 and a projected growth of 5 percent in 2025. The food processing sector, comprising over 3,000 facilities, generated \$14.13 billion in revenue in 2024, heavily relying upon imported agricultural products. The ongoing regional conflict has impacted the food service industry, which recorded \$7.6 billion in sales; future growth is contingent on the cessation of the conflict. Despite economic challenges, including inflation and regulatory changes, the demand for food remains stable, driven by trends such as health and wellness products, sustainability, and digitalization. The U.S. food industry holds a positive image in Israel, though it faces competition from European suppliers and regional instability.

Executive Summary:

Israel is a technologically advanced, market-oriented economy. In 2024, Israel's annual GDP reached \$541.8 billion. Israel's GDP grew by 0.9 percent in 2024 and is expected to grow by 4 percent in 2025, and 4.5 percent in 2026, if the war subsides. If the war continues until the end of the first quarter of 2025, the inflation rate is expected to be 2.6 percent in 2025, and 2.3 percent in 2026. Risk assessments are still ongoing with uncertainty around growth rate, inflation rate, and government deficit.

Consumer-Oriented Agricultural Imports

Chart 1: Top Exporting Countries to Israel



Source: Trade Data Monitor

Food Retail Industry:

Israeli food retail sales reached \$21 billion in 2024, with 5 percent growth anticipated for 2025. The food retail market consists of supermarket chains, convenience stores, local grocery stores, and wet markets. The leading retail supermarkets in Israel are: Shufersal, Rami Levi, Merav-Mazon Kol/Osher Ad, Yohananof and Viktory. Collectively, they have a revenue of \$9.2 billion and represent 68 percent of Israel's top 24 food retail companies.

Food Processing Industry:

With more than 3,000 food and drink processing facilities, the Israeli food processing sector is an important player in the domestic economy. Five groups dominate the local food processing industry: Tnuva, Central Company for Beverages Distribution (Coca-Cola), Strauss, Osem-Nestlé, and Soda Stream. In 2024, Israel imported \$8.9 billion of agricultural products, a large percentage of which were for the food processing industry. Almost all ingredients from horticultural sources are imported. In 2024, the annual revenue for Israel's largest food processors was \$14.13 billion.

Food Service Industry:

Israeli food service sales reached \$7.6 billion in 2024. The war greatly affected the food service sector due to a lack of tourism and closures of hotels and restaurants. The expansion of sales is dependent upon the cessation of the regional conflict and improvement in demand.

Quick Facts CY 2024 Imports of Consumer-Oriented Products*

\$5.5 Billion (Value: USD)

List of Top 10 Growth Products in Israel*

Beef & Beef products
Chocolate & Cocoa products
Distilled Spirits
Coffee, Roasted and Extracts
Fresh Vegetables

2) Fruit & Vegetable juices
4) Processed vegetables
6) Fresh Fruit
8) Beer
10) Dog & Cat Food

Food Industry by Channels (U.S. billion)

Retail Food Industry	\$21
Food Service-HRI	\$7.6
Food Processing	\$14.13
U.S. Food & Ag Exports to Israel**	\$10.8

Top 10 Host Country Retailers

Shufersal Ltd; Rami Levy Shivuk Hashikma Ltd; Merav-Mazon Kol/ Osher Ad; Yohananov M and Sons (1988) Ltd; Victory Supermarket Chain Ltd; Hazi Hinam; Cohen Machsanei Hashuk Ltd; Freshmarket Ltd (PAZ Oil Co Ltd); Tiv Taam Holdings; Keshet Tastes Ltd.

*2023 Carrefour entered Israel.

GDP/Population

Population (*millions*): 10.027 GDP (*billions USD*): 541.80 GDP per capita (*USD*): 54,336

*BICO HS6 2021 – Consumer Oriented Agricultural Total **BICO – Agricultural and Related Products Bank of Israel annual exchange rate 1 USD = 3.69 NIS

Sources: Euromonitor, Bank of Israel, The World Factbook, TDM, Duns 100, Israeli Centras Bureau of Statistic (CBS), FAS Tel Aviv office research.

1.https://www.cbs.gov.il/he/mediarelease/DocLib/2025/077/08_ 25_077b.pdf

2.<u>https://www.boi.org.il/media/cd5mswlf/forcast0125h.do</u> cx

Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats

Strengths	Weaknesses
- Many markets are	- Different regulations from
arguably well known	the United States
- U.SIsrael Free Trade	- Geographical distance
Agreement	from the United States
Opportunities	Threats
- Increasing consumer	- Adoption of EU
demand	regulations
- Availability of kosher	- Strong competition in a
products	highly branded market
- Demand for innovative	- Regional instability
products	

Section I: Market Overview

The Israeli food and beverage processing industry consists of more than 3,000 food and beverage processing facilities.¹ Some of these facilities are also registered as retailers and marketers, such as Shufersal, Rami Levi, Osher Add, etc.² The industry's top 40 companies are estimated to employ over 41,000 workers.³ According to latest available data in 2022, the Israeli food processing sector generated revenues of \$23.19 billion.⁴

Israel's limited land and water resources preclude a high level of agricultural self-sufficiency which affects local production, costs, and consumer prices. The Government of Israel (GoI) is pursuing lower custom fees, increasing import quotas for specific food products, and implementing new regulations to promote competition in the sector and mitigate the high cost of living. The latest effort by the GoI to address the high cost of living was the revision to the Israeli food legislation under the title "What is good for Europe is good for Israel," which was implemented on January 1, 2025 (See GAIN report IS2-24-0020 "Israel Adopts Additional European Union Standards for Agricultural Imports").⁵

Israel's food and beverage processing industry is centralized, and a small number of large local companies supply most of the food sold in Israel. The largest food companies are the Central Company for Beverages Distribution (Coca-Cola), Strauss Group Ltd., Tnuva Ltd., Osem, SodaStream, Unilever Israel, and Tempo.

The food processing industry is currently navigating a challenging economic environment both domestic and global. Ongoing war in the region, post-pandemic inflation, rising interest rates, economic instability following the recent downgrade of Israel's credit rating, and the recent global trade changes, have led to a reduction in household disposable income and uncertainty. Despite these pressures, the demand for food remains relatively stable with fluctuation in the average components of a family's food basket. If the war continues or expands, it could lead to supply-side disruptions, including labor shortages affecting manufacturing output, and if demand remains high, it could lead to inflation. Tarriff changes can also influence the average household purchasing power and in return change the demand for food.

Looking ahead, the stabilization of global food commodity prices could help moderate the cost of food production, although local conditions in Israel such as the reduction in available income, inflation, and the implementation of the new food legislation may continue to challenge the market. Recent tariff changes and the fluctuation in trade policies around the world can have a significant impact on the food processing sector and on consumer behavior.

¹ Without duplicates

² <u>https://registries.health.gov.il/FoodManufacturers</u> (Hebrew only)

³https://www.duns100.co.il/en/rating/Food_Industry/Food_Manufacturers

⁴ <u>https://www.leumi.co.il/leumi-hebrew/s3fs-public/complex_link_file/05-</u>

^{24/}Food and beverage production may 2024 acc 62688.pdf (Hebrew only), ExchangeRates

⁵https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/DownloadReportByFileName?fileName=Israel%20Adopts%20Additional%20Eur opean%20Union%20Standards%20for%20Agricultural%20Imports_Tel%20Aviv_Israel_IS2024-0020

Current Market Trends:⁶

- <u>Health and Wellness Products</u> Consumers are shifting towards products such as natural, organic, reduced fat, reduced sugar, reduced salt, gluten-free, and high-protein.
- <u>Sustainability</u> Industry is focused on improving the nutritional value of its products, including eco-friendly packaging, to promote healthy eating habits and lifestyle.
- <u>High-end Confectionery</u> The consumption of quality food such as high-end chocolate, desserts and cheeses is growing.
- <u>Storable food</u> Dry foods such as pasta and ready-made meals have increased in sales following the war; these trends are expected to continue in the coming year.
- <u>Private Label (PL)</u> PL continues to expand even though its market share is decreasing. The new Food Reform (adopting EU standards), which shifts liability to the markets, combined with rising food prices that drive consumers towards PL, necessitates close monitoring of PL trends and the suppliers' market share (See Chart 1).

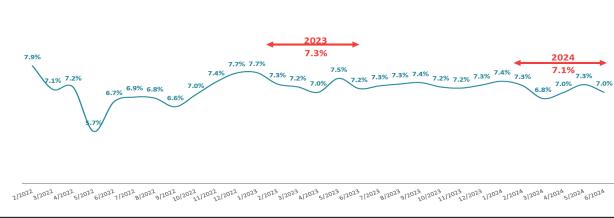


Chart 1: FMCG Private Label (PL) Market Share

Source: StoreNext

- <u>Digitalization and Automation</u> Industry is adopting advanced technology to streamline production and increase efficiency.
- <u>Impact of Regulatory Changes</u> The Food Reform has yet to change market dynamics. The complexity of the adopted regulations and its implementation in the manufacturing sector is not clear, as there are different transition periods for implementation of such standards.

⁶ FAS Tel-Aviv research

Advantages and Challenges

ADVANTAGES	CHALLENGES	
U.S. commodities and products are known as high-quality.	Israeli food safety regulations are complex. Israel has adopted 40 new EU standards, many of which are more restrictive than the United States.	
Many Israelis have lived in the United States and are familiar and receptive to new and emerging products from the United States.	Consumers demand high-level kosher certification.	
U.S. commodities and products that are being sold in the EU market may have easier and faster access to the Israeli markets.	Import requirements are strict and differ from the United States.	
Free trade agreement between the United States and Israel.	High shipping costs from the United States to Israel can be challenging.	
Kosher commodities and products have a high market share in Israel - over 10,000 American companies produce kosher products.	Israel has some restricted food ingredients, including non-kosher meat.	
The Israeli market is high-end oriented, with high benchmark prices.	Israeli buyers are less familiar with U.S. suppliers and producers.	
The Palestinian Authority has a growing population, and most imports are routed through the Israeli border.	Low-cost competition from Europe and Asia.	
Some commodities are dominated by the U.S. market or have a significant market share.	U.S. exporters lack knowledge of the Israeli market and are unaware of new opportunities.	
Israel promotes innovation in food processing, including food-tech, agri-tech, and alternative protein. Although related regulations are not yet fully developed, it could provide opportunities for U.S. suppliers of innovative ingredients.	The ongoing war may impact the supply chains and overall market stability, adding increased risk for exporters.	

Table 1: U.S. Supplier's Advantages and Challenges in the Israeli Retail Food Sector

Section II: Roadmap for Market Entry

Entry Strategy

Food processing ingredient suppliers from the United States should establish business relationships with reliable, experienced, and professional importers or distributers and identify the appropriate distribution and sales channel. Commissioned agents are generally used for raw materials and commodities. Face-to-face meetings also help build relationships and create opportunities to explore business opportunities firsthand.

Large food processors like Strauss Group, Osem, and Sugat have their own purchasing and importing division to handle ingredient imports directly. Major food processors and retail companies are increasingly importing directly from foreign suppliers to reduce costs. Suppliers should initially contact business development divisions, as well as purchasing or importing divisions, and large food manufacturers (especially for new-to-market ingredients).

Exporters should consider the price sensitivity of their customers, their product requirements, purchasing policies, and expected purchase volumes. Further details on product standards and regulations are available in the Israel FAIRS Country Report.⁷ For further information, U.S. exporters should review FAS/Tel Aviv policy and marketing reports⁸ and private sector analyses.

Additional Entry Options:

- Direct marketing is mostly done through social media.
- Manufacturing under licensing agreements is common in Israel.
- The Government of Israel encourages both joint ventures and licensing.
- Participating in or visiting ISRAFOOD,⁹ an international food and beverages exhibition in Tel Aviv for professionals in catering, wholesale, retail, restaurants, hotels, institutional and food shops. This is the largest trade exhibition of its kind in Israel.

Import Procedure

Details on import procedures are available in the Israel FAIRS Country Report.¹⁰

Distribution Channels

Food processors sell their products to a variety of sectors, including hotels, restaurants, institutional food service sector, retail, and wholesale. More information on specific sectors is available in the Israeli HRI Food Service sector¹¹ and the Israeli Retail Food Market¹² reports.

While the use of an agent or distributor is not legally required, partnering with a local representative who has good industry contacts, proven reliability, loyalty, technical skills, and after-sales service capabilities is important for selling and maintaining a continued presence in Israel. U.S. companies need to be aggressive in their pursuit of business opportunities and maintain an active in-country presence.¹³

Market Structure

Raw food materials are imported by agents, importers, or directly by food manufacturers. Importers and agents sell these materials directly to food manufacturers or through distributors. Local producers of raw food materials typically sell directly to food manufacturers but may also use distributors to supply smaller food manufacturers

⁷<u>https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/DownloadReportByFileName?fileName=FAIRS%20Country%20Report%20Annual_Tel%20Aviv_Israel_IS2024-0016.pdf</u>

^{8 &}lt;u>https://www.fas.usda.gov/data/search?search_api_views_fulltext=israel&=Apply</u>

⁹ Food and Retail Week Stier group Initiating and producing international exhibitions and conferences (israfood.com)

¹⁰https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/DownloadReportByFileName?fileName=FAIRS%20Country%20Report%20Ann ual_Tel%20Aviv_Israel_IS2024-0016.pdf

¹¹ <u>https://www.fas.usda.gov/data/israel-food-service-hotel-restaurant-and-institutional</u>

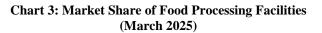
¹²https://www.fas.usda.gov/data/israel-retail-foods-3

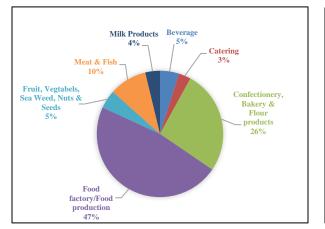
¹³ https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/israel-distribution-and-sales-channels

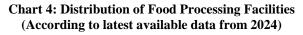
Large food processing companies and some large distributors prefer to source their food ingredients directly from overseas suppliers. By removing local agents from the distribution chain, they can save costs and buy in bulk and repack as needed. Most large food processing companies in Israel have their own import departments.

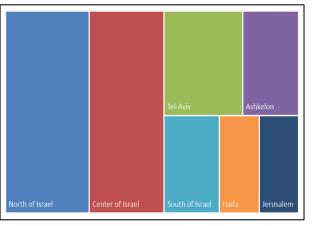
Smaller Israeli food processors tend to prefer to purchase from agents because they can obtain better service from local agents. The local agents normally buy large quantities from overseas and distribute to smaller buyers. Small food processers can use local suppliers to protect themselves from some risk and better manage contract terms, quality issues, etc.

Share of Major Segments in the Food Processing Industry









Source: <u>https://registries.health.gov.il/FoodManufacturers</u> (Hebrew Only)

Company Profiles & Company Products

- Company profiles are available on Dun's 100 Food Manufacturers ranking list¹⁴
- Company products are available on the Ministry of Health Food Manufacturers and Food Businesses with Manufacturer's license list¹⁵

Sector Trends

- <u>Centralized Sector</u> The Israeli food industry is highly centralized and dominated by a few large companies: The Central Company for Beverages Distribution (Coca-Cola), Strauss Group Ltd., Tnuva Ltd., and Osem. Israeli companies produce some foreign brands of food products under licenses with the rights to market within specific geographical regions. Though small firms have been largely pushed out of the market, recent regulations designed to deconsolidate the market are giving them more favorable treatment.
- <u>Digital Commerce and E-Grocery Growth</u> The Israeli food processing sector is increasing its use of digital platforms to reach consumers and developing a direct line to consumers

¹⁴ https://www.duns100.co.il/en/rating/Food_Industry

¹⁵<u>https://registries.health.gov.il/FoodManufacturers</u> (Hebrew Only)

providing home delivery. This trend has opened opportunities for the U.S. food processing industry, especially in niche products that are expensive and difficult to find in Israel.

- <u>Convenience and Ready-to-Eat/Cook Meals</u> Israel has a growing demand for ready-made food, meal kits and stable shelf products. This trend is likely to continue with the growing need for dual income household and urbanization that drives the need for convenience.
- <u>Alternative Food and Health-Conscious Consumers</u> Israel has a growing rate of vegans and vegetarians which influence the market by demanding plant-based ingredient products, meat substitutes, dairy alternatives, and innovative protein sources. The packaging market has been influenced by this trend which has also led to a shift in using more sustainable packaging.
- <u>Food Tech, Food Startups and Innovation</u> Startups in food tech are rapidly developing in Israel to align with the health and environmental concerns of Israeli consumers. R&D for innovative food solutions such as packaging, food safety technologies, fermentation and biotech ingredients, have a favorable research environment.
- <u>Food Reform</u> As of January 1, 2025, the new Food Reform was implemented and is expected to influence the entire food handler's chain. Food processing facilities must adapt to the new regulatory system that harmonizes the Israeli food legislation with the EU food legislation.
- <u>Multinational</u> There is an increasing interest for unique flavors and global cuisines.
- <u>Kosher Food</u> The majority of the population in Israel prefers to buy Kosher food. Israeli manufacturing companies also export Kosher food to Jewish and Israeli communities worldwide.

Section III: Competition

While U.S. suppliers face high competition from European and regional players, the U.S. food industry has a positive image in Israel in terms of reliability and food safety. Exporters must be competitive in their pricing or focus on high-end products, which tend to be less price sensitive. There is also strong competition among food importers seeking to maintain or enlarge their market share. Nearby EU countries operate with relatively low shipping costs and have easier compliance as the Food Reform harmonizes with EU food regulations and standards.

<u>Market Dynamics</u> - Local and EU suppliers remain U.S. exporters' main competitors. The U.S. industry's primary advantage is supplying reliability and product quality. Conversely, high shipping costs, the adoption of EU standards, import duties, and import licensing requirements remain major market barriers. U.S. exporters must also consider the longer freight time to Israel and the higher transportation costs.

Advantages of U.S. products

- Many Israeli consumers are familiar with U.S. products and consider them to be high quality.
- There are many products in the United States which hold Kosher certificates.
- There is an FTA between the United States and Israel which gives an advantage for some products to be exported to Israel with lower tariffs and custom rates than other countries.
- The Palestinian Authority (PA) Israel is a gateway to the PA, with a population of over three million people. Products imported to Israel may be destined for the PA food and beverage manufacturing sector.¹⁶

¹⁶ <u>http://www.pipa.ps/page.php?id=1ab350y1749840Y1ab350</u>

Category (Top Ten BICO Imports)	U.S. Market Share in Category (Percent)	EU Market Share in Category (Percent)	Top 3 Country Market Share in Category (Percent)
BICO-Beef & Beef Products	2 %	11 %	Argentina – 40 % Brazil – 21 % Paraguay– 14 %
BICO-Fruit & Vegetable Juices	2 %	19 %	Brazil – 25 % South Africa – 14 % Argentina– 13 %
BICO-Chocolate & Cocoa Products	1 %	56 %	Italy – 16 % Germany – 13 % Singapore – 12 %
BICO-Processed Vegetables	3 %	39 %	Ukraine– 24 % China– 12 % Belgium – 7.35 %
BICO-Distilled Spirits	2 %	34 %	United Kingdom – 45 % France - 14 % Montenegro – 5 %
BICO-Fresh Fruit	13 %	46 %	Italy – 26 % South Africa – 11 % Greece – 9 %
BICO-Coffee, Roasted and Extracts	0 %	30 %	Switzerland – 26 % Italy – 24 % South Korea – 19 %
BICO-Beer	0 %	64 %	Mexico – 24 % Belgium – 17 % Germany – 14 %
BICO-Fresh Vegetables	0 %	52 %	Netherlands – 35 % China– 24 % Jordan– 13 %
BICO-Dog & Cat Food	13 %	62 %	Italy – 15 % France – 18.74 % Spain – 9 %

Table 2: Top Competitors to U.S. Suppliers for Food Processing Ingredients

Source: Trade Data Monitor ((BICO – Consumer Oriented Agricultural Total, Year Ending: December 2024, Value)

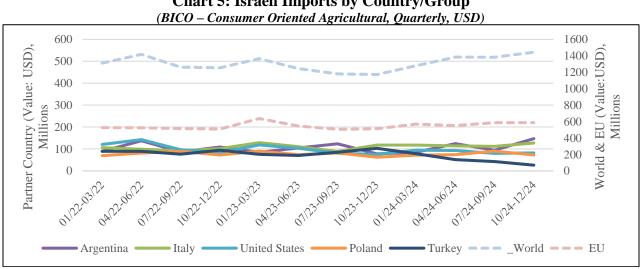


Chart 5: Israeli Imports by Country/Group

Source: Trade Data Monitor

Section IV: Best Product Prospects

The food processing sector in Israel has shown consistent demand for raw materials and ingredients for fresh food products and packaging. Israel is a high-priced market with high benchmark prices for end products. It is still unclear the extent to which the new legislation will have over this market.

Products Present in the Market with Good Sales Potential

- 0802 Nuts Nesoi, Fresh or Dried The demand for tree nuts (shelled or in-shelled) in Israel remains strong, particularly for varieties used in snacks, confectionery and bakery products. The rising demand for health snacks and ingredients makes these nuts particularly appealing. Although the United States dominates this market (with almost 80 percent market share), it is unclear how the new legislation of adopting EU standards may impact such trade.
- 0202 Meat of Bovine Animals, Frozen Consumption of frozen meat has increased in value the last year, but not yet to pre-war figures, leaving a lot of growth potential.
- 15 Animal or Vegetable Fats and Oils Mostly vegetable oils such as olive, sunflower, • canola, which are essential ingredients in food processing and in domestic household use.

Products Not/Limited Presence in the Market with Good Sales Potential

- Fruit & Vegetable Juices There is market demand for frozen vegetables and fruits. Prices for these products are high, and local production does not meet demand.
- Fish and Crustaceans, Molluscs and Other Aquatic Invertebrates (frozen or chilled) Israel • imports the majority of these from Norway and Chile. It is a growing category in which U.S. exporters hold a very small market share.
- Beer It is a diverse market with a lot of different brands which has shown consistent growth. • Israelis are less familiar with U.S. brands as the share is virtually zero.

Products Not Present due to Significant Barriers

- Kosher Restrictions Non-kosher meats are not permitted for importation.
- Phytosanitary Restrictions Bananas, strawberries, cherries, and citrus are not allowed for •

importation due to phytosanitary restrictions.

• <u>Standard</u> – All goods imported into Israel must meet Israeli standards.

Links to Top Food Processing Companies

Strauss Group Ltd.: <u>Strauss Website</u> Tnuva Ltd.: <u>Tnuva Website</u> Osem-Nestlé: <u>Osem Website</u> (Hebrew) Central Bottling Company (Coca-Cola Israel): <u>Coca-Cola Israel Website</u> (Hebrew) SodaStream: <u>SodaStream Website</u> Unilever Israel: <u>Unilever Israel Website</u> (Hebrew)

Section V: Key Contacts and Further Information

Links to Government Sources

- Israel Tax Authority <u>Customs Tariff Book</u>
- Israel Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) Imports and Exports of Goods and Services
- The Standard Institution of Israel (SII)
- Ministry of Economy and Industry
 - Foreign Trade Administration (FTA)
- Ministry of Agricultural and Food Security
 - Veterinary Services and Animal Health
 - o <u>Plant Protection and Inspection Services</u>
- Ministry of Health
 - National Food Services

Trade Associations

- Israel America Chamber of Commerce (AmCham Israel)
- Federation of Israeli Chamber of Commerce (FICC)
- Manufacturers Association of Israel (MAI)

Foreign Agriculture Service – Tel Aviv	Phone: 03-519667/671
71 Hayarkon Street	Email: agtelaviv@usda.gov
Tel Aviv, Israel 63903	http://www.fas.usda.gov

Attachments:

No Attachments