



## German fresh fruit and vegetable imports keep growing

In 2020, Germany imported a record amount of fruit and vegetables. Quantity-wise, imports exceeded the nine million ton mark for the first time. This was one percent more than in 2019. In terms of value, imports grew by almost ten percent to €12 billion. Over the past decade, German fresh fruit and vegetable imports have increased slowly but surely. They've crept up from eight to nine million tons.

In total, Germany imported 3,5 million tons of fresh vegetables and 5,5 million tons of fresh fruit last year. The country produces a lot of its own full soil vegetables. Farmers harvest four million tons of these annually. At 200,000 tons, greenhouse vegetable production is modest in comparison. In a typical year, German fruit production amounts to about 1,1 million tons. As far as imports go, the last five years' most important (continuous) growth products are:

- Cucumbers: from 520,000 tons in 2015 to 590,000 tons in 2020
- Watermelon: 365,000 tons to 505,000 tons
- Bell peppers: 400,000 to 415,000 tons
- Lemons: 150,000 to 235,000 tons
- Kohlrabi: 125,000 to 145,000 tons
- Strawberries: 100,000 to 130,000 tons
- Avocados: 50,000 to 120,000 tons
- Courgettes: 80,000 to 110,000 tons
- Aubergines: 45,000 to 60,000 tons
- Blueberries: 18,000 to 55,000 tons
- Kakis: 40,000 to 55,000 tons





### Corona-effect: A lot of citrus

There are also several products that did particularly well in the 2020 COVID-19 year. These are mainly all citrus products. Outliers in the past year were pineapple, kiwis, and apricots. Pears, peaches, and nectarines have clearly become less popular over the last five years.

### Bananas at the top, then tomatoes

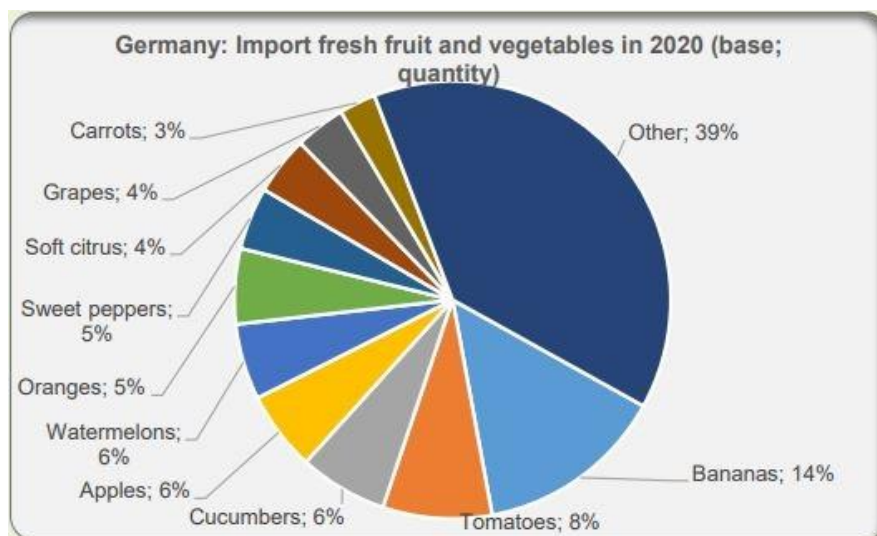
Bananas remain the absolute top import product. Last year, Germany imported 1,26 million tons of these. That was five percent down from 2019. Then, it was also less than 2016 and 2017's 1,4 million+ tons. Tomatoes are at number two in the German import assortment. Last year, the country imported 730,000 tons of these. That's a little more than in 2019, but less than in the previous years. In 2015, that volume stood at almost 760,000 tons.

### Top 3: Spain, the Netherlands, and Italy

Spain, the Netherlands, and Italy are Germany's main suppliers. It's difficult to give a precise figure for Dutch and, to a lesser extent, Belgian products sold on the German market. A lot of fresh fruit arrives at various Dutch and Belgian ports. Most of this is destined for other EU-27 countries, especially Germany.



According to Eurostat figures, Germany imported 2,6 million tons of fresh fruit and vegetables from the Netherlands last year. The same Eurostat report shows that the Netherlands exported three million tons to Germany. Some products imported by the Netherlands are transported further into Europe via Germany, for example. That could explain these differences.



### A lot of re-exports from the Netherlands and Belgium

It's hard to show how many Dutch (or Belgian) grown products Germany gets. The Dutch Quality Control Bureau and GroentenFruit Huis (GFH/KCB) stats show a quantity of almost 850,000 tons. The German Central Statistical Office (Statisches Bundesamt, SBA) registers products country of origin (in principle). That's in contrast to Eurostat. But, the SBA isn't always sure of an item's country of origin. This source registering avocados, pineapples, etc., as being Dutch products demonstrates that.

With other products, the re-exports volumes aren't clear either. Products such as tomatoes, cucumbers, and bell peppers hardly ever enter the Netherlands via ports. So, it's plausible that the SBA figures (mostly) concern Dutch products. That's harder to determine with, for example, apples and pears. These products often enter Europe via Dutch ports. But they're also grown in



the Netherlands (and Belgium). So, these volumes include Dutch as well as re-export figures.

It is, however, clear that the GFH/KCB stats regarding full soil vegetables are far from accurate. Based on the information above, last year Germany likely imported about 1,1 million tons of Dutch-grown vegetables. Pinning this down for fruit is more challenging. According to GFH/KCB, some 70,000 tons of Dutch product went to Germany. Based on the SBA, this could well have been double. That's, however, a rough estimate.

### **Spanish products benefited from the 2020 corona year**

The SBA figures show that last year for the first time, Germany imported more than three million tons of Spanish fruit and vegetables. That was four percent more than in 2019. The "corona demand" for citrus boosted these imports. Spanish oranges imports grew by seven percent to over 400,000 tons.

That meant orange imports, which had experienced a slump, reverted to 2015 levels. German imports of Spanish mandarins increased by more than ten percent. That also put an end to the previous years' decline. Spanish lemons imports were hugely successful, rising by 30%. The 185,000 tons was a record. Grapefruit imports, too, went very well.

In contrast, Germany imported fewer Spanish melons. However, Spanish cucumber and bell pepper imports fared well. Tomatoes are 'only' the seventh-most imported product from Spain. Slightly fewer of these were imported. Many smaller Spanish products did well in Germany in 2020. These are kohlrabi, aubergines, cauliflower/broccoli, plums, garlic, celery, and avocados.

### **Greenhouse products dominate Dutch supply**

Based on the SBA figures, Germany imported almost 1,5 million tons of Dutch fruit and vegetables. That's slightly less than in 2019.



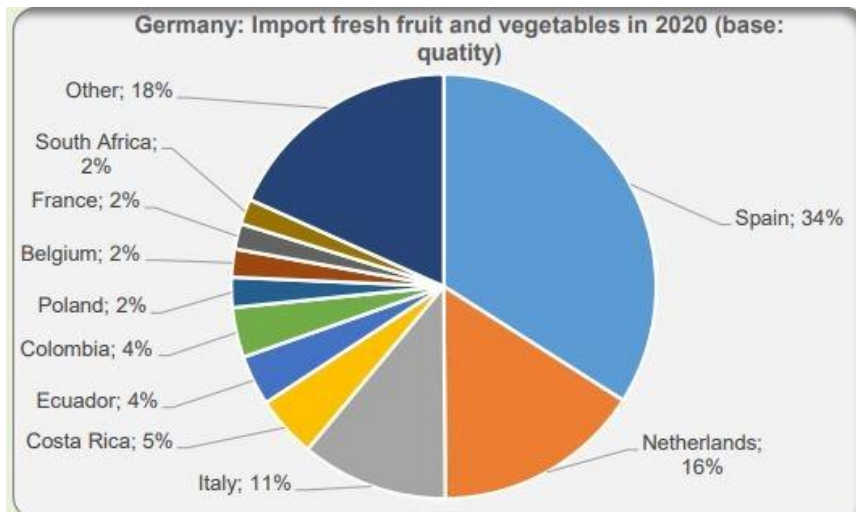


Tomatoes are the main product, followed by cucumbers and bell peppers. These big three greenhouse products accounted for more than half of the total. Based on GFH/KCB export stats, these made up almost as much as three-quarters of total exports to Germany.

### Belgium: local tomatoes and overseas bananas

According to the SBA figures, 192,000 tons of fresh fruit and vegetables were imported into Germany from Belgium last year. That was 14% less than in 2019. With almost a third of the total, tomatoes are the most important Belgian product exported to Germany. Far in its wake, apples and pears are in second and third place.

According to Eurostat figures, Germany imported 520,000 tons of fresh produce from/via Belgium last year. Almost half (250,000 tons) were banana re-exports. However, this flow has been declining sharply in recent years. In 2017, 460,000 tons of bananas went to Germany via Belgium.



### One million tons from Italy

Annually, Italy supplies Germany with about a million tons of fresh fruit and vegetables. In 2020, it was just a bit more, after a dip in 2019. Apples are the main product imported from Italy. Last year, this amounted to 230,000 tons.

That was considerably more than in previous years. Watermelon is the other main product.

After Spain, the Netherlands, and Italy, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Columbia are numbers four, five, and six on the suppliers' list. That's according to SBA figures. These countries almost exclusively supplied bananas. They came onto the German market either via the Netherlands or Belgium. Incidentally, Germany re-exports quite a lot of these bananas. In 2020, it exported almost 300,000 tons. A third of these went to Poland.

### **Neighbor and major producer, Poland, at no. 7 on the suppliers' list**

Poland is just above Belgium, at number seven on Germany's suppliers' list. Again, that's based on SAB stats. Poland is quite a large producer and a neighbor to Germany. So, the import of 206,000 tonnes is relatively small. Germany imported more produce from Poland last year than in 2019.

However, compared to the previous years, it was less. Apples are the top product. In 2020, 75,000 tons of Polish apples were imported into Germany; over half were for the industry. Mushrooms are the other main Polish product with an import of 43,000 tons in 2020. Tomatoes, onions, and cucumbers distantly follow these.

### **Growth from farther afield**

There are several less-important suppliers whose imports have risen. These are South Africa, Turkey, Greece, Morocco, the Dominican Republic, the United States, and Egypt. South African products imports via the Netherlands continue to increase. In the past year, this amounted to 175,000 tons. Grapes and oranges are the most important products.

Moroccan tomatoes are the top product imported from that country. But, here, there was more growth in other products. These included bell



peppers, watermelon, blueberries, courgettes, mandarins, and avocados. Egypt mostly supplies Germany with grapes, watermelons, and oranges.

**Rapport complet :**

<http://www.fruitandvegetablefacts.com/sites/default/files/Factsheet%20GERMANY%20import%20fresh%20fruit%20and%20vegetables%202020.pdf>

**Lien article :**

<https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9300631/german-fresh-fruit-and-vegetable-imports-keep-growing/?edition=3>