

Dried fruits and vegetables in Finland



Image: Pixabay: Dried Fruit Snack Eat Be 1

Finnpartnership
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Finland (5.5 million inhabitants in 2018) has a relatively small market for dried fruits and vegetables. However, Europe is the largest market for dried fruits and vegetables in the world. The import value in 2017 for dried fruits and vegetables was roughly €294,9 million for 230,3 thousand tons (Note! These numbers include both dried and fresh fruits' exports in Finland). Like most of other food products in Finland, dried fruits and vegetables are sold mostly through supermarkets and hypermarkets by a few retail chains in Finland, but there are other alternative sources to get one's dried products into Finnish markets. This fact-sheet covers those aspects and acts as a guidebook for people who are planning to export dried fruits and vegetables into Finland.

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A. Product Description

Table 1: HS code for popular dried fruit and vegetables in Finland

Code	Code description
0801	Nuts, edible; coconuts, Brazil nuts and cashew nuts, fresh or dried, whether or not shelled or peeled
0802	Nuts (excluding coconuts, Brazils and cashew nuts); fresh or dried, whether or not shelled or peeled
0803	Bananas, including plantains; fresh or dried
0804	Dates, figs, pineapples, avocados, guavas, mangoes and mangosteens; fresh or dried
0805	Citrus fruit; fresh or dried
0806	Grapes; fresh or dried
0813	Fruit, dried, other than that of heading no. 0801 to 0806; mixtures of nuts or dried fruits of this chapter
0712	Vegetables, dried; whole, cut, sliced, broken or in powder, but not further prepared
0713	Vegetables, leguminous; shelled, whether or not skinned or split, dried

Source: [Foreign Trade Online](#)

1 Language for dried fruits and vegetables in Finland

- Fruit(s): “hedelmä” (plural: hedelmät) in Finnish or “frukt” (plural: frukter) in Swedish
- Vegetable(s): “kasvis” (plural: kasvikset) in Finnish or “grönsak” (plural: grönsaker) in Swedish
- Nut(s): “pähkinä” (plural: pähkinät) in Finnish or “nöt” (plural: nötter) in Swedish

Visit this [link](#) for more information on the names of specific fruits and vegetables.

2 Types of dried fruits and vegetables imported into Finland

Dried fruits are quite popular in Finland and are consumed in many kinds of occasions. They can be used as a snack, baking, muesli mixtures, puddings, fruit soups, etc. Dried vegetables and nuts in the other hand are used as different powders, smoothies, preparing food, soups, snacks (substitute to chips for example), etc. Dates, apricots, raisins and exotic fruit mixes are very popular among Finnish people and favored over dried vegetables.

Dried fruits and vegetables are becoming more popular among Finnish people through the years according to [International Trade Statistics](#). This is due to different health trends such as veganism or alternative option for sweets and candies.

3 Labeling

The following items must be mentioned on the label of pre-packed dried fruits and vegetables in two mandatory languages Finnish and Swedish. Product labeling must be in compliance with the [European Union Regulation on food information to consumers](#).

- the name of the product and specifying if product is naturally dried or if sugar is added (for specific types of dried fruit)
- information about nuts should contain specification if they are shelled or in shell
- Regarding certain types of dried fruit which have seeds or pits, the label should declare presence of the seeds or pits
- It is common that besides grading, specifications include the crop year and variety
- list of ingredients
- ingredients that cause allergies and intolerances **highlighted**
- quantity of ingredients or categories of ingredients
- net quantity
- best before date/expiry date (dd.mm.yyyy)
- name or business name and address of the manufacturer or packager
- country/place of origin as in legislation
- instructions for storing the product
- instructions for use when needed
- nutritional values



Labeling must be:

- easy to identify
- written with visibly enough letters (mostly 1,2mm character size at least)
- easy to read
- understandable
- made with permanent manner
- not covered, blurred or cut with other visual items

It is very important to label products properly. Labeling should not misinform buyer about the product's quality, composition, quantity, origin, manufacturing process or anything else.

4 Packaging

Consumer packaging varies between plastic pouch, cartons or foil bag, sometimes re-closable. Pre-packed products weight between 9-500g. **Products in B2B consumer packaging** are packed in cartons in various sizes depending on the product and requirements of the buyer.

There is no general rule for export packaging, but dried fruit and shelled nuts are usually packaged in carton boxes with plastic liner inside. Unshelled nuts that are intended for wholesale are typically packed in jute or plastic bags or 'polysacks'. They can also be packed in paperboard cartons or wooden boxes.

Packaging used for dried fruit and edible nuts must (according to CBI):

- Protect the organoleptic and quality characteristics of the product
- Protect the product from bacteriological and other contamination (including contamination from the packaging material itself)
- Not pass on any odour, taste, color or other foreign characteristics to the product



4.1 European standards

Minimum standards for packaging: the objective of this legislation is, on one hand, to provide environmental protection and, on the other hand, to ensure free trade within the single market of the European Union (EU). [The Alliance for Beverage Cartons and the Environment](#) has published a list of frequent Q&As.

The EU has laid down rules for materials and articles coming into contact with food (including, for example, packaging) in order to prevent any unacceptable change in the composition of the foodstuffs and to protect human health (see legislation below). More information in the [Practical Guide of the Commission on the EU Food Contact Directives](#).

[The Finnish Waste Law](#) (2011, updated in October 2017) obliges Finnish companies to recycle the packaging of products placed in the Finnish market. It is largely based on the EU packaging legislation but incorporates some stricter national requirements. This legislation is not directly applicable to a supplier outside Finland. However Finnish buyers might forward requirements regarding the type of material used for packaging on to the supplier.

Additional information

- Quality demands can differ per segment and possibly per buyer. Therefore, asking importers for their specific quality requirements is important.
- Improving quality is an important way to add value to products, create competitive advantage, and open new markets.

B. Finnish dried fruit and vegetable market

The most common place consumers get their dried fruits and vegetables in Finland are super- and hypermarkets. Finns tend to buy dried fruits quite rarely for a reason that they are used more as snacks, preparing desserts or baking. Alternative routes to get dried fruits and vegetables in to the markets are wholesalers and ethnic grocery stores for example.

1 Finnish dried fruit and vegetables brands



[Mauste-Sallinen Ltd](#), a Finnish family enterprise, was established in 1961. The company imports, manufactures and packs foodstuffs for retail business and industry. Although they are better known for their spices and herbs, Sallinen Ltd also provides a variety of different dried fruits.



[Meira](#) (website only in Finnish) produces coffees, seasoning products, nuts, almonds and raisins at its own production facility in Helsinki, Vallila, both for retail and food services. Meira is part of the Italian Massimo Zanetti Beverage Group. Meira is a well-known brand in Finland and many consumers favor their high-quality nut and almond products, for example.



[Arimex](#) has been engaged in nuts and dried fruit market since 1991. In 2017 their sales exceeded 46 million Euros and is the leading provider of dried fruits and nuts in Nordic and Baltic countries. [Finnsweet](#) represents them in Finland.



[Eldorado](#) is a trademark developed by Tuko Logistics and is a so-called market's own trademark. Eldorado products are sold by [M-Group](#) and [Tarmo](#), for example.



[Pirkka](#) and [K-Menu](#) are K-Group's own food brands. Pirkka is a brand registered by the K-Group in 1987 and K-Menu is a brand registered in 2014. Both brands have a vast variety of different food products.



[Rainbow](#) is S-Group's own food brand registered in 1967. The name comes from Nordic acquisition organization, which tried to make shared trademark. Eventually Rainbow took root only in the Finnish market.

Other well-known dried fruits/vegetables brands in Finland; [SunSweet](#) (mostly plums in Finland), [Sun-Maid](#), [Western Commodities](#) and [Alesto](#) (Lidl's own brand, website in German).

2 Retailers in Finland

The grocery retail industry in Finland is mostly operated by two retail groups called [S-Group](#) and [K-Group](#). In 2017, the S-Group held the largest market share with 47 percent of Finnish grocery retailers and the K-Group as the second largest with 36 percent. The third largest retailer is [Lidl](#) with little less than 10 percent market share. There are also smaller grocery retailers for example [Tokmanni](#), [Halpahalli](#) and small private [grocery stores](#) and grocery stores focused on only preserved food products such as [Punnitse & Säästä](#) and [It's Pure](#).

You can find more information from the [Finnish Grocery Trade Association](#) (PTY) about retailers in Finland. From there you can see for example which grocery stores are members of the PTY, structure of the Finnish grocery trade, supply chains in Finland etc.

3 Wholesalers in Finland

In Finland there are multiple wholesaler companies specialized in groceries and they distribute their goods to restaurants, professional kitchens, retailers, private parties etc. Importing companies can choose between local wholesalers or bigger wholesalers that distribute their products around Finland. Here are some of the well-known wholesalers in Finland:



[Metro](#) is one of the leading wholesalers of daily consumer goods in Finland. Their market share of daily consumer goods – wholesalers in Finland is approximately 23 percent and their selections include fresh products, frozen food, manufactured food, brewery products and non-food.

MEIRA NOVA

Specialized in restaurants, hotels, staff restaurants and public-sector kitchens, [Meira Nova](#) has vast knowledge of restaurant business. The company was founded in 1991 and today has 21 000 different products.

Heino

[Heino](#) distributes groceries all around Finland and brings daily consumer goods from the world to Finnish households. Their product range is over 30 000 and their customers are catering-companies, grocery stores, restaurants, kindergartens, schools etc.



[Foodin](#) is a Finnish family company from Jyväskylä founded in 2009 which provides organic food. Focused on ethical, clean, authentic and high-quality products, they have all sorts of products from dried fruits and berries to dried vegetables.



[Fitnesstukku](#) is the leading wholesaler of additional nutrients and health sector in the Nordic markets. Although they're better known of their additional nutrients, they also sell dried fruits and berries as an alternative snack.

Other smaller wholesalers who distribute into multiple places in Finland or distribute to local area are [Elintarviketukku A.Piipponen Oy](#), [Multicatering](#), [Elintarviketukku Rikainen](#) etc.

Additional information

[Aitojamakuja.fi](#) is a place to gather information about getting one's product to Finnish wholesalers and through them to different foodservices. Visitors may choose the language of the site (Finnish, Swedish, English).

4 Ethnic grocery stores

Ethnic grocery stores have steady customer base due to offering people from different countries their home countries food and products. Finns may visit in ethnic grocery stores too out of curiosity, because they offer exotic food products for them. Ethnic grocery stores are mostly located in bigger cities and even then, only a few or even just one grocery store.

Even though many chain markets now days in Finland have more exotic food products too, many foreigners prefer ethnic grocery store, because from there they may get service by their own language, according the news article by [YLE](#) from 2015.

The selection of dried fruit and vegetables (and pretty much the selection of the whole store) is highly dependent of customers' requests and demands. Their request determines what kind of products a shopkeeper will choose to their stores. After that they need to get their products from multiple different wholesalers. Most of these wholesalers are in Helsinki and each of them are specialized in certain countries food products (Arabic, Indian, Chinese, Russian etc.). According to interviews with ethnic grocery stores' shopkeepers, dried fruit products are not in high demand there, but instead dried berries are very common product inside of consumers shopping basket.

From pictures below, you can see some of dried fruits and vegetables sold in ethnic grocery stores:



Dried plantains are very popular snacks in ethnic grocery stores (lower shelf)



Dried berries and selection of nuts

5 Food trends in Finland

There are few ongoing food trends in Finland. Most of them are concerning ethical and environmental issues. Eating healthy and in sustainable way has increased. Finns are willing to try new products and are making food decisions more individually. Some ongoing food trends in Finland are listed below:

Organic products

Consumption of organic products have increased all through 2010s. Total sales of organic products in Finland increased over 50% between 2012-2017. In 2017 total sales were €309 million, increasing 13% (compared to 2016). Organic products' market share in Finland is 2,3%. Increasing consumption gives opportunities for exporting organic products to Finland.

Most of the organic products are purchased from the grocery stores. Products are sold also in marketplaces and specialized shops. Use of organic products has become ordinary in households and food services. Finnish consumers value purity, taste, healthiness and environmentally friendly organic foods. Half of the consumers estimated that their organic consumption will increase in the near future and most of them are willing to buy even more if the products were less expensive. More information about producers and a wider selection of products might increase consumption.

40% of professional kitchens use organic products every week, mainly vegetables, fruits and berries. Main reasons for using are environmental and ethical issues and good taste.

More information about organic products in Finland available: [ProLuomu](http://ProLuomu.fi).

Eating healthy

Finnish people are trying to eat healthier than ever, they are aware how food they eat affects their bodies. For example, foods that affect positively to brain and intestines have become common. Trend is to eat naturally for gaining wellness. This means that the consumption of natural, organic and plant-based foods is growing.

Veganism

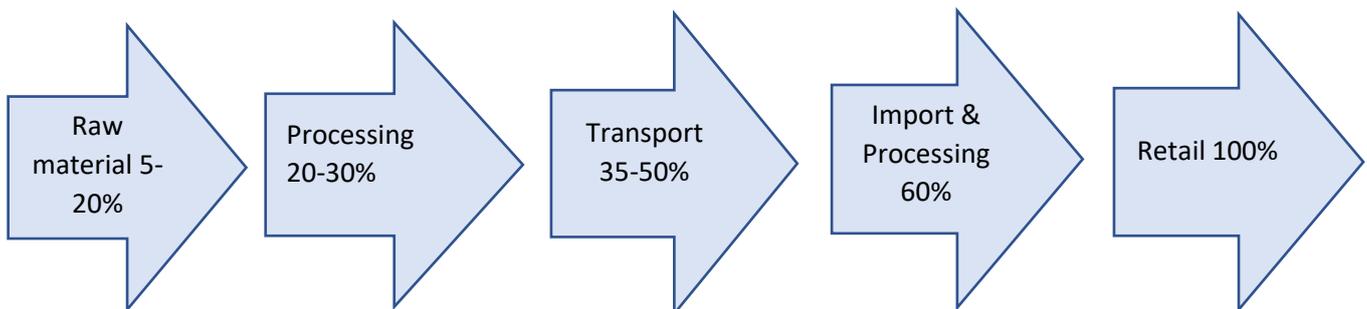
Veganism has been a trend in Finland for couple of years. Reasons for plant-based diet are ethical, ecological and its healthiness. Vegans do not eat any animal-based foods (meat, eggs, milk etc.), which means they consume plant-based foods like vegetables, mushrooms, seeds, grains and substitutes for meat. Schools are organizing vegetable food-days and almost every restaurant serves vegan menus or dishes.

Season buying

Awareness of different varieties of fruits and vegetables has grown. Markets and customers are following crop seasons during the year. Markets are changing their range of products throughout the year, so they can offer affordable price for specific types and varieties of fruits and vegetables. People are also curious, and they are willing to try new exciting products.

C. Retail price

According to CBI, the retail price for dried fruits and edible nuts are not precise because of vast range of different products and it is pretty much same situation across European countries including Finland. There are also differences between producing countries regarding types, fruits and nuts' variety and qualities. Below is a very rough breakdown of dried fruits and vegetables prices:



Source: [CBI Dried tropical fruit to Europe](#)

Table 1: Example of consumer prices of dried fruit and vegetable products in Finland (based on retail price in 2018, per kilogram)

	Product	Price		Product	Price
	Earth Control Apple chips	€33,20		Sunsweet Dried plums	€14,45
	Rainbow Dried apricots	€8,95		Sallinen Dried tropical fruit mix	€8,72
	Rainbow Dried fig	€8,95		Pirkka Dried organic dates	€12,95
	Rainbow Dried fruit mix	€7,92		Kluth Dried berries mix	€23,12
	Urtekram Dried organic mango pieces	€26,59		Arimex Dried pineapples	€9,98

	Foodin Sundried tomatoes	€19,96		Sallinen Raisins	€5,81
	Pirkka Dried cranberries	€14,60		Arimex Dried banana slices	€9,58
	Exotic Snacks Roasted & salted horse bean	€15,75		Deliciest Carrot chips	€42,14

D. Display of dried fruit and vegetables in Finland and consumers

1 Display

Displaying dried fruits and vegetables varies between grocery stores, because chains often determine their own ways to display each product selections and even some independent grocery stores may decide it. For example, Kesko's grocery stores have loose guidelines for displays, but a shopkeeper can affect the display too.

Price of dried fruit and vegetables is also important factor when displaying them, because by doing that, grocery stores can tempt customers to do impulse purchases. It is very common to put a discount on new products, because then customers will try them more easily and are more likely buy that product in the future.

The Finnish Food Safety Bureau ([Evira](#)) has also made clear guidelines for displaying groceries and one of the most common direction for them is putting older products first on the shelves and newest on the back.

Below couple of pictures as an example of display of dried fruit and vegetables:



Selection of nuts in S-Group shop



Dried fruit and nuts display in Lidl



Display in S-Group hypermarket Prisma

Health products have become more and more popular among Finnish people and because of that stores such as [Punnitse & Säästä](#) (Weigh & Save) are a popular alternative for sweets. Their operating model is to provide selection of nuts, dried fruits, powders etc. for consumers. People can choose products freely and make a package of their own liking. S-Group's and K-Group's hypermarkets provide similar kinds of selections nowadays too but in smaller scales. The idea is the same as in pick and mix candies; make a bag of snacks of your favorite products.



Display in Punnitse & Säästä

2 Consumers

Dried fruit and vegetables are very common in any kind of Finnish households. Dried fruit and vegetables in Finland are considered as healthy snacks and ingredients for preparing food although there are not any recommendations for how much it is good to consume them. Slightly exaggerating, almost every household in Finland has at least some dried fruits, nuts and vegetables in their food closet (plums, raisins, apricots and walnuts are common). Finnish consumers only buy them in small amounts.

Different seasons affects consumers behavior of buying dried products. The most important seasons in Finland which affect most to consumer behavior towards dried products are Christmas, Easter and May Day. Christmas is affecting more than any other season. During Christmas time, Finnish people will buy different almonds, mixes of dried fruits for their Christmas kissel and dried plums. In Easter it is very common to buy raisins and peaches for different baking products.

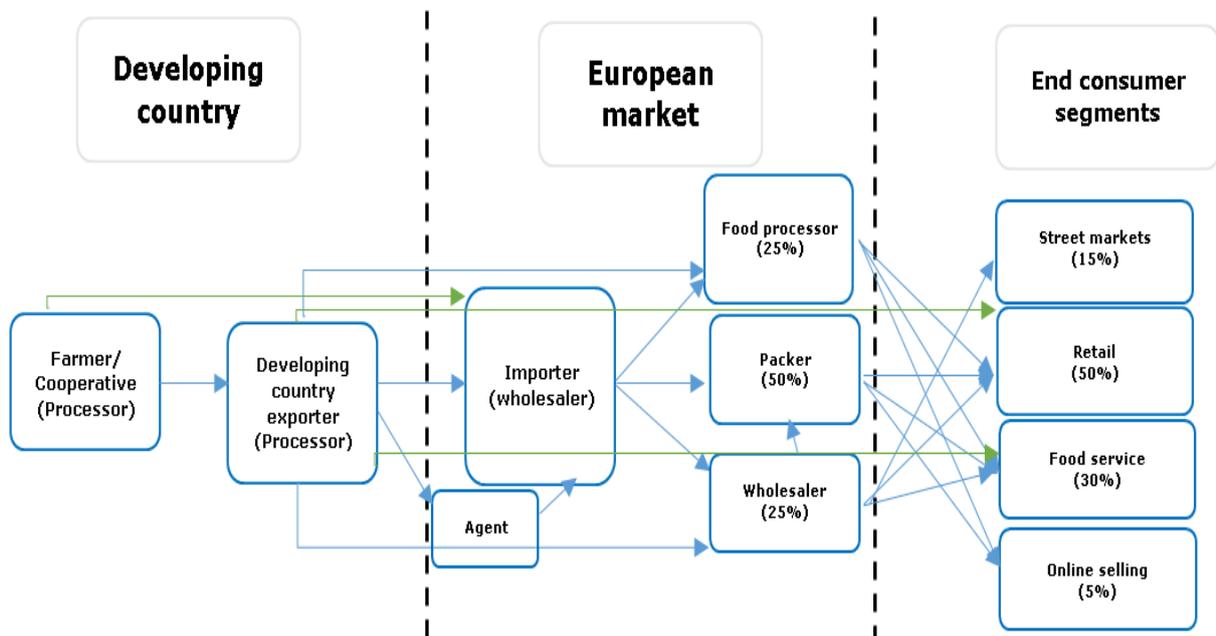
E. Channels to bring dried fruits and vegetables into Finnish Market

1 Market channels on the European markets

Importers (wholesalers) and agents are the main channels to reach the European market. Depending on the product, growers can work together and act as a processor, but in most cases, processors are separate from growers. The exception is the production of sun-dried products, where growers produce naturally dried products that are further processed in the industrial facilities.

Farmer sells the products to exporter/processor who delivers products to European importers or food manufacturers or straight to end consumer. End consumer is mostly retail or food service company.

Figure 1: European market channels for dried fruit and edible nuts. (CBI)



Growers and processors in developing countries

After harvesting, fruit and vegetables are processed in developing countries with different methods, such as deep freezing, concentrating, preserving, canning, cooking etc. Fruit and vegetable preparation processing technology in particular is developing fast to meet tailor-made requests from the European processing industry. This includes specification according to fruit size, cut and variety, stabilisation systems, different flavour combinations, sugar reduction and vitamins/minerals enrichments.

A major trend in the processing industry of dried fruit and vegetables is the investment in new drying and processing technologies. This trend continues as a move away from sun-drying processes, to improve food safety and quality control over the production process.

Importers

There is a move from importer-traders, who do not add any processing, to importer-packers-processors, who not only pack, but also blend, mix, coat and brand the products. In addition, there is also further specialisation of the importers (wholesalers), and some of them exclusively deal with dried fruit and vegetables as food ingredients.

The position of the importers and food manufacturers are put under pressure by retail: the higher requirements from the retail industry determine the supply chain dynamics from the top down the chain. This pressure is translated into lower prices, but also added value aspects such as “sustainable,” “locally sourced,” “free range,” “natural,” “organic,” “fair trade” and “carbon neutral” products.

Food processors

Food manufacturers use dried fruits and vegetables as ingredients. The bakery and confectionary industry uses dried fruit, the ready meals industry and the soup industry use dried vegetables, the breakfast cereal industry uses dried fruit and the pet food industry uses dried vegetables.

Big food processing companies more often import directly from developing countries. However, this trend only applies to the most used products (such as raisins). This trend is still not applicable to ‘exotic’ ingredients as these are imported in small quantities.

Packers

- Packers are the most important channel in terms of quantity of traded dried fruit, vegetables and edible nuts, as more than 50% of products is re-packed in Europe into smaller packs for the retail and food service sector.
- Packers increasingly pack under private label brands for retailers.

Many packers import directly as well, thus threatening the existence of the stand-alone importers. ‘Packers’ also perform other processing and marketing functions such as blending, mixing, coating and branding of the products, and have thus earned a strong position as product category specialists.

Food manufacturers

The European food and drink industry is the largest European industry in terms of employment. It is very competitive and globally connected as a major importer and exporter of food and agricultural products.

The food manufacturing industry consumes the largest share of processed fruit and vegetables as ingredients on the European markets.

One of the strong developments in the food manufacturing industry is vertical integration. European processors are investing in production facilities, source directly from the farmers and even grow fruit on their own orchards in developing countries.

More information about market channels can be found [here](#) (CBI, dried fruit and edible nuts), [here](#) (CBI, processed fruits and vegetables) and [here](#) (CBI, dried tropical fruits).

Additional information:

The Finland Chamber of Commerce in Finland provides help to companies, so they can improve their internationalization, expand their network and services in Finland. They also have an influence on international business rules inside the EU and globally. It is highly recommended to familiarize oneself with the Finland Chamber of Commerce, because from there, one can get useful information and help for exporting or importing e.g. dried fruit and vegetables. After all, from there one can have necessary contracts and documents for foreign trade, guidance and education you need to improve a company’s business.

You can get read more about [Finland Chamber of commerce](#) from their website.

2. Direct contact with buyers through trade fairs or food events

Finnish trade fairs and food events:



[Wine, Food and Good Living](#) (Helsinki) is the leading exhibition in the field of food and beverages sector in Finland. Although the emphasis is on wine, there are also stands for coffee, tea, food and other beverages.



[Gastro Helsinki](#) is the leading trade fair for the hotel, restaurant and catering industries. It presents the sector's latest products, trends and innovations.



[Trade Fair for Food and Drink Industry](#) (Tampere) is international event that provides an extensive view of the development and topical themes within the food and packaging industries and introduce products, services and new innovations. Both industries will go through several reforms this year (2018) as well as in the near future and they will be discussed throughout the trade fair.



[e-Commerce and Shop Tech](#) (Helsinki) is a major trade fair that offers two effective days full of innovations, inspiration, and information in the retail sector organized in Helsinki. It is a unique trade show combination that gathers retail professionals, decision makers, buyers and suppliers together for two effective days to meet face to face, find new products, services and attend to seminars.



[Fastfood & Café & Ravintola](#) (Helsinki) offers visitors opportunities to find new trends, ideas and concepts within the fast-food & café business gathered at on place. Plenty of exhibitors display provisions such as raw ingredients, fresh food, drinks, seasonings, packaging, decor, machines, utensils, clothing, check-out systems, and concepts.



[Luomupäivät](#) (Pori) is event for organic foods. It gathers producers, entrepreneurs, advisors, researchers, interest groups and decision makers. Luomupäivät offers opportunities for networking and sharing knowledge and experiences with different industries.



[Turku Food and Wine Festival](#) (Turku) offers premium foods and wines for visitors. Food companies offer lots of treats for buying and tasting.

Important European trade fairs for canned fruits and vegetables

- [Food Ingredients Europe](#) – unites industry leaders.
- [Natural Ingredients](#) – world's leading health and natural food ingredients event.
- [BioFach](#) – fair for organic and natural products. Hosted in Germany.
- [Sial](#) – various food and beverage products. Hosted in France.

3 Information channels

Finding buyers:

Visit [CBI's document](#) about finding buyers for more information.

4 Promotion tips for exporters targeting Finnish retail

Innovative seasonings, mixtures and packaging

Innovative seasonings, mixtures of fruits/vegetables and innovative packaging would draw attention of the consumers. They value easiness, healthiness and flavor of the product. Ready and healthy take-away snacks are estimated to become more popular according to the [K-Group](#). For example, healthy one portion ready-to-eat packaging would be noticed.

Variety of products

Finnish consumers are interested in increasing variety of available products. There are dozens of various products of dried fruits and vegetables on the grocery stores' shelves. Still, except products like raisins and specific nuts, which are perceived as mainstream, dried fruit and vegetables are relatively unknown products in terms of taste as a separate snack and use in preparing foods. Promotion materials, such as advertisements and recipes that are published in media might boost the demand of a product.

Healthy snack

Dried fruit and vegetables are usually perceived as a healthy snack. Consumers eat dried fruit and vegetables as a snack instead of unhealthy options like chips or candies. Emphasize health aspects of your product.

Low prices

Regular Finnish household expenditure for food and non-alcoholic products is slightly over 10%. Finnish people are very price sensitive. Price is determining factor when buying food, especially to people with low wages. If applicable, emphasize your ability to compete on lower prices.

Sustainability

Supply chain of food in Finland is developing toward a more sustainable approach of production and handling. Environmental, social and ethical issues are becoming increasingly important for consumers and retailers. If applicable, emphasize your ability to deliver according certification schemes (Organic, Fair Trade, Rainforest Alliance). More information about sustainability available in chapter **F – Non-legal requirements**.

Sourcing

Major Finnish retail chains are buying their products from their own wholesale companies and distribution companies. Buying is often centralized nationally for large (mainstream) product volumes from countries of origin directly. This means they buy large volumes at once with consistent quality.

- Inex - Importer/purchaser for S-Group
- Kesko - Importer/wholesaler for K-Group
- Tuko Logistics – cooperative association including Wihuri, Heinon tukku
- Lidl (German) has its own European purchase and distribution network

Private labels

Grocery stores sell dried fruit and vegetable products also under their private label next to other “popular” brands (S-Group’s “Rainbow” and “X-tra” and K-Group’s “Pirkka”), which demands maintaining a certain level of quality when supplying a private label. Emphasize your ability of being able to provide large volumes at a consistent quality in time when aiming at private label supply.

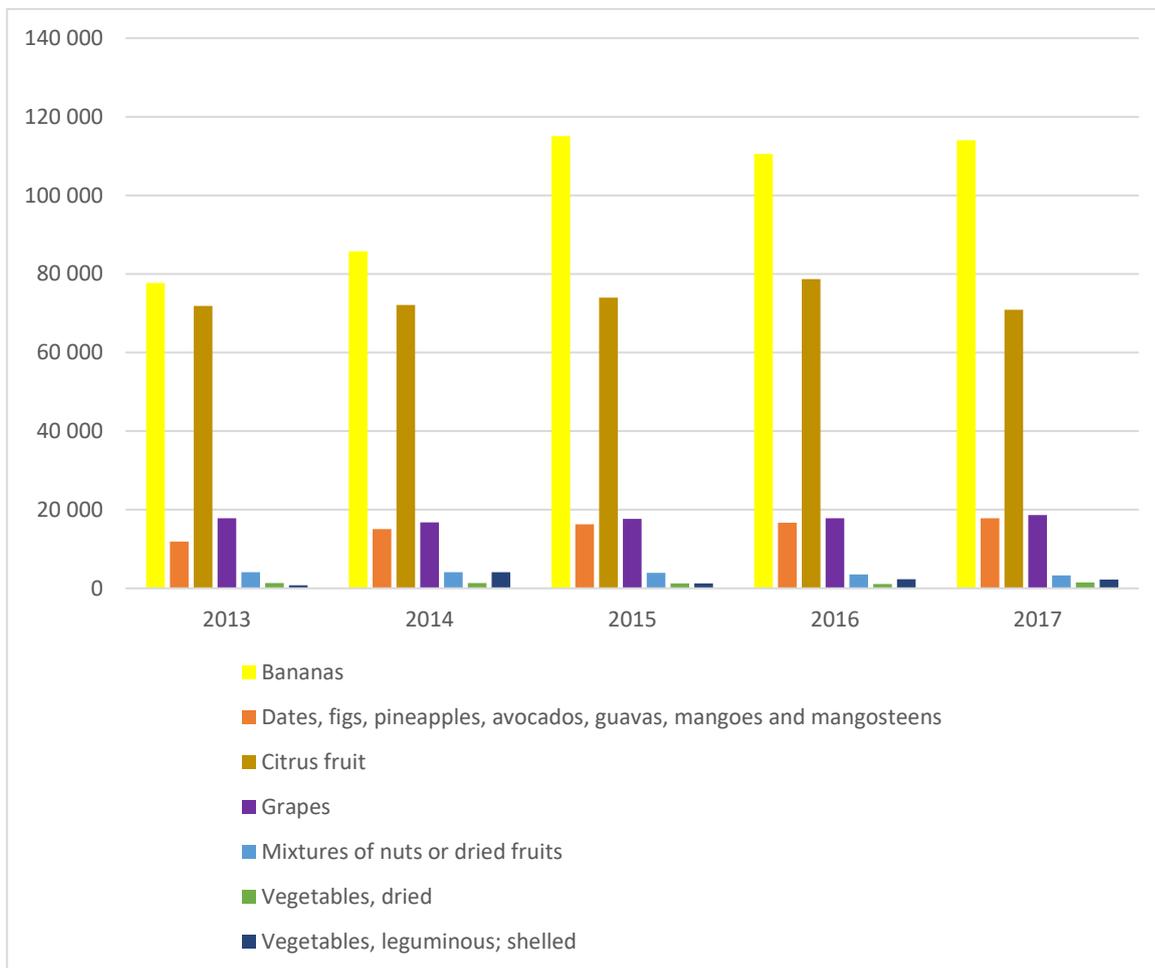
Importing companies

There are importing wholesale companies that supply dried fruits and vegetables to the retail. For example: [Grefinn](#), [Maustemesta](#), [Finnsweet](#), [Aduki](#).

F. Export and import in the Finnish dried fruit and vegetables market

The climate in Finland makes production of many fruits very challenging, therefore Finland is highly dependent of most of dried fruit imports and some of vegetables. From the graphs in the following pages, you can get directional understanding of import and export volumes of dried fruit and vegetables because most of the fruit and vegetables are categorized with both fresh and dried.

Figure 2: Finnish imports of dried fruit and vegetables, in tons, from 2013-2017

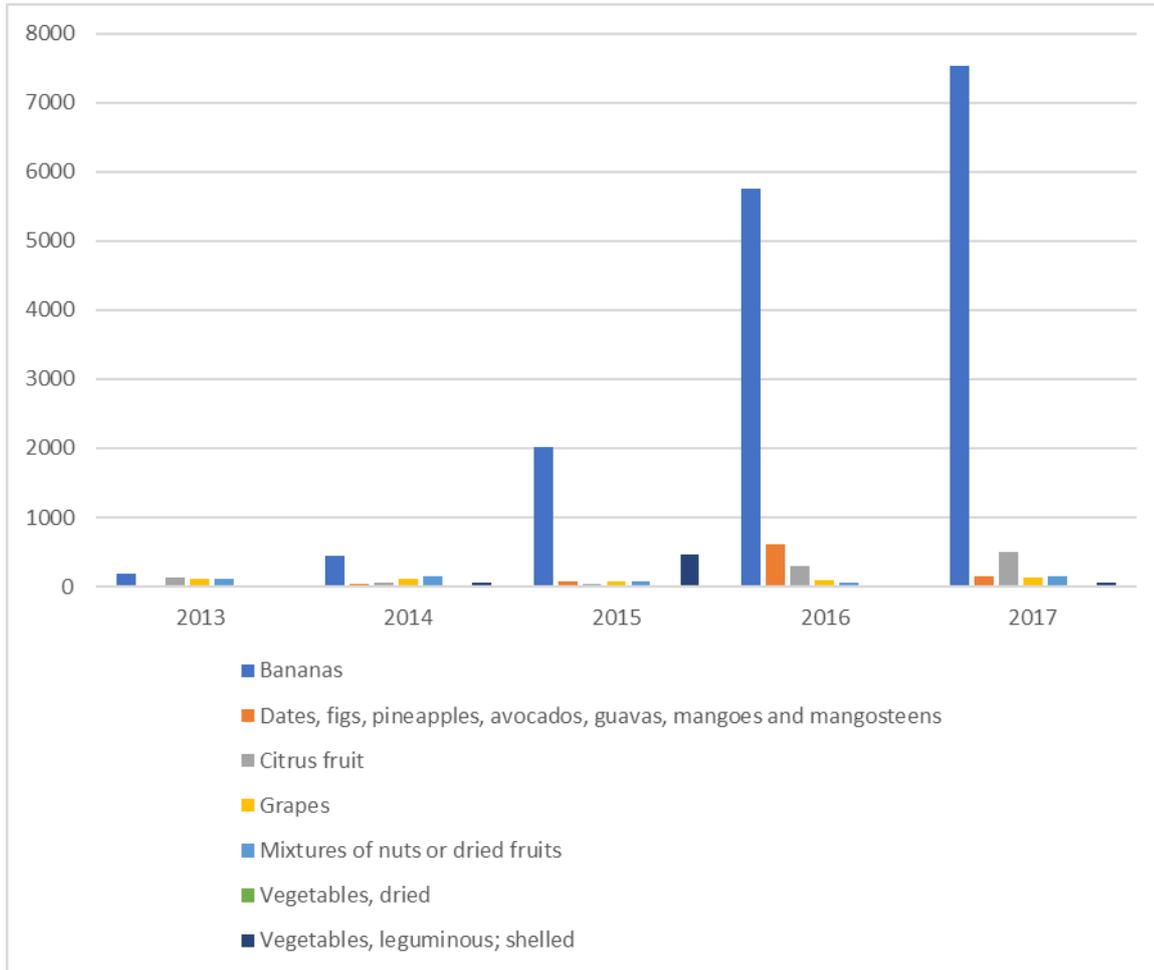


Source: [International Trade Statistics](#)

The top two categories of imported fruit in 2017 to Finland were bananas and citrus fruit with bananas 114 tons imported and citrus fruit 70,9 tons imported, but it is unclear how much of them are dried products. With all categories together, the import volumes of dried fruit and vegetables were 228,5 tons in 2017. In 2013 the import volumes were 185,5 tons which means 43 tons growth between 2013 and 2017 (23% growth).

Some of the biggest suppliers of dried fruit and vegetables are Costa Rica (bananas mostly), Spain (citrus and grapes) Sweden, India and Turkey (dried vegetables).

Figure 3: Finnish exports of dried fruit and vegetables, in tons, from 2013-2017



Source: [International Trade Statistics](#)

Export of dried fruit and vegetables have been greatly increased between 2013 and 2017 mostly because of bananas. In 2013 the export volumes were only 582 tons and that increased to export volumes of 8,516 in 2017. The most popular countries Finland exported dried fruit and vegetables in 2017 were Estonia, Latvia and Sweden.

G. Requirements for importing dried fruits and vegetables in Finland

1 Legal requirements

Regarding dried fruits and vegetables, Finland follows EU legislation, including the requirements of General Food Law, food labeling, organic production, contaminants, ionizing radiation, irradiation and maximum residue levels (MRLs) of pesticides.

Many of the legal requirements address food safety issues that must (also) be addressed at the farming level. It is crucial to stress the importance of these issues to farmers. Suppliers would provide training to the farmers (e.g. on [good agricultural practices](#)) and invest in better processing and storing practices, if needed.

General food law

Food safety is a key issue in EU food legislation. [The General Food Law](#) is the framework regulation in EU food safety legislation. The legislation also introduces requirements on traceability. [Evira](#) is the Finnish Food Safety Authority that is entrusted to ensure food safety in Finland, and has information about its activities, research reports, guides and brochures on food safety issues in Finnish market.

Contaminants in food

The EU food safety policy has set maximum levels for certain [contaminants](#) in specified products or product groups. Besides microbiological contamination, the problem caused by some matters (e.g. sand, glass, metal) should be paid attention. All foods including dried fruit and vegetables sold in the European Union must be safe. This applies to imported products as well. Additives must be approved. Harmful contaminants such as pesticide residues or exceeded level of mycotoxins or preservatives are banned. It should also be readily obvious from the labelling if a food contains allergens.

According to a [study](#), dried fruits are susceptible products for mold contamination and growth, and mycotoxin production; once the product is contaminated, decontamination procedures are inevitable.

Food contact materials

The European Union has enacted rules for materials and articles brought into contact with food (e.g. packaging) in order to prevent any unacceptable change in the composition of the foodstuffs and to protect human health. Food contact materials are either intended to be brought into contact with food, are already in contact with food or can reasonably be brought into contact with food including direct or indirect contact. Food contact materials includes for example containers for transporting food, machinery to process food, packaging materials, kitchenware and tableware. Food contact materials should not affect consumer health nor the quality of food. More information can be found in the [EU legislation – Food Contact Materials](#).

Food control

All food products entering the EU are subject to be checked whether they are in compliance with the relevant food legislation by [official controls](#).

Food labeling

The EU provides [general food labeling requirements](#) applicable to all foodstuffs. More information about labeling available in chapter **A. – Labeling**.

Good manufacturing practice (GMP) for food contact materials

The EU has developed [Good Manufacturing Practice \(GMP\)](#) for the manufacturers of materials and articles intended to come into contact with foodstuffs. It is not directly applicable to producers outside

the EU. However, it may be relevant since buyers can demand a quality system. Common quality requirements of Finnish companies include:

- employee hygiene
- hand washing
- proper use and storage of clothing
- regulated traffic flow throughout the farm and/or fabric
- chemical usage (kept to a minimum), identification of allergens and related controls and procedures (where appropriate)

In addition, it outlines requirements related to nutrition and allergens labeling.

Hygiene of foodstuffs

The EU legislation on [hygiene of foodstuffs \(HACCP\)](#) is legally binding for food processors in the EU. If an exporter is outside the EU, there is no direct bound by this legislation. However, Finnish companies will ask their suppliers to comply with the requirements set out in the HACCP legislation. Finnish buyers will therefore often ask suppliers to implement a food safety management system (see Non-legal Requirements below) to prove that they comply with the HACCP requirements.

Maximum Residue levels of pesticides in food

EU legislation has been laid down to regulate the presence of pesticide residues ([MRLs](#)) in food products. A [study](#) conducted in 2015 (published in 2017) by the European Food Safety Authority has shown that food produced in Finland is mostly free of quantifiable residues. Therefore, alternatives should be considered, including the use of non-chemical methods and implementing Integrated Pest Management (IPM).

Microbiological contamination of food

The EU has set [microbiological criteria](#) for food born micro-organisms, their toxins and metabolites.

Organic producing and labeling

The EU has established [requirements](#) for an organic product of agricultural origin in order to be marketed in the EU as “organic”.

2 Non-legal requirements

In addition to EU and EFTA requirements, other non-legal requirements must be in order to supply Finnish buyers. Industry standards have emerged from retailer initiatives, laying down minimum rules of conduct and practices, requirements for product quality and food handling that are above and beyond the legal requirements.

The responsibility policies of importers and retailers often incorporate the following standards:

2.1 Quality



The [ISO9000](#) family provides guidance and tools for ensuring that products and services consistently meet customer's requirements, and that quality is consistently improved. Some of ISO standards are product based and some are organization based. [SFS](#) is Finnish standardization organization.

2.2 Health & safety

A large share of buyers in Finland has implemented a food safety management system and will ask suppliers to do the same. These systems often go beyond legal requirements. The below list could be important in the Finnish market. More information can be found in the [CBI's document](#) concerning requirements for exporting.



The [ISO22000](#) addresses various aspects of environmental management. It provides practical tools to identify and control environmental impact and constantly improve their environmental performance.



The [Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point](#) is a methodology, based on seven principles, which food processors, packagers and distributors must use to identify the potential hazards that can be introduced while the food is under their care.



The [IFS Food](#) is standard for auditing food safety and quality of processes and products of food manufacturers. It concerns food processing companies or companies that pack loose food products.



[British Retail Consortium \(BRC\)](#) global standard is a widely applied safety and quality standard. A food safety certification is very important in the EU including Finland. The adoption of HACCP is the main requirement, when you supply to large international retailers. BRC is endorsed by the Global Consumer Goods Forum and has thus been recognized in key western markets, including Finland. Large Finnish retailers take BRC into account when choosing a supplier.



The [GlobalG.A.P.](#) supports good agricultural practices that help to provide safe and traceable products. It has been becoming a minimum requirement demanded by Finnish retailers (as most European retailers).

2.3 Sustainability



For exports of dried fruits and vegetables produced organically all countries in the EU accept the same regulation scheme for organic production. Almost every EU country has one or more additional domestic organic labels. More information about European Union organic certification can be found [here](#).



[Nordic Ecolabel](#) (Nordic Swan) is the official sustainability ecolabel for the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden), introduced by the Nordic Council of Ministers.



Focusing on principles of fair pricing, good registration of company processes and good care for labour conditions, the FairTrade [principles](#) are a strong band in the EU and in Finland in as well. Fair Trade products are sold by the all large retail chains. The K-food stores have the largest selection of FairTrade products in Finland. More information about FairTrade can be found [here](#).



[The Rainforest Alliance](#) certification scheme aims at reducing the environmental and social impact of agricultural production. Rainforest Alliance works to conserve biodiversity and improve livelihoods by promoting and valuating the implementation of the most globally respected sustainability standards in a variety of fields. Retailers in Finland increasingly add Rainforest Alliance products to their assortment, but the number of products is limited comparing with other certifications.

- Sustainability is currently a trend in Finland and is expected to become more important in the future. It covers environmental, economic and social aspects, including health and safety issues.
- Sustainability policies of retailers in Finland: Three largest retailers, S-Group, K-Group, Lidl, often go beyond pure legislative requirements of food safety, quality and environmental issues. Most of the buyers will supply their retailers directly or indirectly and will therefore forward those stricter requirements on their suppliers. They communicate to their consumers in policy statements. See their policy statements and criteria below for further information:
 - [S-Group responsibility policy](#)
 - [K-Group responsibility policy](#)
 - [Lidl Finland responsibility statement](#) (only available in Finnish)

References and useful sources

- [BRC Global Standards](#)
- [CBI – Exporting edible nuts and dried fruits to Europe](#)
- [CBI – Exporting dried tropical fruit to Europe](#)
- [CBI – Trends offering opportunities on European market](#)
- [CBI – Buyer requirements](#)
- [CBI – Channels to get edible nuts and dried fruit on the European market](#)
- [CBI – Channels to get canned fruit and vegetables on the European market](#)
- [CBI – 10 tips for finding buyers](#)
- [Chamber of Commerce - Finland](#)
- [Codex Alimentarius](#)
- [EU Organic farming](#)
- [EU Trade Helpdesk](#)
- [European legislation](#)
- [Evira – Finnish food safety authority](#)
- [Fairtrade](#)
- [Finnish Customs](#)
- [Finnish Food and Drink Industries' Federation and Finland business culture](#)
- [Finnish Grocery Trade Association](#)
- [Finnpartnership – Import from developing countries](#)
- [Fruit Logistica](#)
- [GlobalG.A.P.](#)
- [Nordic Ecolabel](#)
- [Product factsheet: Dried fruits and vegetables in Finland](#)
- [Rainforest Alliance](#)
- [Trademap statistics](#)
- [UTZ certified](#)