

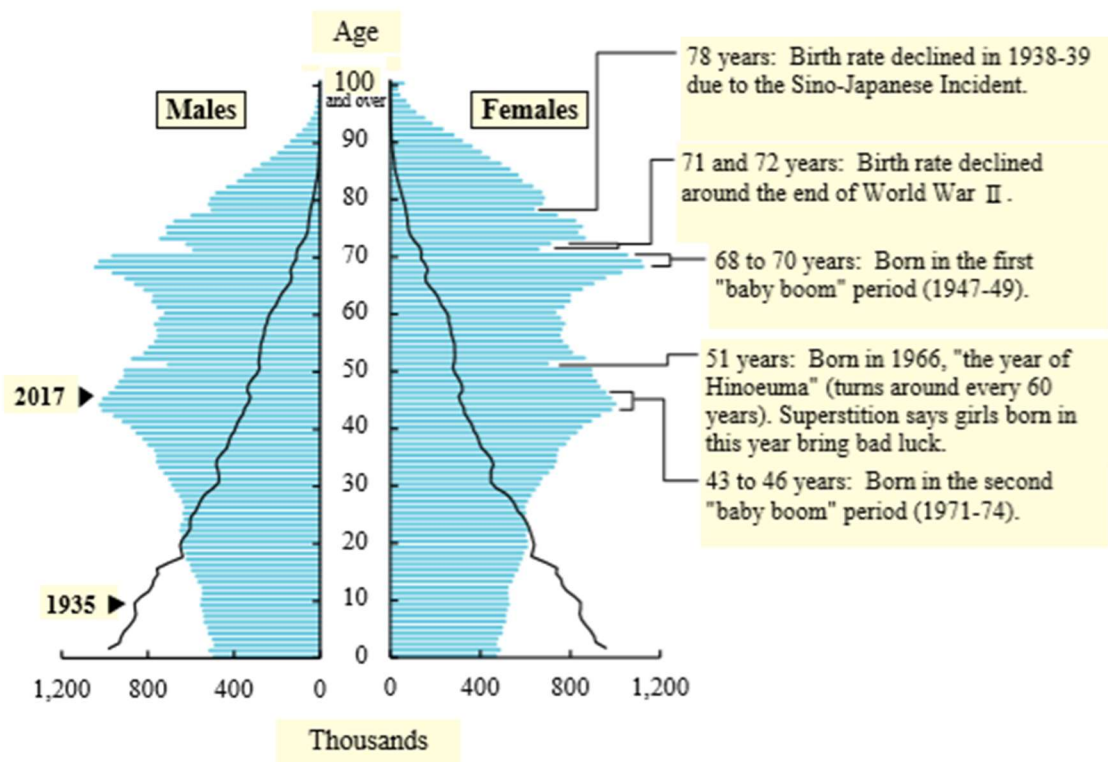


Japan Food

GENERAL

Population: 126.71 million (2017) / 126.93 million (2016)

Population Pyramide:



Source: Statistics Bureau, MIC.

Private households: 53.33 million (2015)

Food self-sufficiency: In FY 2016, the self-sufficiency rate was 100 % for rice, 12 % for wheat, 8 % for beans, 80 % for vegetables, 41 % for fruits, 53 % for meats, and 56 % for seafood. Japan relied almost entirely on imports for the supply of wheat and beans.

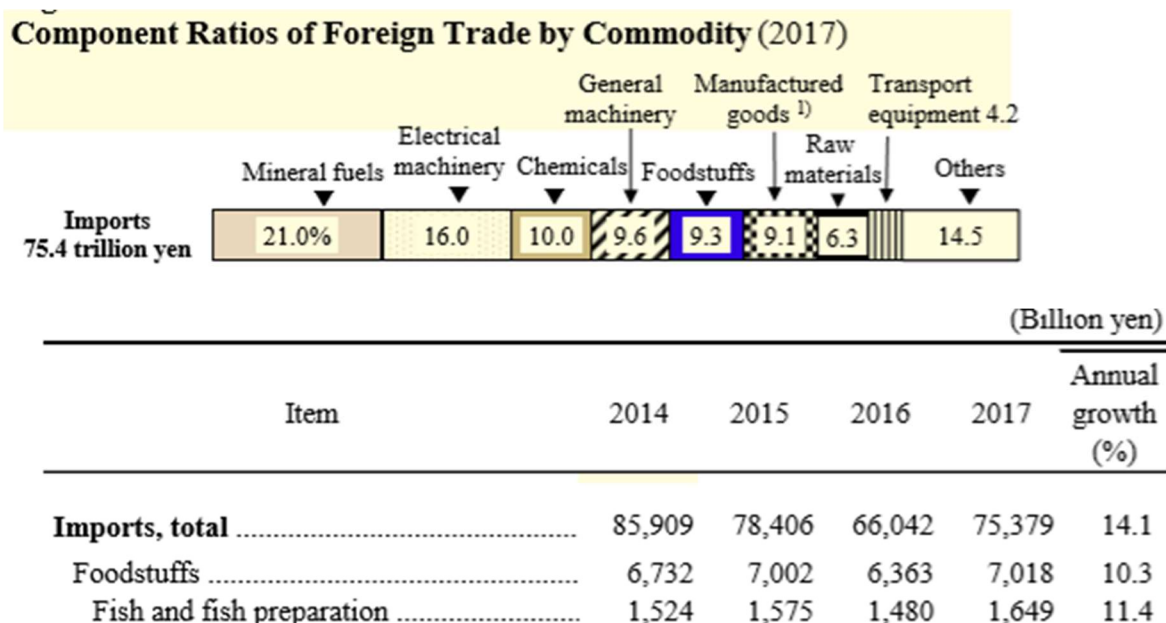
Value of manufactured food shipments: 28'102 billion yen¹ (2015)

¹ 1 CHF = 114 JPY as of January 15, 2020

Food services and drinking places:

590'847 establishments in operation in 2016 / 620,000 (2014)

Food import:



Source: Statistical Handbook of Japan²

REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

NON-LIBERALIZED ITEMS

In general, any type of food can be exported to Japan as long as it is verified to be safe for human health. From Switzerland and Liechtenstein, beef had been banned because of BSE since 2001, but Japan lifted the ban on imports of beef (raw meat) in 2016.³ Some fresh fruits are still banned due to Mediterranean fruit fly⁴. Import quotas are imposed on certain fish products. Wild plants, animals protected by the Washington convention including products made of them cannot be exported to Japan.

JAPANESE IMPORTER

There is no license for food import; anyone can therefore import foods except for alcoholic beverages. Those who import and wholesale/retail beverages containing 1 % or more alcohol require a liquor vendors' license.

² Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication, <https://www.stat.go.jp/english/data/handbook/pdf/2018all.pdf>

³ <http://www.maff.go.jp/aqs/english/news/eligible-bse-country.html>

⁴ List of the import prohibited plants: <http://www.pps.go.jp/english/law/list2.html>

STEP 1: PRODUCT ANALYSIS

First, the Swiss exporter should check if the product complies with the Japanese regulations.

To verify this, the following information will be useful to Swiss exporters:

- General information on Japanese food safety administration:
<http://www.mhlw.go.jp/english/topics/foodsafety/>
- Positive List System for Agricultural Chemical Residues in Food
<https://www.ffcr.or.jp/en/positive-list-system---exempted-substances.html>
- Food additives permitted for use in food
<http://www.mhlw.go.jp/english/topics/foodsafety/foodadditives/index.html>

Inspection result statements provided by Swiss official laboratories are also valid. The list of laboratories is available on <http://www.mhlw.go.jp/english/topics/importedfoods/1-10.html>

STEP 2: MARKET ANALYSIS

In order to be successful, the Swiss exporter must understand the Japanese market and create clear competitive advantages. This involves understanding the customers, competitors and the distribution channels. Swiss Business Hub Japan will help the Swiss exporter get necessary information and provide suggested next steps.

STEP 3: BUSINESS PARTNER SEARCH

Based upon the findings from the Step 2, establish a profile of the qualified business partner (importer/distributor) approach the identified potential partners, meet them and enter into a partnership with the chosen one to start business.

Swiss Business Hub Japan will gladly help through every step the Swiss exporter to succeed.

STEP 4: PROCEDURES TO BE TAKEN CARE OF BY THE JAPANESE PARTNER

INSPECTION PROCEDURES

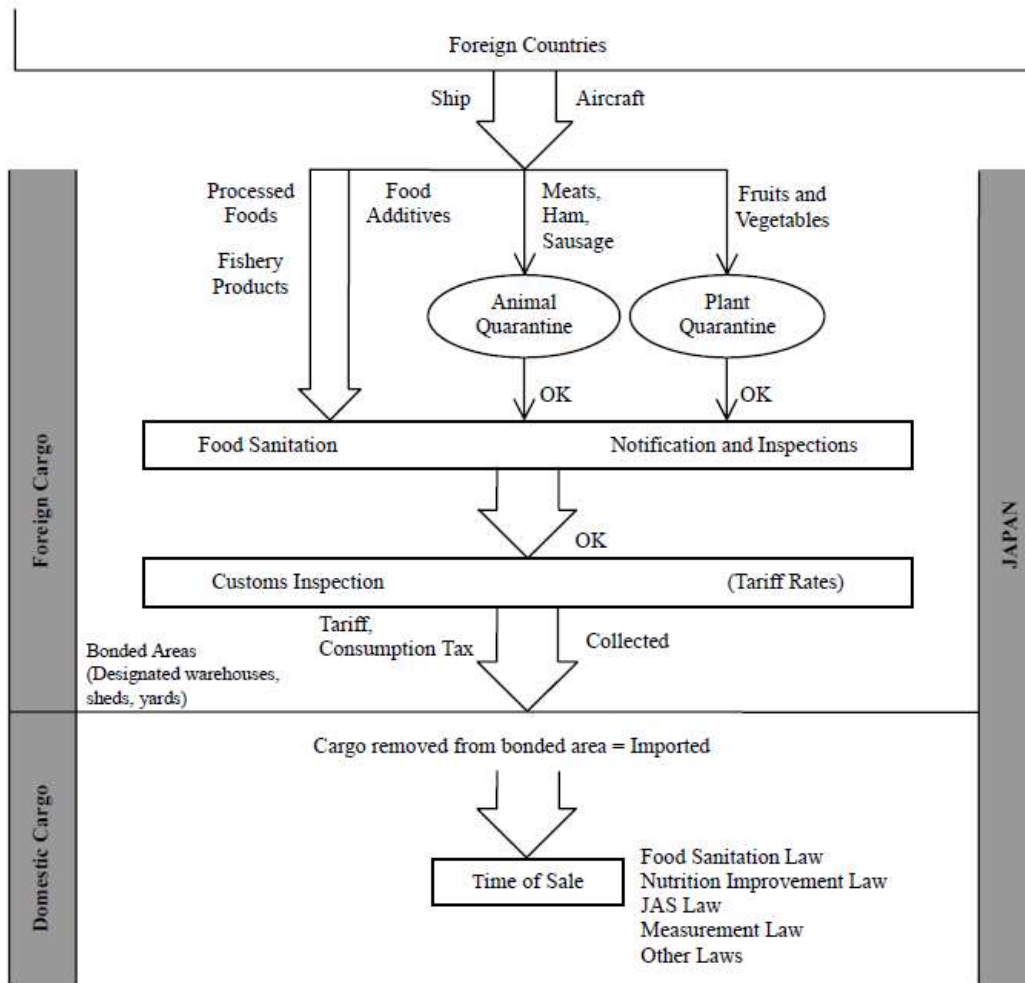
In order to ensure the food safety, every type of food product must pass a food sanitation inspection and a customs inspection. Furthermore, products such as meat, fish and fresh fruits/vegetables must be inspected in addition at each respective quarantine station as shown below:

Figure 1: Principal Quarantine and Inspection Procedures:

	FRUITS AND VEGETABLES	MEATS AND MEAT PRODUCTS	FISHERY PRODUCTS	OTHER PROCESSED FOOD
ANIMAL QUARANTINE	Required			
PLANT QUARANTINE	Required			
FOOD SANITATION INSPECTION	Required	Required	Required	Required
CUSTOMS INSPECTION	Required	Required	Required	Required

For Food Sanitation Inspection, the importer must submit a “Notification Form for Importation of Food” to the Quarantine Station at the port of entry. Having examined submitted documents, the Japanese authorities will determine whether further inspection is required or not. The food product can only be imported into Japan once it passes all the required inspections.

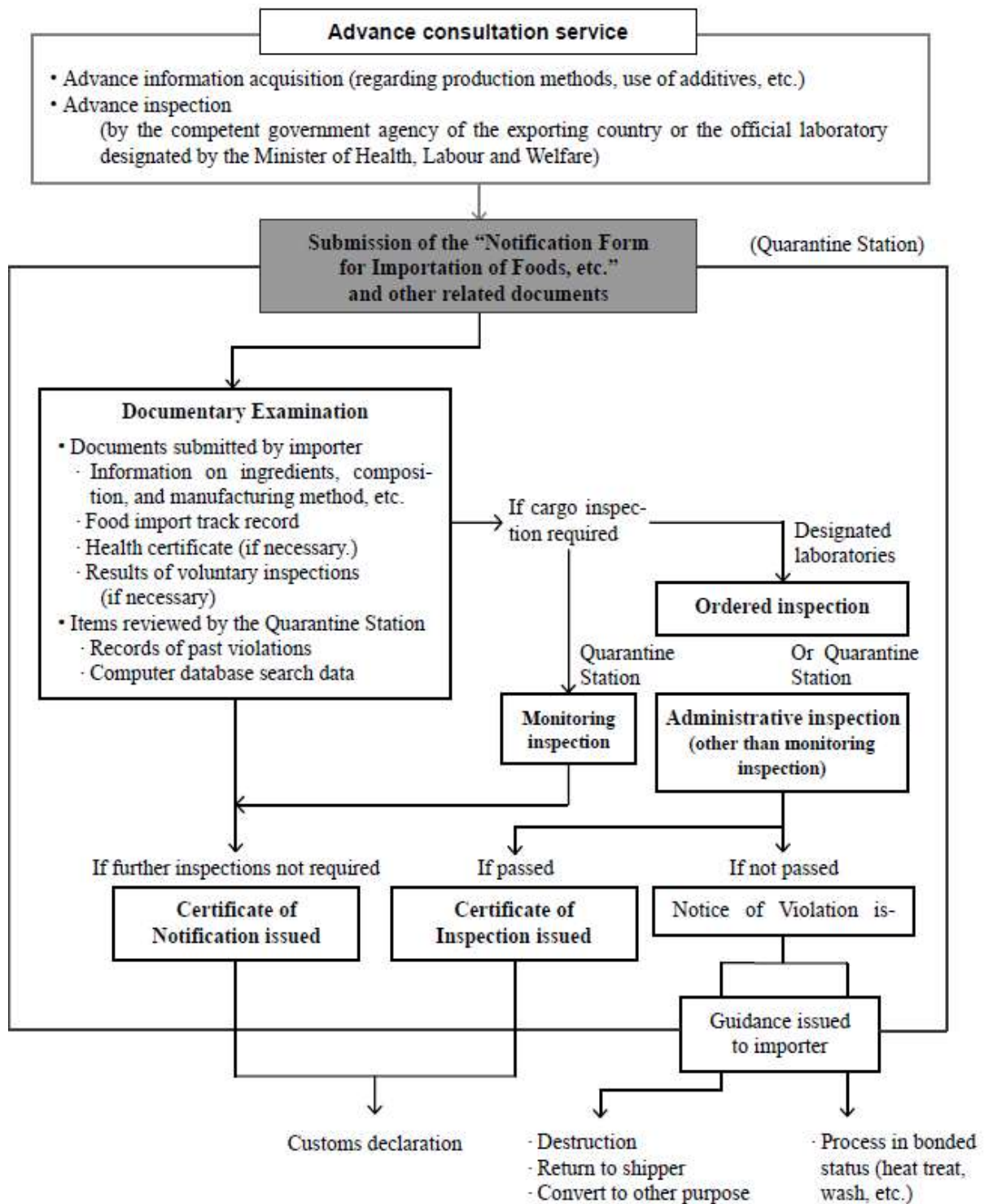
Figure 2: Flowchart of Food Import Procedures of Japan



Note: Upon request by the importer, the food sanitation inspection and the animal quarantine/plant quarantine inspection may be conducted concurrently. Importers who wish to receive such treatment must clearly write "requesting concurrent inspection" on the application for import quarantine inspection.

Source: JETRO Japan External Trade Organization, www.jetro.go.jp

Figure 3: Procedure required under the Food Sanitation Law



Source: JETRO Japan External Trade Organization, www.jetro.go.jp

An import notification is required⁵ for all foods including food additives, apparatus for food (e.g. knives), food container-packaging as well as toys for infants that are imported for commercial purposes⁶.

With regard to the import notification procedure, the importer is recommended to utilize a consultation service provided by food sanitation inspectors well in advance. For the importer to make an inquiry to the authorities, the following information and sample are required:

- Ingredients
- Country of origin
- Composition
- Names, quantity and purposes of use of additives, if any
- Manufacturing or processing method (e.g. pasteurization or extraction methods described in detail)
- Container-packages (materials, form, coloring, etc.)
- Unopened sample

Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare: [Import Procedure under Food Sanitation Law](#):

LABELING

Every kind of food products sold in Japan has to meet the legal labeling requirements. Below are two of the major laws related to food labeling:

REGULATION	COMPETENT AGENCY	SCOPE
Food Sanitation Law	Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare	Protection of health (best before date, ingredients (food allergen) listing, etc.)
	Labeling for Food Additives http://www.mhlw.go.jp/english/topics/foodsafety/foodadditives/index.html	
	Labeling for GMO http://www.mhlw.go.jp/english/topics/foodsafety/dna/index.html Labeling for nutrition, health claims, special dietary use http://www.mhlw.go.jp/english/topics/foodsafety/fhc/index.html	
	Responsible for attaching the required labeling: Seller	
JAS Law (Japanese Agricultural Standards)	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery	Quality labeling to ensure a certain quality of foods and drinks made by a specific manufacturing method (e.g. organic)
	Organic JAS http://www.maff.go.jp/e/policies/standard/jas/specific/organic.html	
	Responsible for attaching the required labeling to imported food: Importer	

⁵ When the same product is imported repeatedly, there is no need to file an import notification every time under the Planned Import System which presupposes that the product must absolutely be identical and the importer has been importing the same product continuously, and has never violated the relevant regulations for the past three years.

⁶ This includes provision importing such products as a gift (e.g. corporate gifts, giveaways) to anonymous, unidentifiable and/or large number of recipients.

Food Labeling Standard

Consumer Affairs Agency

<http://www.caa.go.jp/en/>**Food with health claims**

In April 2015, a new health claim labeling for food system has been introduced.

Before the change, only such foods that were individually approved by the government were allowed to have functional claims on labels. Since 2015, manufacturers and importers can submit a notification including scientific evidences verifying that they meet the necessary requirements and then make function claims on food labels

http://www.caa.go.jp/foods/pdf/151224_2.pdf

Further information on the Japanese food labeling rules also by CAA

<http://www.caa.go.jp/en/> (See under Food Labeling)

RECENT TRENDS

- Organic food and beverages
- Halal food
- Frozen foods and ready-made meals
- Cheese
- Meat substitutes, Protein, Low carb

AUTHORITIES

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Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan (MAFF)	Tel: +81-3-3502-8111	Kasumigaseki 1-2-1, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, 100-8950 http://www.maff.go.jp/
Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIAC)	Tel: +81-3-5253-5111	Kasumigaseki 2-1-2, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, 100-8950 http://www.soumu.go.jp/
Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI)	Tel: +81-3-3501-1511	Kasumigaseki 1-3-1, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, 100-8901 http://www.meti.go.jp/
Consumer Affairs Agency	Tel: +81-3-3507-8800	Nagatacho 2-11-1, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, 100-6178 http://www.caa.go.jp/

Food Safety Commission of Japan	Tel: +81-3-6234-1166 Fax: +81-3-3584-7390	Akasaka 5-2-20, 22F, Minato-ku Tokyo, 107-6122 http://www.fsc.go.jp/
Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO)	Tel: +81-3-3582-5511	Akasaka 1-12-32, Minato-ku Tokyo, 107-6006 http://www.jetro.go.jp/

INDUSTRY ASSOCIATIONS

Chocolate and Cocoa Association of Japan		http://www.chocolate-cocoa.com/english/index.html
All Japan Coffee Association		http://coffee.ajca.or.jp/english
Japan Import Food Trading Association		http://www.jifta.org/hp/
JAPAN WINES AND SPIRITS IMPORTERS' ASSOCIATION		https://youshu-yunyu.org/english/index.html
WINE IMPORTERS ASSOCIATION OF JAPAN		http://importers-wine.jp/
Wine and Spirits Culture Association		http://www.sakuraaward.com/en/supporter.html
The Japan Imported Cheese Promotion Association		http://www.jic.gr.jp/

TRADESHOWS

Foodex	Tokyo (Makuhari)	https://www.jma.or.jp/foodex/en/
Health Ingredients Japan	Tokyo	http://www.hijapan.info/eng/index.php Concurrently held with Food ingredients for Taste Japan and Safety & Technology Japan 2018
Wine and Gourmet Japan	Tokyo	http://www.wineandgourmetjapan.com/

		Concurrently held with Food And Beverage Great Expo and Dessert Sweets & Bakery Festival, Food and Drink OEM Matching Expo, Japan Meat Industry Fair, etc.
Gourmet & Dining Style Show	Tokyo	http://www.gourmetdiningstyleshow.com/22gdsen/
Hoteles Japan	Tokyo	https://www.jma.or.jp/hcj/en/ Concurrently held with Caterex Japan and Japan Food Service Equipment Show
Agri-food Expo	Osaka	https://www.agri-foodexpo.com/english/
Health Food Expo	Tokyo	http://www.healthfoodexpo.jp/eng/
Wellness Food Japan	Tokyo	http://www.wfjapan.com/en/
Organic Expo Japan	Tokyo	https://organic-expo.jp/en/
Drink Japan		http://www.drinkjapan.jp/en/Home/

Market entry recommendations:

The Japanese food and beverage market is extremely diversified.⁷ In the past, Swiss Business Hub Japan created market studies for Swiss exporters of food products as follows:

- *The Japanese Cheese Market. Opportunities and Challenges* (2011)
- *Swiss Wine in Japan, Challenges and Solutions* (2013)
- *Health & Functional Food in Japan* (2014)

These studies were intended to be used by Swiss SMEs as a practical marketing guide and such marketing-related information is still valid today. They can be e-mailed upon request.

JETRO, Japan External Trade Organization, provides the following market report online for free. They are all published in 2011 and available in English and French.

⁷ <https://www.jma.or.jp/foodex/en/trends/today.html>

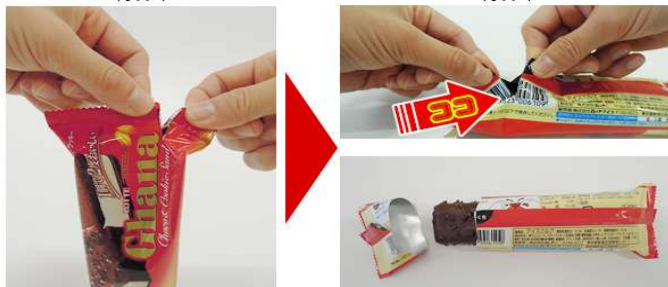
- "Coffee"
- "Spices and Herbs"
- "Nuts"
- "Dried Fruits"
- "Cereals" (812KB)
- "Vegetables, Fruits, and Processed Products"
- "Alcoholic Beverages"
- "Soft Drinks"
- "Seafood and Processed Products"
- "Health Foods and Dietary Supplement"

<https://www.jetro.go.jp/en/reports/market/>



Packaging is also as important in terms of functionality (e.g. easy to open), food safety and esthetics as the quality of food product itself.

<http://total-package.jp/case/200057>



<https://www.lotte.co.jp/products/column/vol3.html>

It is essential to obtain in-depth market knowledge and understand what specifically makes a foreign company successful in Japan.

Then prepare your product(s) specifically for the Japanese market (e.g. size of the product, seasonal changing packaging).

To demonstrate your commitment to the Japanese market and build trust, participate strategically in key trade shows taking place in Japan.

This factsheet contributes to SBHJ's mission to provide Swiss small and medium sized enterprises with first basic information on the Japanese market.

Swiss Business Hub Japan offers customized solutions to Swiss exporters. As this factsheet provides only very basic information on the Japanese food and beverage market in general, we invite Swiss exporters to talk to us to discuss their goals and strategies in depth.

We support you through every step of the exporting process, please contact:

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New trends and business opportunities in Japan

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Disclaimer

While this report is intended to provide an overview of this specific market and its opportunities at the time of its edition, each individual company or organization may have to conduct its own analysis to get a better understanding of the opportunities and possibilities available to them. You are encouraged to explore and develop your chances and assess your risks based on in-depth research and analysis.

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