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Report Highlights:

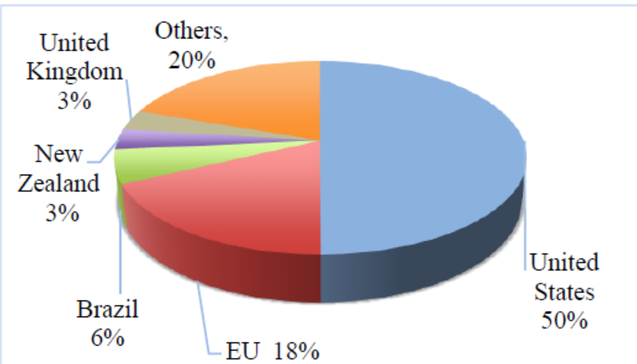
The Caribbean Basin region has a robust and competitive hotel/restaurant/institutional (HRI) food service sector. Tourism is a key factor generating demand for U.S. products in the food service sector. Sales reached $2.28 billion in 2024, an increase of 4 percent from the previous year. Tourism is a major economic driver, with roughly 9 million stopover tourists and 18.6 million cruise ship passengers in 2024. American travelers account for about half of that volume, a trend that powers a strong demand for U.S. consumer-oriented products.

Caribbean Basin Market Fact Sheet

Executive Summary: The Caribbean is an excellent market for U.S. suppliers. Proximity, close commercial ties with the United States, a large influx of tourists, and a relatively trade-friendly regulatory environment all contribute to the attractiveness of this market.

Consumer-Oriented Agricultural Imports: A large majority of foods must be imported in the Caribbean Basin, as domestic production is limited. Imports of consumer-oriented agricultural products totaled $3.29 billion in 2024, with the United States capturing 50 percent of the market.

Market Share of Exporters to Caribbean Basin



Food Retail Industry: Total food retail sales (excluding sales tax) were estimated at $10.48 billion in 2024. Approximately 81 percent of imported foods and beverages are channeled through the retail sector, which includes traditional grocery stores as well as modern, upscale supermarkets and convenience stores.

Food Processing Industry: Due to limited agricultural production, food processing is minimal in most countries, with Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, and Guyana being notable exceptions. The sector is valued at an estimated $148 million.

Food Service Industry: Tourism is a key factor generating demand for U.S. products in the food service sector. Sales reached $2.28 billion in 2024, an increase of 4 percent from the previous year, supported by the opening of new hotels and restaurants that are paving the way for future market opportunities for U.S. exporters.

2024 Quick Facts

Imports of Consumer-Oriented Products
$3.29 billion

Top 10 Growth Products

1. Poultry Products	6. Prepared Foods
2. Bakery, Cereal, Pasta	7. Fresh Fruits
3. Beef Products	8. Fresh Vegetables
4. Dairy Products	9. Eggs & Products
5. Non-Alcoholic Bev	10. Pork Products

Food Industry by Channels

Retail Food Industry	$10.48 billion
Food Service-HRI	$2.28 billion
Food Processing Ingredients	$2.48 billion
Food and Agriculture Export	$813 million

Top Retailers
Massy Stores, Leader Price, Super Value, Carrefour, Market Place, Rite Way Food Market, Graceway Supermarket, Price Smart, and Tru Valu Supermarket

GDP/Population
Population: 4.96 million

GDP: Ranges from $658 million (Dominica) to $28.14 billion (Trinidad and Tobago)

GDP per capita: Bermuda $118,774; Guyana $84,140; Aruba $54,720; Trinidad and Tobago $32,680; Dominica $15,280

Sources: Trade Data Monitor, Euromonitor International Monetary Fund, World Bank

Strengths	*Weaknesses*
The United States holds a logistical advantage with extensive shipping and consolidation through South Florida ports.	Extreme weather threats and high logistics costs in some locations may limit competition for value-conscious consumers.
Opportunities	***Threats***
International visitors are expected to spend more in the food service locations as tourism numbers grow.	Supply chain disruptions and higher prices from U.S. suppliers could lead some importers to source from other regions.

Section 1: Market Summary

For purposes of this report, the terms "Caribbean" and "Caribbean Basin" refer to the 25 markets1 covered by the Caribbean Basin Agricultural Trade Office (CBATO), with the exception of Cuba (see full list at the bottom of section). The Caribbean Basin region includes a mix of independent states, overseas departments or dependencies of European countries, and islands that are part of a European kingdom. The region has a fragmented island geography and a year-round population of less than 5 million. However, with limited agricultural production and food processing, in addition to roughly 9 million stopover tourists and 18.6 million cruise ship passengers visiting the region annually, the demand for food products is considerable. In 2024, the Caribbean imported $3.29 billion in consumer-oriented agricultural products, including $1.64 billion from the United States. An estimated 20 percent of these imports are channeled to the region's hotel, restaurant, and institutional (HRI) food service sector.

According to the World Travel and Tourism Council, travel to the Caribbean region grew by 28.3 percent between 2019 and 2024, marking the highest growth rate in the world. Travel and tourism accounts for 17.6 percent of regional gross domestic product (GDP) and approximately 15.7 percent of employment. Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana are the main exceptions, as their economies are largely based on oil and gas production. According to the IMF, in 2024 Guyana's GDP grew by 43.8 percent in real terms, marking the sixth consecutive year of growth above 20 percent due to the country's expanding oil industry.

The region heavily relies on international travelers, accounting for nearly 76 percent of total travel expenditures. In 2024, travel spending increased by 7.7 percent compared to the prior year. Corporate travel only accounts for 10 percent of total spending. The Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association expects the volume of stopover (non-cruise) visitors to increase by 2-5 percent in 2025.

Food service plays a significant role in the region's economy, with the HRI sector reporting total sales of $2.28 billion in 2024. The region is heavily influenced by culinary trends from the United States, due to geographic proximity, demands of American tourists (more than 50 percent of visitors), and the presence of many U.S. hotel chains that offer American dishes to give tourists familiar food and beverage options when traveling.

[1] The CBATO's region of coverage consists of the following 25 markets: Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, The Bahamas, Barbados, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands (BVI), Caribbean Netherlands or BES Islands (Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba), Cayman Islands, Cuba, Curaçao, Dominica, Grenada, Guadeloupe, Guyana, Martinique, Montserrat, Saint Barthélemy, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Martin, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Sint Maarten, Trinidad and Tobago, and Turks and Caicos Islands.

Advantages for U.S. Exporters	**Challenges for U.S. Exporters**
Growth in the number of stopover tourists increases demand for food and beverage products in many markets.	Due to its geography, the Caribbean faces climate-related extreme weather risks that affect may tourism seasonally.
American tourists account for the majority of visitors on most Caribbean islands.	U.S. exports face greater competition in the CBATO region, which has seen an uptick in food imports from Central and Latin American countries.

Well-established private family businesses foster long-term relationships with suppliers.	The region is characterized by small- and medium-sized companies that are unable to purchase large volumes and have limited access to external financing.
A robust array of consolidated shipping services catering to smaller markets in the Caribbean Basin region allow small- and medium-sized U.S. suppliers to test the trade waters before scaling up production.	The region is fragmented into small markets, which limits connectivity and inter-island cargo. The outdated port infrastructure in some markets can pose logistical challenges, resulting in high shipping and freight costs.
The current regulatory environment is generally favorable to U.S. products, as there is trust in American food standards.	Some Caribbean markets with strong ties to Europe maintain culinary traditions and use ingredients from their countries of origin.

Market	Total Stopover Visitors in Select Caribbean Markets			
	2022	2023	2024	% change 2023/2024
Anguilla	59,145	95,944	111,639	16%
Antigua & Barbuda	265,119	281,896	330,281	17%
Aruba	1,100,997	1,260,402	1,421,616	13%
The Bahamas	1,801,999	1,869,110	1,872,059	-0.2%
Barbados	539,746	636,540	704,340	11%
Bermuda	145,865	185,335	203,080	10%
British Virgin Islands	168,706	169,706	182,183	7%
Bonaire	173,213	262,080	305,876	16%
Cayman Islands	284,274	429,284	437,842	2%
Curacao	275,799	582,405	700,249	20%
Dominica	60,422	75,000	83,599	12%
Grenada	133,162	178,020	194,914	10%
Guyana	288,487	319,056	371,271	16%
St. Kitt & Nevis	6,169	13,041	14,845	14%
St. Lucia	79,767	104,463	94,479	-10%
Sint Maarten	356,237	380,791	435,659	14%
St. Vincent & the Grenadines	58,081	80,771	102,766	27%
Trinidad & Tobago	227,403	310,237	336,696	9%
Turks and Caicos	621,910	580,197	641,766	11%

Source: Tourism Analytics

Section 2: Roadmap for Market Entry

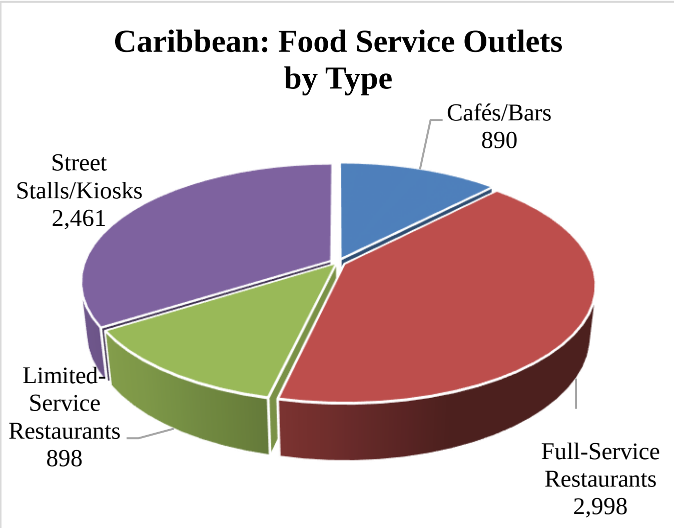
Entry Strategy

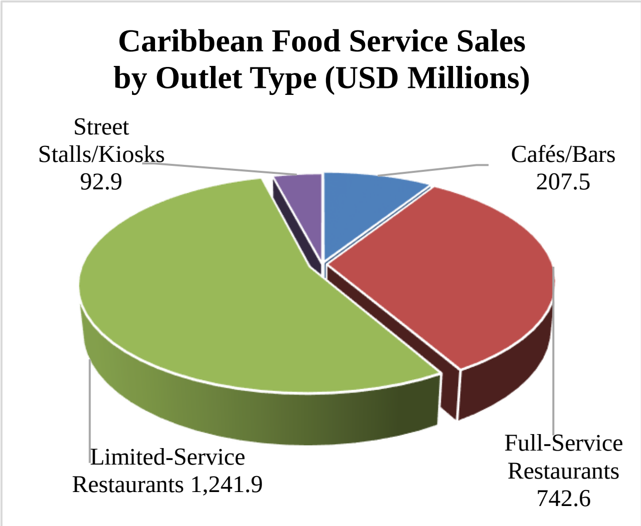
The best method for U.S. suppliers to enter the Caribbean HRI food service market is through local importers/distributors. Generally, local importers/distributors have broad access to food and beverage supply channels, possess adequate warehouse facilities, carry a large inventory of products, and service many HRI accounts. Wine and liquor tend to be imported and distributed by companies dedicated exclusively to these types of products. While most importers/distributors service both the retail and HRI markets, specialized HRI importers/distributors exist on a few islands. Food service operators buy most of their products from local importers, though some larger food service operations import directly from U.S. suppliers. For instance, high-end restaurants may fly in fresh seafood from Boston or other specialty goods from elsewhere during the December-April tourist season. Hotels and resorts under the umbrella of large, well-known brands may rely on U.S. buying offices and/or established hospitality supply chain organizations such as Avendra. Select importers may belong to these supply chain networks and thus have access to large hotel customers. However, most of the trade of U.S. food service products flows to Caribbean importers via well-known U.S. food service suppliers, especially those in the South Florida (e.g., Sysco, Cheney Brothers, UNFI, and Sun International, among others).

Meeting Caribbean food service buyers can be accomplished in several ways. Many buyers from the region travel to U.S. trade shows, such as the National Restaurant Association (NRA) Show in Chicago and the Americas Food and Beverage (AFB) Show in Miami. CBATO and FAS Cooperator groups often organize Caribbean buying delegations to these shows. Contact the CBATO for more information on Caribbean buying missions to these events or to request lists of Caribbean food service buyers. See contact details in Section 5 of this report.

Market Structure

According to Euromonitor International, the Caribbean HRI food service sector is made up of approximately 7,247 outlets, with full-service restaurants, stalls, and kiosks accounting for three-quarters of the sector in 2024. The region is characterized by full-service restaurants (41 percent), as well as smaller street stalls and kiosks (34 percent). However, limited-service restaurants (fast food chains) account for 54 percent of the sector's total sales, with locations particularly noticeable in the main markets. About 89 percent of all restaurant outlets are independently owned, while the remaining 11 percent are chain-owned (but account for 56 percent of total sales volume).





Source: Euromonitor
Note: excludes BES Islands, Montserrat, Saint Barthélemy, St. Martin, and Turks and Caicos Islands

Distribution

U.S. consumer-oriented products are shipped mostly in the form of mixed containers, with shipments usually arriving in 4-5 days or less. For the most part, U.S. products are exported to the region through ports in South Florida. U.S. exports to Bermuda (which technically is not part of the Caribbean) are predominantly shipped from the northeastern region of United States, namely from the New York/Newark area and Philadelphia. The flow chart to the right illustrates how U.S. consumer-oriented products make their way from U.S. suppliers to food service outlets in the Caribbean. Although some food service operators will buy direct from U.S. suppliers, the overwhelming volume of food and beverages is channeled through local and regional importers/distributors.

Sub-Sector Profiles

Hotels and Resorts

Given the large number of tourists visiting Caribbean islands each year, hotel and resort eateries play an important role in the overall food service sector of the region. Many hotels host their own food and wine festivals. Large mega resorts such as Atlantis Paradise Island (≈4,000 rooms) and Baha Mar (2,200 rooms) in The Bahamas offer multiple restaurants, cafes, indoor and poolside bars, etc. Despite the great buying power of these larger establishments, local importers and distributors remain important suppliers due to both the ever-changing needs and limited storage space for dry and refrigerated goods. Moreover, by using large local importers for perishable products such as fresh produce, these establishments do not need to worry as much about spoilage as they would if importing directly.

According to the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association, hotel occupancy in the Caribbean reached 66.6 percent in 2024, up 0.8 percent from the previous year. Additionally, the average daily rate for hotels has increased by 4.2 percent, and there are numerous expansion projects in the region, and construction incentives are available in certain markets to encourage and support new projects. For example, the Turks and Caicos Islands are expecting to open 18 resort developments in the next few years, including international hotel brands such as Waldorf Astoria and St. Regis. Many of these accommodations will offer amenities like sports centers, spas, fine dining, gourmet restaurants, and retail shops, all designed to attract high-end tourists.

Guyana continues to experience growth in business travel, prompting expanded hotel room capacity. There are several projects currently under construction, including investments by Pasha Global, Blue Bridge Inc., AC Marriott, and Hyatt Place. In 2024, the Aiden by Best Western opened, followed by projects from Four Points by Sheraton and Courtyard by Marriott Hotel in 2025. In total, these new hotels are expected to add 700 rooms to the country's accommodation.

Some of the largest international hotel and resort chains offering services in the region are listed in the chart below.

Company	Markets	# of Locations	Links
Marriott Bonvoy Hotel Brands and Resorts	Antigua, Aruba, Bahamas, Barbados, Bermuda, Bonaire, Cayman Island, Curacao, Grenada, Guyana, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Martin & Sint Maarten, Trinidad, Turks & Caicos	37	https://www.paradisebymarriott.com/ https://all-inclusive.marriott.com/royalton-saint-lucia
Hyatt Hotels Corporation	Antigua, Aruba, The Bahamas, Barbados, Bonaire, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Curacao, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Barthelemy, St. Lucia, Saint Martin & Sint Maarten, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago	31	https://www.hyatt.com/promo/hyatt-resorts?region=Caribbean
Intercontinental Hotel Group (IHG)	Antigua, Aruba, Bahamas, Barbados, Bonaire, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Lucia, Saint Martin & Sint Maarten, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks & Caicos	22	https://www.ihg.com/explore
Hilton Hotels and affiliated Small and Luxury Hotels	Aruba, Bahamas, Barbados, Bonaire, Cayman Island, Curacao, Dominica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Martin & Sint Maarten, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago	17	https://www.hilton.com/en/locations/caribbean/resorts/.
Sandals Resort International	Antigua, Bahamas, Barbados, Curacao, Grenada, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Turks & Caicos	12	https://www.sandals.com
Wyndham Hotels (Ramada)	Antigua, Aruba, Bahamas, Barbados, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Curacao, Sint Maarten, Saint Kitts and Nevis	9	https://www.wyndhamhotels.com/locations
The Four Seasons	Anguilla, Bahamas, Saint Kitts and Nevis	3	https://www.fourseasons.com
Fairmont Hotels & Resorts	Barbados, Bermuda	2	https://www.fairmont.com/barbados/ https://www.fairmont.com/hamilton-bermuda
Riu Hotels and Resorts	Aruba, Bahamas	2	https://www.riu.com/en/hotel/aruba/palmbeach/hotel-riu-palace-antillas/
Barcelo Hotels Group	Aruba	1	https://www.barcelo.com

Restaurants

The Caribbean Basin boasts over 3,000 full-service restaurants, and the region is renowned for its incredible diversity of cuisines influenced by various cultures and trends from around the world. Consumers can choose from a variety of options, ranging from Michelin-star fine dining establishments to fast-casual chains (e.g., TGI Fridays, Margaritaville, and Señor Frog's) and popular beachside restaurants. A few islands are considered culinary capitals of the world, and some host food festivals that highlight the dishes of local and international chefs. Three of the most notable events include the Cayman Cookout in the Cayman Islands, Nassau Paradise Island Wine & Food Festival in The Bahamas, and Anguilla Culinary Experience in Anguilla.

Limited-service restaurants (fast food eateries and delivery/takeaway outlets) represent over 50 percent of total HRI food service sales in the Caribbean. There is a plethora of both international and local fast-food chains throughout the region. Some of the largest ones include KFC, Subway, McDonald's, Burger King, Wendy's, Domino's Pizza, Papa John's, Popeyes Louisiana Kitchen (Bahamas), and Chefette (Barbados). Starbucks continues to expand within the region with a presence in Guyana, The Bahamas, Barbados, Aruba, Trinidad and Tobago, and the Turks and Caicos Islands. Other local chains operate multi-brand restaurants, such as Global Brands Group of Companies representing Rituals Coffee House, Pizza Boys, Church's Texas Chicken, Donut Boys, and Rituals Sushi in Trinidad and Tobago, Saint Kitts, and Saint Lucia. Most restaurants rely on local importers serving as wholesalers/distributors to source their imported food and beverage products.

Institutional

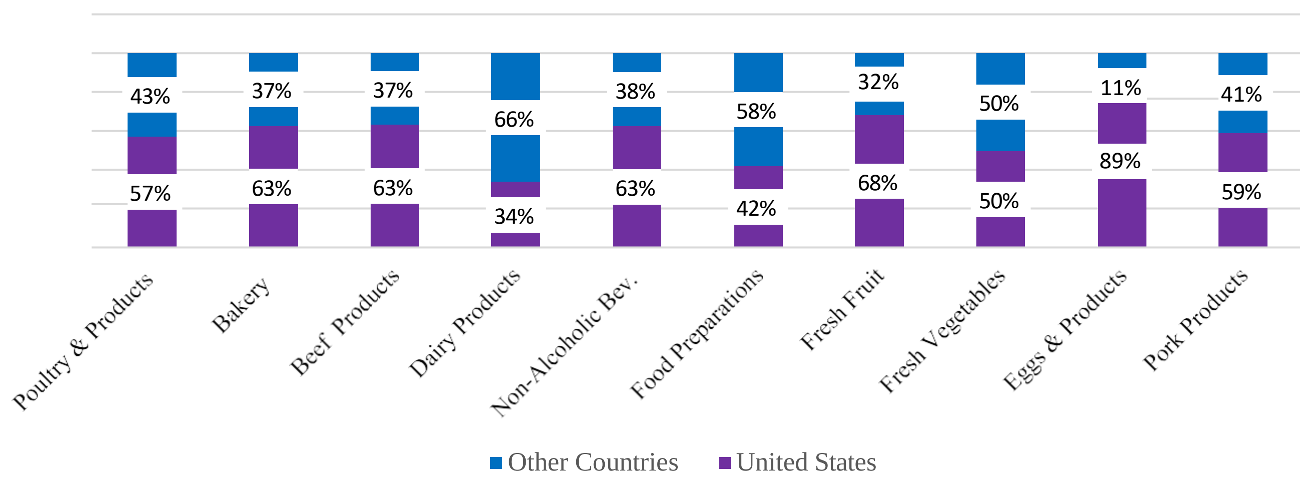
Catering represents an important niche within the region's food service sector, as well as schools, hospitals, military installations, and provisioning for yachts, superyachts, sailboats, and villas in the Caribbean. A few islands are major marina hubs in the region, such as Sint Maarten, Antigua, and The Bahamas. These islands have many provisioning companies, including supermarkets, that offer fine ingredients, premium wines, gourmet delicacies, and "hard to find products." Local/regional companies specialize in servicing this sub-sector. In many islands, airports are undergoing remodeling or expansion, with some projects already completed and others still in progress. These projects are expected to include new dining options for travelers.

Section 3: Competition

The United States accounts for 50 percent of the Caribbean Basin's imported consumer-oriented food and beverage products. In 2024, U.S. exports of consumer-oriented products to the region totaled $1.64 billion. The next closest competitor is the EU with $590 million in exports (17.94 percent), followed by Brazil with $185 million (5.63 percent), the United Kingdom with $113 million (3.44 percent), and New Zealand with $111 million (3.38 percent).

The top 10 import categories for the Caribbean Basin are poultry, bakery/cereal/pasta, beef products, dairy products, non-alcoholic beverages, food preparations, fresh fruit, fresh vegetables, eggs and egg products, and pork products. These categories alone represent two-thirds of all imports of U.S. consumer-oriented products. With only a few exceptions, the United States is the leading supplier in practically all product categories.

2024 Caribbean Basin Market Share by Product Category



Source: Trade Data Monitor

Section 4: Best Product Prospects

Given the limited domestic production and processing of food products, the Caribbean depends on imports of the full range of food and beverage products. The HRI food service sector is an important demand driver of imported foods. The charts below include the top product categories and the value of imports for the last three years.

Top Consumer-Oriented Products Imported from the World, 2021-2024 (USD Thousands)

	2022	2023	2024
Dairy Products	381,462	384,720	397,821
Poultry Meat & Prods. (ex. eggs)	291,016	274,074	304,346
Food Preparations	242,882	222,828	244,574
Bakery Goods, Cereals & Pasta	205,260	228,845	234,690
Beef & Beef Products	198,637	200,171	224,655
Non-Alcoholic Bev. (ex. juices, coffee, tea)	141,830	162,026	179,376
Fresh Vegetables	141,572	165,862	167,516
Processed Vegetables	139,008	157,625	165,862
Fresh Fruit	122,308	129,738	141,285
Pork & Pork Products	119,284	116,640	128,716

Source: Trade Data Monitor

Top Consumer-Oriented Products Imported from the United States, 2021-2024 (USD Thousands)

	2022	2023	2024
Poultry Meat & Prods. (ex. eggs)	174,495	166,327	174,059
Bakery Goods, Cereals, & Pasta	131,590	144,843	146,979
Beef & Beef Products	119,291	127,303	142,235
Dairy Products	127,600	126,526	134,012
Non-Alcoholic Bev. (ex. juices, coffee, tea)	89,445	101,911	112,111

Food Preparations	125,131	96,687	102,179
Fresh Fruit	78,148	86,042	96,406
Fresh Vegetables	73,141	75,177	83,000
Eggs & Products	77,794	74,694	80,473
Pork & Pork Products	64,752	68,523	75,967

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Products Present in Market with Good Sales Potential

The top 10 import categories for the Caribbean Basin are poultry, bakery/cereal/pasta, beef products, dairy products, non-alcoholic beverages, food preparations, fresh fruit, fresh vegetables, eggs and egg products, and pork products. Of these, the Unites States supplies more than half of all imports in each category except for the dairy and food preparations. Post sees good sales potential for increased exports of U.S. dairy products, especially cheese, as well as bakery products, though exporters may need to introduce and educate buyers on the quality and variety of U.S. products in these categories.

Moreover, continuing economic challenges, including rising prices across most markets, are affecting food service purchases. Chefs have found that they need to be creative and innovative, developing recipes and menu planning to keep food costs under control and offer affordable dishes. As a result, they are open to using new ingredients and learning new techniques and cooking methods.

A few markets in the region still rely heavily on Europe to as their main food and beverage supplier. For example, the French overseas departments of Guadeloupe and Martinique have traditionally sourced most of their imports from the EU, particularly from France. Consequently, U.S. market share in these islands is in the single digits. Breaking these traditional commercial ties in favor of U.S. products is challenging but does offer significant potential.

Products Not Present in Market with Good Sales Potential

Most U.S. product categories are exported to the region, with few restrictions. The region typically follows U.S. culinary trends, so new and innovative products in the U.S. food service sector are also likely to have good sales potential in the Caribbean Basin,

There are few restricted products for the region. However, in Bermuda, the Importation of Milk (Prohibition) Act of 1997 prohibits the importation of any of the following dairy products: raw milk, pasteurized milk, ultra-pasteurized milk, ultra-high temperature (UHT) milk, and manufactured milk. A few Caribbean countries may also prohibit the importation of select produce items for plant quarantine purposes. These include fresh citrus originating from Florida: fresh papaya, fresh sweet potato/North American yam, fresh corn on the cob, fresh carrots, and fresh mangoes (unless they are certified to have been hot water treated at a USDA approved facility).

Section 5: Key Contacts and Further Information

The ministries of agriculture and health in each individual market are normally the main regulatory agencies for food and beverage products. CBATO's Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards (FAIRS) reports for selected markets are available on the FAS Global Agricultural

Information Network (GAIN). Recent FAIRS reports are available for The Bahamas, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Bermuda, and Barbados.

Additional information can be found in the following links:

- *CBATO's Exporter Guide*
- *Tourism Analytics https://tourismanalytics.com/index.html*
- *Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association https://caribbeanhotelandtourism.com/*

If you have questions/comments regarding this report or need assistance exporting to the Caribbean, please contact the FAS Caribbean Basin Agricultural Trade Office in Miami, Florida. Importer lists are also available for use by U.S. exporters of American food and beverage products.

Caribbean Basin Agricultural Trade Office (CBATO)	
Foreign Agricultural Service U.S. Department of Agriculture 909 SE 1st Ave, Suite 720 Miami, Florida 33131	Phone: (305) 536-5300 Email: ATOCaribbeanBasin@usda.gov Website: www.fas.usda.gov

Attachments:

No Attachments