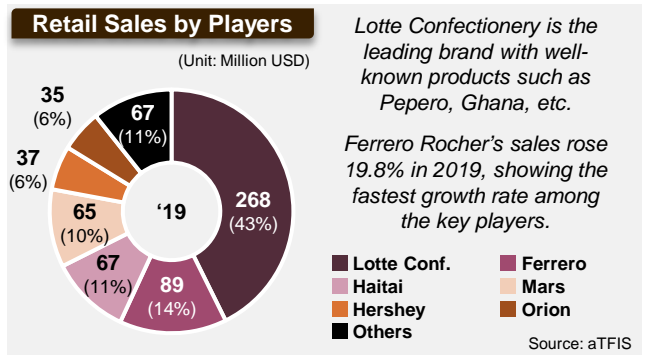
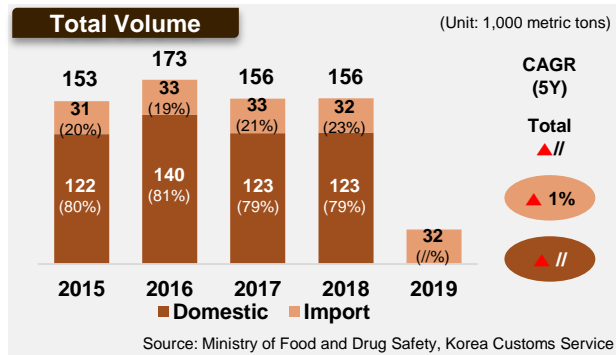


Korea Market Brief

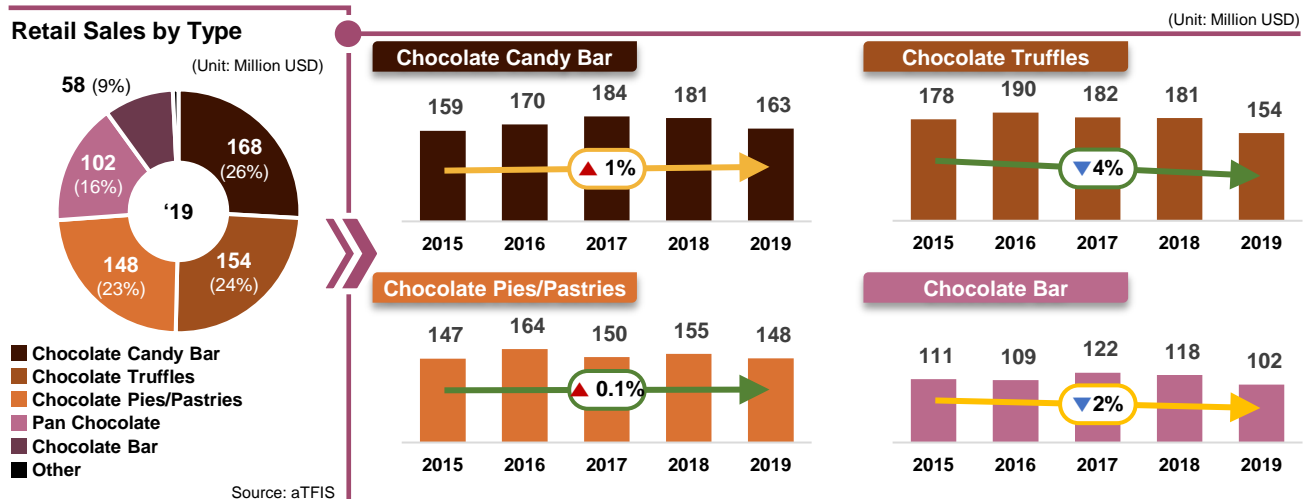
Chocolate



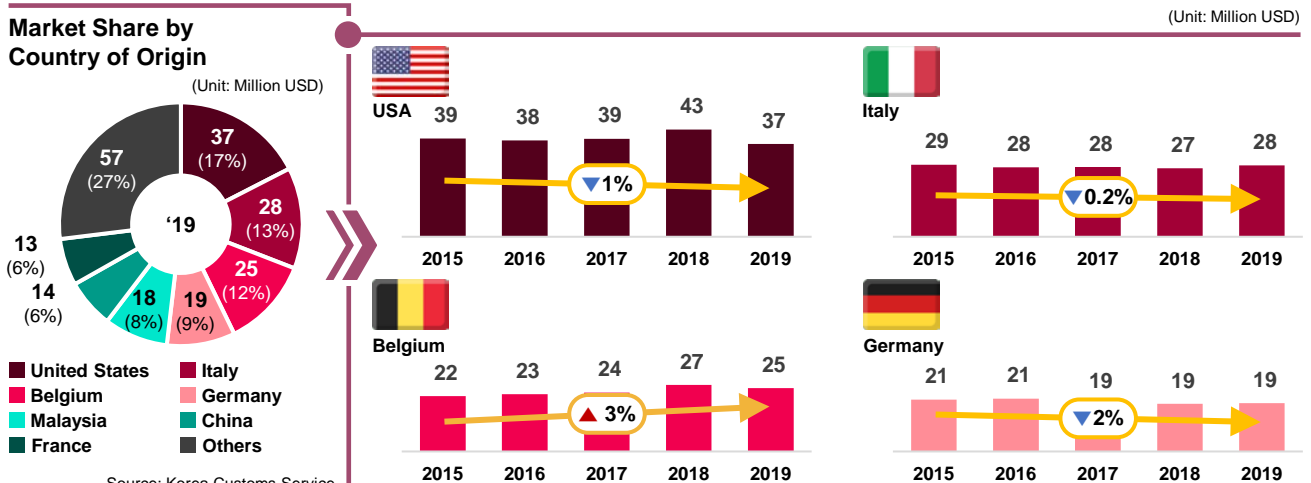
While chocolate is a popular snack in Korea, sales have stagnated. Confectioners have been introducing new products to meet customer's changing demands.



In 2019, Korea's retail sales of chocolate totaled \$629 million. Chocolate candy bars have the highest market share.



Chocolate imports totaled \$212 million in 2019. The United States is the market leader with a 17% import market share, followed by Italy and Belgium.



Consumer Trends

Holidays are Peak Sales Seasons

In Korea, chocolate sales tend to spike in months with official and unofficial holidays as they are often given as gifts. According to an eBay Korea survey in 2020, 62% of respondents said they plan to give chocolate or candies as a Valentine's Day gift. Also, in the latter half of the year, people give chocolates or other sweet snacks to those taking college entrance exams.

According to the Korea Agro-Fisheries & Food Trade Corporation, convenience stores are the major sales channel (34%) as they are highly accessible and sell a variety of specially packaged products targeting specific celebratory days. Discount stores are the second largest sales channel (26%), followed by independent markets (15%), as they run promotions for both domestic and foreign products.

Chocolate Buying Habits

A survey of 600 Korean consumers between the ages 10 and 39 showed the following consumer preferences:

- Frequently purchased chocolate or chocolate-flavored products included chocolate candy (27.6%), milk (17.8%), pastries (14.8%), and ice-cream (14.7%).
- Preferred secondary ingredients to chocolate included nuts (17%), followed by plain chocolate (17%), fruits (11%), and coffee (9%). In particular, consumers in their 30s had a high preference for chocolate with added nuts, and teenagers had a preference for plain chocolate.
- 27.5% of consumers bought chocolate as sustenance, followed by 26.3% who preferred it as a pick-me-up snack, and 17% as dessert.
- Respondents answered that they are willing to spend five times more for chocolate gifts compared to what they would spend on their usual chocolate purchase.

Growth Potential for Premium Chocolate Market

Consumer trends in Korea emphasize small luxuries and high-quality products, benefitting the premium chocolate market. Consumers following these trends are willing to purchase premium-priced chocolate with quality ingredients, high cacao content, and minimal artificial additives. The Korean chocolate market is saturated, but the premium chocolate market is likely to grow in the future.

Regulatory Overview

***Disclaimer: This overview is not a comprehensive guide, and regulations can frequently change. Exporters should verify requirements with their importers before goods are shipped.*



Tariffs & Taxes

Korea does not apply a tariff to U.S. chocolate under the KORUS FTA. Please refer to the [Agricultural Tariff Tracker](#) for details.

Chocolate	HS code	2020	2021	2022	2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chocolate and chocolate confectionery 	180620, 180631 180632, 180690	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Source: <https://apps.fas.usda.gov/agtariiftracker/Home/Search>

A Pre-Registration and Required Certification for Import to Korea

<p>Product Registration No product registration is required to import U.S. chocolate into Korea.</p>	<p>Facility Registration Either a foreign facility or an importer may apply for registration through the MFDS website.</p>	<p>Certificate of Origin The certificate of origin must be prepared for origin verification. Documentation must be kept for five years.</p>
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For details, please refer to [FAIRS Country Report](#), [FAIRS Export Certificate Report](#)

B Labeling Requirements

All imported U.S. products are required to carry legible Korean language labels. Label stickers or tags may be placed upon arrival in Korea, but should not be easily removed or cover the original label such as product name or expiration date.

<p>Korean Language Labeling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Product name Product type Country of origin Ingredient names and content Manufacture date 	<p>Consideration for Labeling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additives Nutrients Allergens (milk, lactose, gluten, nuts, etc.)
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C Import Inspection

<p>Laboratory Test All new imported products undergo laboratory tests.</p>	<p>Document Review Subsequent shipments of the same product are subject to document reviews.</p>	<p>Random Sampling Test Samples are selected randomly depending on violation history or market intelligence.</p>
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For details, please refer to [FAIRS Country Report](#), [FAIRS Export Certificate Report](#)



Regulatory Overview

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Korean Food Safety & Additive Standards

For Korean food safety and additive standards, please refer to the following links.

[Food Additive Code](#)

[Food Ingredient Database](#)

Frequently Asked Questions

FAQ #1: Is labeling the 100% ingredient breakdown required for import?

The Korean government does not require 100% ingredient composition breakdown information on the import application for imported processed food products entering Korea. What is required is the percentage breakdown of major ingredients and the percentages of food additives in the product in case Korea has tolerances established on the additives. For food additives used in composite ingredients, the supplier may need to submit detailed information to verify if the product meets the Korean food additive standards.

FAQ #2: Are there any requirements on exporters when making a Certification of Origin?

Yes, if you are qualified for the FTA. Article 6.17.1 of KORUS FTA requires specific records to be kept for a minimum of five years if a certification from a producer or exporter forms the basis of a claim. We encourage you to look at these provisions. There are also obligations of exporters provided under Article 6.20. Questions about these provisions can be e-mailed to KORUS@ustr.eop.gov or at fta@dhs.gov.

FAQ #3: Are there any documents required for Halal, GMP, or vegan products?

Yes. In order to apply a mark or claim to packaging, exporters and importers should keep supporting documents for their marketing claims. MFDS does not check supporting documents when products arrive in Korea but MFDS has a right to request supporting documents if necessary. Supporting documents should be issued by reliable and credible organizations.

FAQ #4: What are the roles and responsibilities of importers?

Korean importers are responsible for claiming preferential treatment for qualifying goods. However, the exporter or producer may be asked by the importer, customs broker, or the Korean Customs Service to provide a written or electronic certification or other information to support the importer's claim. The information required for certification can be found in Article 6.15.2 of the KORUS FTA, but additional elements may be required by the Korean Customs Service. You should contact your importer or customs broker to confirm what information is required.

USDA GAIN Report Link

[Facility Registration](#)
[MRL](#)
[Exporter Guide](#)

FAIRS Reports

[FAIRS Country Report](#)
[FAIRS Export Certificate Report](#)

ATO Seoul - Regulation

[ATO Seoul Regulation](#)

