

South Korean Food Market Overview¹

I. Executive Summary of South Korea

Republic of Korea (Korea) is the 10th largest economy in the world with the nominal GDP of 1.80 trillion USD in 2021². It is a member of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement (APTA). Korea has a population of 52 million and over 90 percent of its population are living in urban areas³. Seoul, the capital and largest metropolis of Korea contains about 50 percent of Korea's population.

According to Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy, Korea's first half of import of 2021 went up 24 percent to \$285.1 billion, resulting in a trade surplus of \$18.1 billion⁴. Korea has imported \$27.5 billion worth of agricultural and food products from overseas in 2019, according to the Korean Statistical Information Service⁵. Due to its limited resources for domestically produced foods, Korea is one of the most dependent country on imported food among the developed countries.

II. South Korea Food Import Overview

A. Annual Growth of Food Import

Korea's food imports have reached \$27.5 billion worth in 2019, making it one of the world's top 10 economies that imports food from overseas. Due to its limited resources for domestically produced foods, Korea depends significantly on imported food from overseas for around 70% of its demand

¹ This document has been drafted and provided by NODA Labs (www.nodalabs.com), in accordance with the Cooperation Agreement executed with the Investment and Development Agency of Latvia (LIAA) to empower Latvian food exporters to expand their business in Korea.

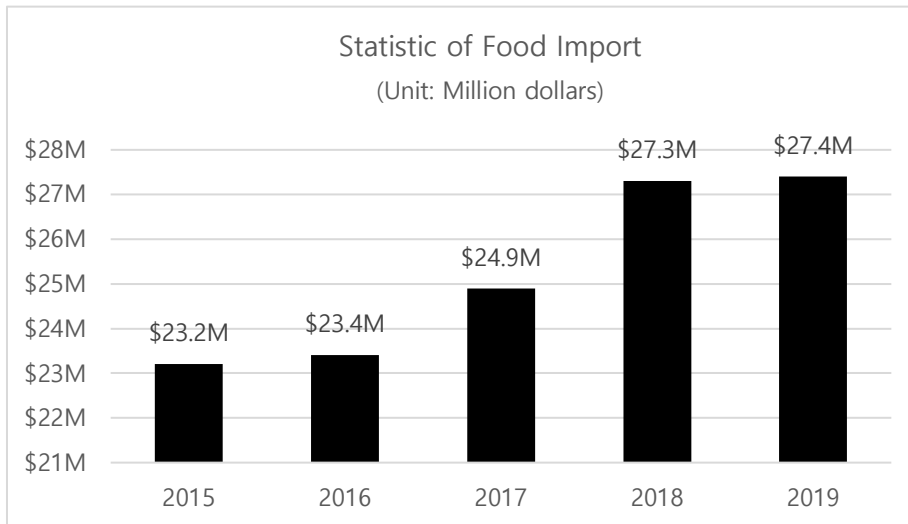
² International Monetary Fund, *Board Discussions on Republic of Korea*, Retrieved September 05, 2021, from <https://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/profile/KOR>.

³ United States Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural Service. Sangyong Oh, *Retail Foods*. KS2021-0015. (2021, June 16). Retrieved September 05, 2021, from https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/DownloadReportByFileName?fileName=Retail%20Foods_Seoul%20ATO_Korea%20-%20Republic%20of_06-30-2021

⁴ Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy. (2021, July 1). *Korea's exports in 1st half of 2021 hit record high*. [Press release]. Retrieved October 01, 2021.

⁵ Korean Statistical Information Service (KOSIS), (2020, December 03). *Status of Imported Foods, UpToDate*, Retrieved September 04, 2021 from https://kosis.kr/statHtml/statHtml.do?orgId=134&tblId=DT_134001_002&conn_path=I2

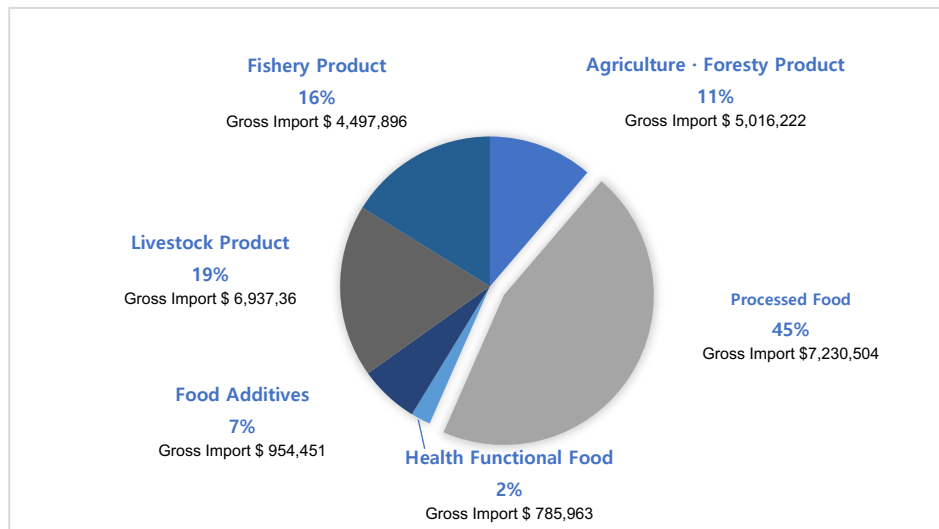
Figure 1: Korea's International Food Import from 2015 to 2019⁶



As shown in Figure 1, Korea's food import has been continuously growing since 2015. The number of food imports has significantly risen from 590,000 in 2015 to 738,000 in 2019 — a 23% increase in only 5 years. Such figures show promising opportunities for foreign exporters.⁷

B. Food Imports by Product Group (2019)

Figure 2: Korea's Imported Foods by Product Group⁸



⁶ Korean Statistical Information Service (KOSIS), (2020, December 03). *Status of Imported Foods, UpToDate*, Retrieved September 04, 2021 from https://kosis.kr/statHtml/statHtml.do?orgId=134&tblId=DT_134001_002&conn_path=12

⁷ Korean Statistical Information Service (KOSIS), (2020, December 03). *Status of Imported Foods, UpToDate*, Retrieved September 04, 2021 from https://kosis.kr/statHtml/statHtml.do?orgId=134&tblId=DT_134001_002&conn_path=12

⁸ Korean Statistical Information Service (KOSIS), (2020, December 03). *Status of Imported Foods, UpToDate*, Retrieved September 04, 2021 from https://kosis.kr/statHtml/statHtml.do?orgId=134&tblId=DT_134001_002&conn_path=12

Processed food is the most imported food product group, accounting for 45% of Korea's food imports. Livestock and fishery products are the second most imported food product groups, which together accounting for about 35% of Korea's food imports. Other product groups contributed to less than 11%; Agriculture and forestry 11%, food additives 7%, and health functional foods 2%.⁹

C. Major Countries Exporting Food to Korea

Figure 3: Top 5 Countries Exporting Foods to Korea (2019)¹⁰



In 2019, Korea has imported \$27.5 billion worth of food product from overseas. It has imported foods mostly from the United States, China, Australia, Vietnam, and Russia, which together make up to 45% of Korea's total food imports.¹¹

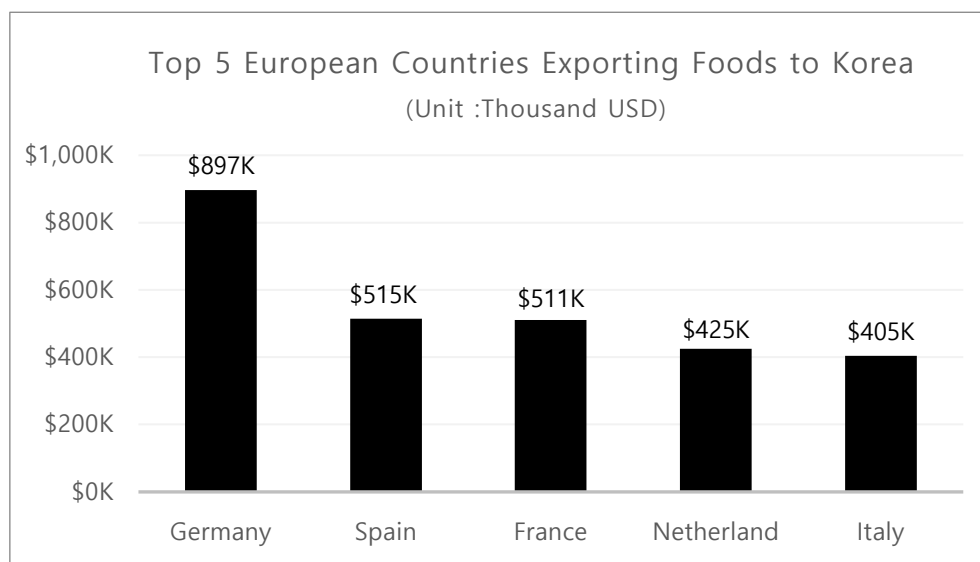
As Korean consumers are adopting various cuisines and diets, more food processors and retail businesses in Korea are actively seeking for new overseas sources for new products to satisfy the market's needs for variety of food products.

⁹ Korean Statistical Information Service (KOSIS), (2020, December 03). *Status of Imported Foods, UpToDate*, Retrieved September 04, 2021 from https://kosis.kr/statHtml/statHtml.do?orgId=134&tblId=DT_134001_002&conn_path=12

¹⁰ Korean Statistical Information Service (KOSIS), (2020, December 03). *Status of Imported Foods, UpToDate*, Retrieved September 04, 2021 from https://kosis.kr/statHtml/statHtml.do?orgId=134&tblId=DT_134001_002&conn_path=12

¹¹ Korean Statistical Information Service (KOSIS), (2020, December 03). *Status of Imported Foods, UpToDate*, Retrieved September 04, 2021 from https://kosis.kr/statHtml/statHtml.do?orgId=134&tblId=DT_134001_002&conn_path=12

Figure 4: Top 5 European Countries Exporting Foods to Korea (2020)¹²



Out of all European countries exporting food products to Korea, Germany has exported the most. It has exported a total of almost \$900 thousands worth of food products such as pork, food additives, and potato starch in 2020. Spain, France, Netherlands, and Italy follow as other major food product exporting European countries.¹³

Table 1: Imported Food Products from the Major Food Product Exporting European Countries¹⁴

Country Name	Products
Germany	Starch, Coffee, Cocoa, Chocolate, Beer, Confectionery (Caramel, Candy), Pork, Dairy
Spain	Fruits (Orange) Fruit Juice, Olive Oil, Animal Food, Wine, Confectionery, Fisheries (Tuna)
France	Animal Foods, Bakery (Dough Powder, Wheat), Cocoa, Tobacco, Wine, Sparkling Water, Confectionery, Biscuit, Pork, Butter, Tuna
Netherland	Animal Food, Cocoa, Beer, Food Additives, Pork, Butter, Cheese, Sweety Whey Powder
Italy	Coffee, Cocoa, Chocolate & Chocolate Snacks, Wine, Biscuits, Noodle (Pasta), Cream, Cheese, Tuna.

¹² Korean Statistical Information Service (KOSIS), (2020, December 03). *Status of Imported Foods, UpToDate*, Retrieved September 04, 2021 from https://kosis.kr/statHtml/statHtml.do?orgId=134&tblId=DT_134001_002&conn_path=12

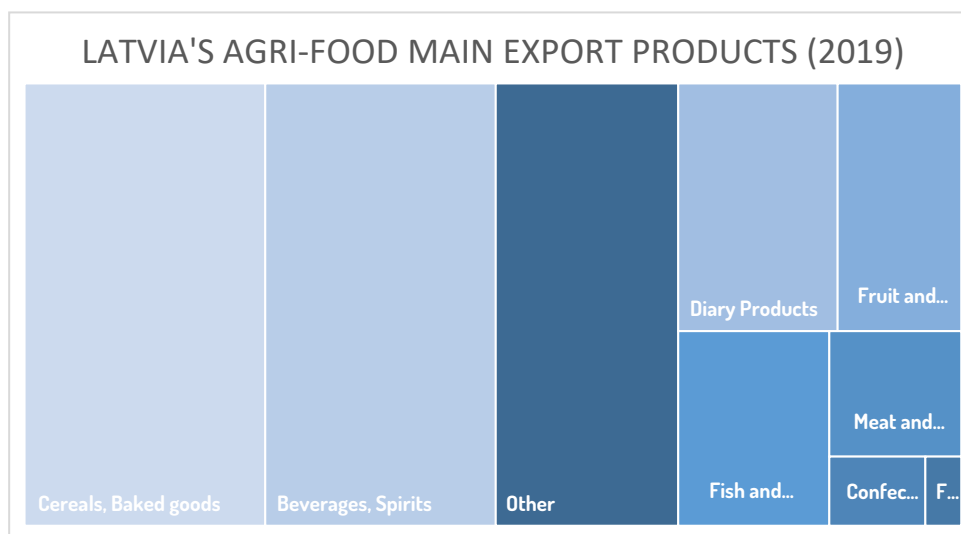
¹³ Korean Statistical Information Service (KOSIS), (2020, December 03). *Status of Imported Foods, UpToDate*, Retrieved September 04, 2021 from https://kosis.kr/statHtml/statHtml.do?orgId=134&tblId=DT_134001_002&conn_path=12

¹⁴ KATI Statistics, *Monthly Performance By Nation (2020)*, UpToDate. Retrieved September 16, 2021, from <https://www.kati.net/statistics/monthlyPerformanceByNation.do>.

III. Competitive Analysis: Latvian Foods Entering Korean Food Market

A. Latvia's Food Export

Figure 1: Latvia's Major Food Product Exports (2019)¹⁵



According to Central Statistical Office of Latvia, cereals/baked goods and beverages/spirits are accounted for 25.7% and 24.6% for more than 50% of Latvia's food exports. Dairy products (9.5%), fruits, and vegetables (7.4%), fish and fish products (7.1%), meat and edible meat (4%), confectionery (1.6%), fat and oils (0.6%) are the categories of food products that Latvia exports.¹⁶

B. List of Favorable Food Products from Latvia for Korean Market

- Soft Drinks
- Alcoholic Drinks
- Grain Products and Baked Goods
- Dairy Products
- Fruits and Vegetables
- Fish and Fish Products
- Meat and Edible Meat
- Confectionary
- Fat and Oils

¹⁵ Investment and Development Agency of Latvia, (2020, December 30). Central Statistical Office of Latvia, *Export by Product Group in 2019*, %. Retrieved September 19, 2021, from <https://www.liaa.gov.lv/en/trade/industries/food#export-product-group>.

¹⁶ Investment and Development Agency of Latvia, (2020, December 30). Central Statistical Office of Latvia, *Export by Product Group in 2019*, %. Retrieved September 19, 2021, from <https://www.liaa.gov.lv/en/trade/industries/food#export-product-group>

1. Soft Drinks & Alcoholic Beverages

As more Koreans are adopting new cuisines and diets, imported foreign soft drinks and alcoholic beverages that generally pair with those new cuisines are also in high demand in Korea. This market trend is led by younger population in their 10-30s who are more active in adopting the new trend in cuisines. To catch up with the growing trend, beverage companies in Korea are diversifying their product catalogs from traditional drinks with exotic flavors to locally brewed alcohol beverages. Further, they are even actively importing foreign beverages that generally were not available in Korea to satisfy the growing market demand for new tastes.

2. Grain Products (Cereals), Baked goods, Dairy Products

Traditionally, Koreans dine 3 times per a day with Korean meals in *table d'hôte* fashion (in Korean, “*Hanshik*”) with family or other acquaintances. However, with the rapid increase of single-person households, Korean dining style has shifted to a simpler, quicker, and easier way to consume meals. For instance, rather than having full meals with various side dishes for breakfast, Koreans have adopted the western style of breakfast, having easy-to-prepare and quick-to-eat products such as cereal, oatmeal, granola, milk, yogurt, and baked goods.

3. Fish and Fish Products, Meat and Edible Meat

Home Meal Replacements and Meal-Kits (HMRs) refer to “one-dish meals that can be consumed both at home and in stores and does not require the purchaser to go through a cumbersome cooking process, but instead is simply heated before eating”.¹⁷HMRs are becoming popular not only for its convenience to consume, but also it is emerged an alternative way for Koreans to enjoy various cuisines at home during the pandemic. As Koreans rapidly adopts foreign cuisines and diets, HMRs serves to satisfy their new tastes more easily. To provide more diverse HMRs for Koreans’ growing demand, Korean HMR producers are actively investing and seeking new sources to import high-quality proteins and other ingredients that are essential and only available overseas for their new HMR products.

¹⁷ Agribusiness and Information Management, Kyeong Ah Ahn. Young Chan Cheo. Hye Bin Cho, (December 30,2014). *Types of Home Meal Replacement and Determinants of Consumption in South Korea*. Vol.6 No.2 2014. Retrieved September 13, 2021.

※**Note:** Partial amendment of Ministry of Food and Drug Safety – Expansion of Latvia’s Import Products.¹⁸

► According to The Ministry of Food and Drug Safety, the government has announced a partial amendment to expand imports of livestock and dairy products. The main revisions include the permission to expand dairy products, and a 'Meat Meal-Kit' has been added to the subject of the 'Import livestock hygiene evaluation'.

In the case of Latvia, only oil and syrup were allowed, however after the revision, seven items, including processed oil, concentrated oil, milk cream, butter, cheese, powdered milk, and ice cream, will be added after the revision.

IV. Food Retail Business in Korea

Food retail business in Korea accounted for about one-third of total retail sales in 2020. This has been one of the biggest market shares of food retail business in years.¹⁹ Despite the economic recession caused by COVID-19, grocery and food retail businesses have achieved significant business growth. The prolonged social distancing restrictions have caused consumers to spend more on essential items like food and beverages. Food retail businesses have benefited from this sudden change caused by the pandemic. Online retail business such as e-commerce and food delivery have especially benefited the most as a result of people ordering food products online to prevent exposure to COVID-19 outside. Of the four major retail businesses for food products, supermarket was the leading retail business, followed by others like hypermarkets, department stores, and convenience stores.²⁰

A. Type of Food Retail Business

1. Supermarket

Supermarkets are the biggest retail business for food products and their major revenues are generated from food product sales. Some are owned by private owners, and some are owned by the big corporate chains such as Lotte Mart, E-mart, and Home Plus. Supermarkets are typically located in residence areas, and their main customers are household consumers looking for domestic products that are on promotion.

¹⁸ Gang-Lip Kim, Ministry of Food and Drug Safety. (2021, September 10). *Expanding imports of livestock and dairy products of Latvia and Slovakia*. [Press release]. Retrieved September 11, 2021, from https://www.mfds.go.kr/brd/m_99/view.do?seq=45744.

¹⁹ United States Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural Service. Sangyong Oh, (June 16, 2021). *Retail Foods*. KS2021-0015. Retrieved September 04, 2021.

²⁰ Food & Tourism Business Finland Korea, Flanders Investment and Trade, Seoul, (June, 2014) *The Food Industry in South Korea*. Retrieved September 14, 2021.

Major Supermarkets in Korea

- *Lotte Mart*
- *Lotte Super*
- *GS Supermarket*
- *E-Mart*
- *Home Plus Express*
- *Costco*
- *NH Nonghyup*
- *Hanaro Mart*
- *No Brand*

※ Estimated Food Sales: 39.3 trillion Korean Won²¹

2. Hypermarket

Hypermarkets are big-box stores that combine the concept of department stores and grocery stores. Generally, a large retail establishment, hypermarkets offer a variety of goods such as appliances, clothing, and groceries in one location, providing consumers with a one-stop shopping experience. As big-box stores, hypermarkets are able to source large volume of products at competitive prices, and sell those products at a significant discount to customers.²²

2.1 Differences between Hypermarkets and Supermarkets

Due to the similar size and name, Supermarkets and Hypermarkets are considered to be the same retail store with different names. However, they are few that distinguish between the two. Supermarkets carry grocery and household products in relatively small amount packages for general customers. On the other hand, Hypermarkets are generally larger than Supermarkets, and carries much bigger quantities of products in warehouse-like space so that customers can buy products in bulk amount with less expensive price per a unit. Also, Hypermarkets carry more Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG)^{23*} with less price in bulk amount compared to Supermarkets. Supermarkets have more customer-oriented in the service with more pleasant outlook and customer-oriented marketing. For example, Supermarkets generally offer seasonal sales or promotional events to attract more customers.

²¹ United States Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural Service. Sangyong Oh, *Retail Foods*. KS2021-0015. p.5. June 16,2021. Accessed 04 Sep.2021.

²² Will Kenton, Investopedia, Company Profiles, (2020, July 05). "Hypermarket" *Investopedia, Up To Date*. Retrieved September 09, 2021, from <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/h/hypermarket.asp>.

²³ Corporate Finance Institute, Resources, Knowledge, Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG), Retrieved October 27,2021, from <https://corporatefinanceinstitute.com/resources/knowledge/other/fast-moving-consumer-goods-fmcg/>.

*Fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG), refer to products that are in highly in-demand, sold quickly, and affordable (e.g. packaged food, toiletries, beverages, stationery, over-the-counter-medicines, cleaning and laundry products, plastic goods, etc.)

However, Hypermarkets do not host promotions or sales like Supermarket, as they already provide bulk order discount.

Major Hypermarkets in Korea

- *E-mart*
 - *Home Plus*
 - *Costco*
 - *Costco Wholesale*
 - *Lotte Mart*
 - *Mega Mart*
 - *Lotte Shopping*
- ※ Estimated Food Sales: 17.2 trillion Korean Won²⁴

3. Convenience Store

Convenience stores have been benefited the most from the rapidly growing number of single-person households in Korea. Generally, single-person household consumers tend to look for food products that are easy to prepare and quick to eat. Catering to such a demographic, convenience stores offer a wide range of everyday items such as snack foods, soft drinks, frozen foods, and ready-to-eat products (i.,e. sandwiches, salads). Of all the different types of retail businesses, convenience stores are the quickest to adapt to consumer trends.

Major Convenience Stores

- *GS 25*
 - *CU*
 - *7-Eleven*
 - *Mini Stop*
 - *Emart 24*
- ※ Estimated Food Sales: 17.2 trillion Korean won²⁵

4. Department Stores

Department stores deal a wide range of goods, such as foods, apparels, household wares, electrical

²⁴ United States Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural Service. Sangyong Oh, *Retail Foods*. KS2021-0015. p.5. June 16,2021. Accessed 04 Sep.2021.

²⁵ United States Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural Service. Sangyong Oh, *Retail Foods*. KS2021-0015. p.5. June 16,2021. Accessed 04 Sep.2021.

appliances. They generally offer with more expensive, higher-quality, and exotic products that consumers may not easily find from other stores. To follow up with the recent online trend, department stores are also expanding their business online. Department store brands such as Lotte offers food products through live TV programs and mobile shopping to engage with more customers who use online channels to order their products. They often offer seasonal bargains through online platforms, from time to time, to attract more customers who seek for those expensive high-quality products and branded items with a discounted price.

Major Department Stores in Korea

- *Lotte Shopping*
 - *Lotte Dept. Store*
 - *Shinsegae Dept. Store*
 - *E Land Retail*
 - *Hyundai Dept. Store*
 - *Hanwha Galleria*
- ※ Estimated Food Sales: 17.2 trillion Korean Won²⁶

5. Online Food Retail Business (e-commerce market)

Online food retail businesses have become the most benefited business from COVID-19. Online platforms, such as Market Kurly, have become the customers' go-to place to order food products from their homes. In 2020, there has been 58% sales increase in food products from the online food retail businesses. As more Koreans order their foods from online, traditional offline retail businesses such as Lotte Shopping and GS Shopping are expanding their presence online to attract more customers the COVID-19 era.

Major Online Food Markets in Korea

- *Market Kurly*
 - *Coupang*
 - *G market*
 - *Eleven Street*
- ※ Estimated Food Sales: 17.2 trillion won²⁷

²⁶ United States Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural Service. Sangyong Oh, *Retail Foods*. KS2021-0015. p.5. June 16,2021. Accessed 04 Sep.2021.

²⁷ United States Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural Service. Sangyong Oh, *Retail Foods*. KS2021-0015. p.5. June 16,2021. Accessed 04 Sep.2021.

V. Different Pricing and Size by Various Retail Stores.

The price and size of products are vary depending on where the customers purchase the products from. Ice cream products in two package sizes (cone and cup shape) are discussed to illustrate the subject. The price of each product is based on 2021.

Case I: “World Cone” from Lotte, Vanilla Flavor Ice Cream (160ml, Single)²⁸



Retail Store	Average	Lowest	Highest
Supermarket	986	600	990
Hypermarket	950	800	1,200
Convenience Store	1,800	1,800	1,800
Department Store	1,500	1,500	1,500
Online Food Retail Business	615	610	700

Unit: KRW

Case II: “Together” from Binggrae, Vanilla Flavor Ice Cream Cup (900ml, Single)²⁹



Retail Store	Average	Lowest	Highest
Supermarket	6,970	3,600	6,990
Hypermarket	5,430	4,800	5,500
Convenience Store	7,000	7,000	7,000
Department Store	5,367	4,900	6,300
Online Food Retail Business	4,791	4,583	5,000

Unit: KRW

²⁸ Korea Consumer Agency, Daily necessity price information, *Price item information, UpToDate*, Retrieved October 25, 2021, from <https://www.price.go.kr/tprice/portal/dailynecessitypriceinfo/priceiteminfo/getPriceItemInfoList.do>

²⁹ Korea Consumer Agency, Daily necessity price information, *Price item information, UpToDate*, Retrieved October 25, 2021, from <https://www.price.go.kr/tprice/portal/dailynecessitypriceinfo/priceiteminfo/getPriceItemInfoList.do>

For both of Cases, online food retail businesses offer the lowest price. Although the price is the lowest per a unit, online stores generally do not sell in single unit, but require the customers to purchase in bulk to compensate the margins. On the other hand, convenience stores are the most expensive stores on both of Cases, because they carry smaller inventory at higher price due to the space limit and do not offer discounts like other retail stores, where frequently offers promotions and carry more inventory.

Despite the expensive price of convenience stores, they are one of the biggest sellers of ice cream products, earned \$42 million in a year, according to Korea Consumer Agency.³⁰ It is because they are in every corner of streets and consumers can shop there 24 hours a day. According to Maeil Business Newspaper, number of the convenience store in Korea has exceeded 5 million stores as of 2020.³¹

To generate more sales from convenience stores, food manufactures even provide products in exclusive size for convenience stores. For example, Binggrae, a major company in Korea for dairy products and snacks, has launched 300ml products of its signature product: “*Together*,” which was only available in 900ml.³²

Hypermarkets offer bigger portion of products at a cheaper price than similar stores like supermarkets. The price of local food products in department stores is usually similar with the price sold in the supermarkets. However, because they include more imported premium goods and rarely provide discount price offers, department stores are viewed as the most expensive retail store by general customers.

VI. Consumer Trends

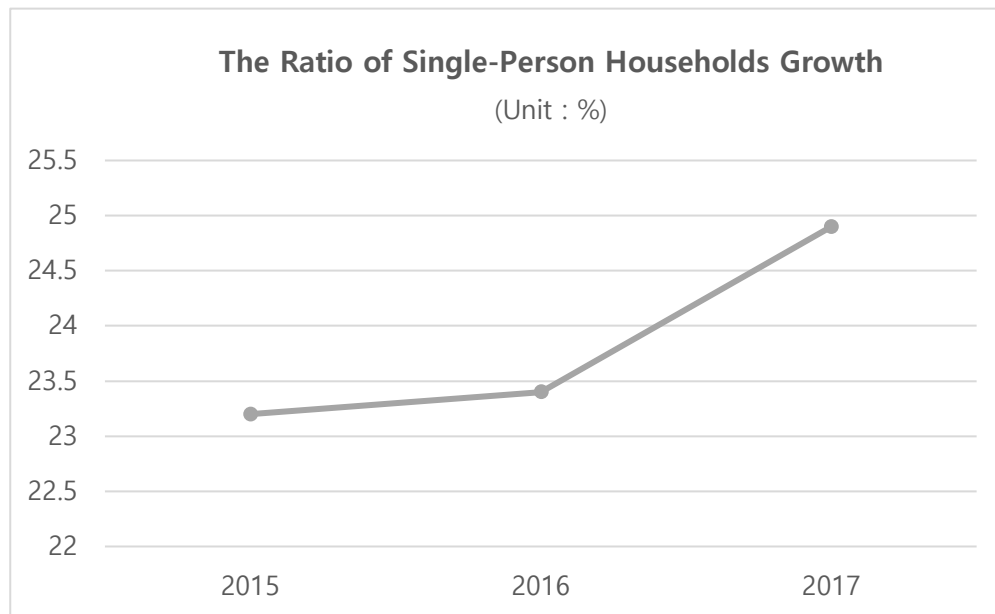
A. Rapid Growth of Single-Person Households

³⁰ Korea Agro-Fisheries & Food Trade Corporation, Food Information Statistics System, types of sales top item by POS store sales avenue, UpToDate, Retrieved October 22, 2021, from <https://www.atfis.or.kr/salesNew/M002021000/search.do?salesTopItem=CD00000545&searchItem=CD00000558&searchDivision=&searchYear=&searchQuarter=&x=54&y=30>.

³¹ Maeil Business Newspaper, Business, Seung-Wook Noh, (March 29, 2021). *Convenience store exceeding 5 million stores, is it still worth starting?* Retrieved October 25, 2021, from <https://www.mk.co.kr/news/business/view/2021/03/298384/#>.

³² Maeil Business Newspaper, Business, Mijin Shin, (September 7, 2019). *Buying less than to leave leftovers...single-person households looking for 'Mini Size'*, Retrieved October 25, 2021, from <https://www.mk.co.kr/news/business/view/2019/09/710741/>.

Figure 1: The Ratio of Single-Person Households Growth³³



Among the 70% of the population living in urban areas, the proportion of single-person households has increased rapidly, accounting for nearly one-third of all Korean households. In Korea, the proportion of single-person households has continued to grow, from 20% to 30% within only five years.³⁴

As single-person households grow rapidly, there is new cultural trend called, “*Honbap*,” which is the new word combined of the Korean words, “*Hon*” (alone) and “*Bap*” (meal).

‘*Honbap*’ means a huge market opportunity in Korea. CJ Cheil Jedang, one of the biggest F&B conglomerates in Korea, conducted a survey of how many people in Korea frequently eat alone. According to the survey, Koreans eat 3.9 out of 10 meals alone on average.³⁵ Those who generally eat alone have tendency to purchase food products that are easy to prepare and eat, and substitute the *melas* with quick snacks.

B. Home Meal Replacements and Meal-Kits (HMRs)

The HMR market is one of the biggest markets in Korea. It is segmented into three different categories:

³³ The Dong-A-Ilbo. (May 31, 2021). *Nearly one in 3 households is a single-person household*. Retrieved September 18, 2021, from <https://www.donga.com/en/article/all/20210531/2686303/1>.

³⁴ The Dong-A-Ilbo. (May 31, 2021). *Nearly one in 3 households is a single-person household*. Retrieved September 18, 2021, from <https://www.donga.com/en/article/all/20210531/2686303/1>.

³⁵ CJ CheilJedng Corp.(n.d.), (October 31, 2019). *Researching the food culture trends of Korea*. CJ. Retrieved September 14, 2021, from <https://www.cj.co.kr/en/k-food-life/trend-insight/34>.

“Ready to eat”, “Ready to heat” and “Ready to cook”. Below, Table 1 shows the classification of the types of HMR which sell in retail stores.

Table 1: Types of HMRS³⁶

Type	Definition	Example
Ready to eat (Instant-eating)	To be consumed as it is purchased with no preparation	chilled sandwich, chilled pie, simple salad, gimbap
Ready to heat (Instant-cooked)	Simple heating is needed before consumption	frozen pizza, frozen cooked rice, frozen soup, Dried soup and spaghetti, canned soup, stapled food
Ready to cook (Fresh convenience food)	Prepared at the minimum for cooking (dressing & cleaning, peeling, cutting etc.) but in a state requiring complete cooking or all ingredients	chilled pot stew, chilled meat or fish with side dishes, chilled and frozen noodles. meal-kits, ready-to-eat pasta, frozen rice

According to Korea Food and Drug Administration (2011), HMR has 3 different types: “Instant-eating,” “Instant-cooked,” and “Fresh convenience” foods. Instant-eating food is simple packed food product that is already pre-made such as gimbap, hamburger, or sandwiches. Instant-cooked food is food product that has been produced with additives to raw ingredients, and it could be fully cooked after simply heated. And fresh convenience food is food product that requires a minimum cooking process, such as peeling, cutting, dressing, or heating the ingredients packed inside the package. The sales of Instant-cooking HMR have increased the most since following the staying-at-home lifestyle from COVID-19.

³⁶ The Korean Nutrition Society, Lee, H. Y., Chung, L. N., & Yang, I. S. (2005). *Conceptualizing and prospecting for Home Meal Replacement (HMR) in Korea by Delphi Technique*, as cited in *Agribusiness and Information Management*, Kyeong Ah Ahn. Young Chan Cheo. Hye Bin Cho. (2014). *Types of Home Meal Replacement and Determinants of Consumption in South Korea*. Vol.6 No.2. Retrieved September 13, 2021.

VII. Food Import Procedures in Korea

A. Agency

All the imported food and agricultural products are required to follow the general clearance procedure set by these agencies. Both the importer and the overseas exporter must check if the product meets the relevant regulations.³⁷

- Korea Customs Service (KCS): <https://www.customs.go.kr/english/main.do>
- Korea Ministry of Food and Drug Safety (MFDS): <https://www.mfds.go.kr/eng/index.do>
- Korea Animal and Plant Quarantine Agency (QIA):
<https://www.qia.go.kr/english/html/indexqiaEngNoticeWebAction.do>

B. Required Documents

When importing food products into Korea, local government agencies require overseas exporters to submit the following documents:³⁸

- Commercial Invoice
- Bill of Lading or Airway Bill
- Packing List
- Names of all ingredients with composition percentage of major ingredients
- Names & amount of all food additives
- Processing/manufacturing flow
- Certificate of Origin
- Export Sanitary Certificate (for Agricultural productions & Livestock products)
- Other relevant Certificates (e.g., Organic Certificate)

³⁷ Switzerland Global Enterprise. Trade & Investment Promotion. *Korea's Food Industry brief 2019*. Retrieved September 05, 2021.

³⁸ Korea Ministry of Food & Drug Safety, *Imported Food Safety*: Retrieved September 07, 2021, from <https://www.mfds.go.kr/eng/index.do>.

VIII. Reference

Websites

CJ CheilJedng Corp.(n.d.). (2019.10.31). *Researching the food culture trends of Korea*. CJ. Retrieved September 14, 2021, from <https://www.cj.co.kr/en/k-food-life/trend-insight/34>.

Food Exports Midwest USA, Northeast. *South Korea Country Profile, South Korea Food Trends*. Retrieved September 13, 2021, from [South Korea Country Profile \(foodexport.org\)](https://www.foodexport.org/south-korea-country-profile).

International Monetary Fund, *Board Discussions on Republic of Korea*, <https://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/profile/KOR>. Accessed 05 Sep. 2021.

Investment and Development Agency of Latvia, (2020, December 30). Central Statistical Office of Latvia, *Export by Product Group in 2019, %*. Retrieved September 19, 2021, from <https://www.liaa.gov.lv/en/trade/industries/food#export-product-group>.

KATI:<https://www.kati.net/statistics/monthlyPerformanceByNation.do> .Accessed 17 Sep. 2021.

Korea Ministry of Food & Drug Safety, *Imported Food Safety*: <https://www.mfds.go.kr/eng/index.do>. Accessed 07 Sep.2021

Will Kenton, Investopedia, Company Profiles, (2020, July 05). *"Hypermarket" Investopedia, Up To Date*. Retrieved September 09, 2021, from <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/h/hypermarket.asp>.

Wikipedia, *"Table d'hôte"*. (Last modified September 6, 2021). Retrieved September 30, 2021, from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Table_d%27h%C3%B4te.

Statistic Korea, *Agricultural Area Survey*. <http://kostat.go.kr/portal/eng/index.action>. Accessed 04 Sep. 2021.

Morgan, J. (2018, April 3). *Difference Between Hypermarkets and Supermarkets*. Difference Between Similar Terms and Objects. Retrieved October 27, 2021, from <http://www.differencebetween.net/business/difference-between-hypermarkets-and-supermarkets/>.

AskAnyDifference, *Difference Between Hypermarkets and Supermarkets*, Retrieved October 27, 2021, from <https://askanydifference.com/difference-between-hypermarkets-and-supermarkets/>.

Articles

The Dong-A-Ilbo. (2021, May 31). *Nearly one in 3 households is a single-person household*. Retrieved September 18, 2021, from <https://www.donga.com/en/article/all/20210531/2686303/1>.

Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy. (2021, July 1). *Korea's exports in 1st half of 2021 hit record high*. [Press release]. Retrieved October 01, 2021.

Maeil Business Newspaper, Business, Mijin Shin, (September 7, 2019). *Buying less than to leave leftovers...single-person households looking for 'Mini Size'*, Retrieved October 25, 2021, from <https://www.mk.co.kr/news/business/view/2019/09/710741/> .

Reports

Agribusiness and Information Management, Kyeong Ah Ahn. Young Chan Cheo. Hye Bin Cho. *Types of Home Meal Replacement and Determinants of Consumption in South Korea*. Vol.6 No.2 2014. Accessed 13 Sep. 2021.

Food & Tourism Business Finland Korea, Flanders Investment and Trade, Seoul. *The Food Industry in South Korea*. June 2014. Accessed 14 Sep. 2021

Switzerland Global Enterprise. Trade & Investment Promotion. *Korea's Food Industry brief 2019*. Accessed 05. Sep. 2021.

United States Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural Service. Sangyong Oh, *Retail Foods*. KS2021-0015. June 16,2021. Accessed 04 Sep.2021.