General Information

Singaporeans have always placed great emphasis on food, an aspect which reflects its cosmopolitan nature. Till today Singapore is a multicultural city with a strong presence of a large expatriate community in addition to the local population. Singaporeans are rather open to new and exotic types of food such that the city state is an excellent platform for food imports. There is an extensive variety of food offered in Singapore. They run the gamut from Chinese and Thai dishes to Western cuisine like German, French and Italian delicacies.

Singapore is heavily dependent on food imports, due to its virtual absence of agriculture and livestock farming. More than 90% of the country’s food supplies are from abroad, especially from the Asian region. Western products such as meat, dairy products as well as alcoholic beverages and bakery products are mainly imported by Australia, New Zealand and America. The need to meet the gastronomic demands of a population of 5.4 million with over 11 million tourists per year stimulates the imports from neighboring countries. Singapore is therefore the tourist and transportation hub of South East Asia and has a very large food service industry with many hotels, restaurants, airline caterers, ship handlers, hospitals, and clubs.

Food Retail Market

Singapore is considered to have one of the most developed food retail markets in South East Asia. The four major categories of food retail activities are large retailers (supermarket chains and hyper marts), convenience retailers, traditional stores and specialty stores. The larger supermarket chains buy directly from source countries as well as from distributors in Singapore whereas smaller stores more often buy from Singaporean distributors. As there are no tariffs on food products (except for alcoholic beverages) there is easy market access for all importers. Some of Singapore’s major supermarket operators include NTUC Fairprice, Sheng Siong and Cold Storage. Hypermarkets include Giant and Fairprice Xtra. There is also a German Market Place which offers a wide range of German products.

Import Conditions for Food Products

The Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority of Singapore (AVA) is the national authority for food safety for both primary and processed food. AVA ensures the safety of all food from production to just before retail. The import of fresh fruits and vegetables is regulated under the Control of Plants Act. It stipulates that the produce should not contain prohibited pesticide, or levels of pesticide residue or toxic chemical residue exceeding the prescribed levels.

The processed food products which are being assessed for the import into Singapore will be subjected to the Sale of Food Act which stipulates regulations on packaging and labeling requirements. The import of meat products and processed egg products into Singapore is strictly regulated under the Wholesome Meat and Fish Act. Meat products may only be imported from source countries and its establishments (slaughterhouses, meat and egg processing establishments) that are approved by the AVA and it has to be noted that India does not feature on the list.
### Main Market Players

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Company profile</th>
<th>Products</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fraser and Neave Ltd (F&amp;N)</td>
<td>F&amp;N is one of the top 25 companies listed on the Singapore Stock Exchange. Their extensive product range includes soft drinks, cereal bars and yoghurt.</td>
<td>100 Plus, F&amp;N Ice Mountain, F&amp;N MAGNOLIA, F&amp;N DAISY etc.</td>
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<td>Group Danone</td>
<td>Danone operates in four business divisions: fresh dairy products, waters, baby nutrition and medical nutrition.</td>
<td>Actimel, Activia, Bonafont, Evian etc.</td>
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<td>Asia Pacific Breweries Ltd (APB)</td>
<td>APB is one of the leading producers and marketers of breweries. The group operates in an extensive network in the Asia Pacific region that spans across 24 breweries in 14 countries.</td>
<td>Tiger Beer, Heineken, Anchor, Erdinger, Guinness, Heineken etc.</td>
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<td>Nestlé</td>
<td>Nestlé started its operations in Singapore in 1912 and has its RnD centre, RnD Singapore has since become an expert on the region’s culinary habits and techniques.</td>
<td>Milo, Nescafé, Maggi, Kit Kat etc.</td>
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### German Market Players

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<tr>
<td>Dreiboppel</td>
<td>Dreiboppel is the premier manufacturer of flavorings for pastry, confectionary and ice cream producers around the world.</td>
<td>Flavor paste, dessert sauces, baking flavours, fruit fillings and pastes, cream stabilizers</td>
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<td>Martin Braun Group</td>
<td>The Martin Braun Group supplies baking agents such as flavouring compounds and edible decorations for confectionaries. In 2010 they founded Martin Braun Southeast Asia in Singapore.</td>
<td>Bake-proof fillings, binding agents, fresh cream stabilisers, bread/rolls, ice cream products, frozen doughs</td>
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<td>Symrise</td>
<td>Syrimse operates in the perfume, cosmetics and food industry in more than 35 sites worldwide. In 2011 the company opened a new facility for flavor production, which was the third phase of a S$40 million investment plan.</td>
<td>Fragrances, flavourings, and raw materials</td>
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<td>German Dairy Asia</td>
<td>German Dairy Asia is a sales representative of the German cooperative, Molkerei Ammerland which was founded in 1885. Their products range from traditional cheeses like Gouda and Edam to herb-infused cheeses and milk and an assortment of other dairy products.</td>
<td>Gouda, Edamer, sour cream butter, lactic butter, Lactose-free milk and cream</td>
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<td>Paulaner Bräuhaus</td>
<td>Paulaner Bräuhaus is a German brewery and restaurant focused on introducing traditional Bavarian cuisine to other parts of the world. They also brew their beer in house.</td>
<td>Hog roast, Specialty beers and lager, brotzeitbrettl and other Bavarian delicacies</td>
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Outlook

According to Business Monitor International food consumption is forecasted to grow by 3.8% in Singapore until 2014.

Research & Development (R&D)

Singapore does not possess any natural resources. As such, the Singaporean government has tried to develop the city state into the international hub for Research and Development (R&D) in the South East Asian Region. Since 1982, Nestlé has a R&D centre in Singapore with a team of chefs, food technologists, process engineers, mechanical engineers, chemists and microbiologists. Also other efforts include the Agri-Food and Veterinary (AVA)’s Food Fund Phase III to support R&D in food farming technologies and practical industrial application. In addition to that, the National University of Singapore (NUS) offers a Food Science and Technology Programme and the Singapore Polytechnic possess a Food Innovation Resource Centre.

Unprocessed and functional foods
Unprocessed and functional foods are becoming increasingly popular in Singapore as people pay more attention to their diet and are more health conscious. There is hence a trend towards fresh cooking which is likely to be more beneficial for health reasons. Furthermore, consumers being more aware of climate change and the problems it induces are also likely to be more eco-friendly in their consumption patterns such that F&B providers who are more socially and ethically responsible are more popular and accepted by these savvy buyers.

FINEST Food Programme
In partnership with Singapore Food Manufactures’ Association (SFMA) and SPRING Singapore this programme aims to develop healthier food products to address the nutritional and health concerns of Singapore’s population. These products shall contain lower calories, sugar replacers, low glycemic index and should replace saturated fatty acids with unsaturated fatty acids.

Organic food
The market sentiment for organic food in Singapore is growing. Organic food is widely available in supermarkets such as Fair Price and Cold Storage. Furthermore, smaller specialised shops also offer a wide range of organic food.

Sources:

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