Fruits are the seed-bearing structures of flowering plants used to disseminate seeds, although most fruits that are consumed are bred to remove seeds. Most fruit is eaten raw. Some fruits are classified as vegetables, including tomatoes, cucumbers, and bell peppers. Simple fleshy fruits are often grouped into berries, stone fruits such as cherries and peaches, and pome fruits including apples and pears.

Fruits are often more valuable per unit of weight than vegetables, and 10 percent of the global fruit produced is traded across borders, including bananas, apples, oranges, and grapes. Over 80 percent of fruit is sold fresh, while the rest is processed, as with orange juice, or frozen or canned. Demand for frozen berries is expanding, while demand for canned fruit is declining.

Production

Most fruit is consumed in the country in which it is produced. China and India, each with 18 percent of the world’s people, produced 36 and 11 percent of the world’s fruit in 2017, respectively. Brazil, Turkey, Mexico, and Spain produce more of the world’s fruit than their share of the world’s people and are major fruit exporters.

Trade

Most fruit is consumed in the country in which it is produced, including bananas, the fruit most likely to cross national borders. Only 20 percent of the world’s bananas are exported, and less than 10 percent of the other major fruits are exported. Many fruits are heavy relative to their value, which can limit trade in fresh fruit. Other fruits are often processed before being exported, as with canned pineapple.

Fresh fruit consumption rises with population and income. The US is the world’s leading fruit importer by dollar value, importing fresh fruit worth over $14 billion in 2016, followed by China, over $8 billion, and Germany, over $7 billion. Fresh fruit imports rose in all major importing countries over the past decade.

The major fresh fruit exporters by value are Spain, which exported...
fresh fruit worth $8 billion in 2016, followed by the US, which exported fresh fruit worth $6 billion, and the Netherlands, $5 billion. Chile and China each exported fresh fruit worth about $5 billion in 2016, followed by Mexico with $4.5 billion in fresh fruit exports.

The Netherlands plays an unusual role in the EU fresh fruit trade. Many fruits in arrive Rotterdam by ship and are re-exported to other EU countries such as Germany. Spain, by contrast, produces many of the fruits that it exports to other EU countries.

A map of global trade in fresh fruit highlights the importance of banana exports from Central America and Ecuador, and the importance of Mexico in exporting fresh fruit to the US, including avocados and berries.

Many fruits are frozen, including berries, of which Poland is a leading exporter. Mexico, Serbia, and China are also major exporters of frozen fruit, including berries.

Organic
The share of organic fruit sold rises with per capita income, and is highest in Sweden and Switzerland, where 15 percent or more of fresh fruit is organic. In Germany and the US, eight to nine percent of the fresh fruit sold is organic. In most other countries, less than five percent of fresh fruit is organic.

Some fruits are considered to be superfoods due to their health benefits, including avocados and blueberries, explaining their rising per capita consumption levels. Avocados are often ripened in the Netherlands and re-exported to other EU countries.

Blueberries are another superfood whose production and trade is rising fast. Chile was the leading exporter of blueberries in 2015, followed by Canada, the US, Spain, and Peru, which has since become the world’s leading exporter of blueberries.
The Top 3 Fresh Fruit Exporters by Value in 2016 Were Industrial Countries

Spain is the Major EU Fresh Fruit Exporter, While the Netherlands Re-Exports Much of the Fresh Fruit that Arrives in Rotterdam by Ship
The U.S. imports fresh fruit from many Latin American countries, including bananas (blue). Poland is the leading exporter of frozen fruit, and frozen berries are a leading fruit export.

Top 10 frozen fruit export countries, 2006 vs. 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>2006 (thousand tonnes)</th>
<th>2016 (thousand tonnes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
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<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ROW
2016: 711,000 tonnes
2006: 434,000 tonnes
Sweden and Switzerland have the Highest Shares of Organic Fresh Fruit, 15%

Share of organic fresh fruit and vegetable sales vs. income, 2016

Mexico is the Leading Exporter of Avocados, Followed by Peru

Global avocado exports by top 10 export countries, 2006-2016
Blueberry Exports are Rising Fast to Satisfy the Demand for Year-Round Availability

References