THE FOOD & BEVERAGE MARKET IN HONG KONG

FLANDERS INVESTMENT & TRADE MARKET STUDY
THE FOOD & BEVERAGE MARKET
IN HONG KONG

May 2022

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2. FOREWORD

This report aims to provide a comprehensive reference for Flemish companies wanting to develop or expand the Hong Kong Food & Beverage market.

Hong Kong has long been renowned as one of the world’s culinary capitals with 12,000 restaurants and a great number of bars. The locals enjoy dining out with friends, families, and business associates. In fact, eating out is a common practice in Hong Kong, as the small size of people’s kitchens doesn’t invite regular home cooking.

Hong Kong is one of the top markets in the world for food and beverage products. Not only is Hong Kong’s production of local food and beverages very limited, but the consumers are also adventurous when it comes to these products. The Hong Kong consumer values innovation, creativity, and high-quality food and beverage products.

Hong Kong is also often referred to as a “test market”. While the local market is relatively small, many food exporting companies find Hong Kong a strategic place for entering the market in China and other neighbouring Asian countries.

The COVID-19 pandemic has provided the industry with many hurdles. Government restrictions, lack of production resources, disruptions of supply chains, and travel bans have brought about many challenges the Food & Beverage market in Hong Kong. Many businesses were forced to close or had to adjust their operations in order to continue to serve their consumers.

It is expected that COVID-19 will have a lasting effect on the industry, as consumers have created new habits in terms of cooking at home and of the foods that they eat.

This report aims to provide a brief overview of the current situation and trends of the Hong Kong Food & Beverage market, and explores potential opportunities for Flemish companies.

3. INTRODUCTION TO HONG KONG

3.1 SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION

Hong Kong is a Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China. Following British rule from 1842 to 1997, China assumed sovereignty under the “one country, two systems” principle. Hong Kong’s constitutional document, the Basic Law, mentions “a high degree of autonomy” and “Hong Kong People administering Hong Kong” and that the current political situation will remain in effect for 50 years after the handover (until 2047).

3.2 GEOGRAPHY AND POPULATION

Hong Kong covers Hong Kong Island, Lantau Island, the Kowloon Peninsula, and the New Territories, including 262 outlying islands. Its total area is about 1,104 km². Hong Kong’s population is about 7.6 million (May 2022). People of Chinese descent comprise most of the population, with foreign nationals comprising 8%. Chinese and English are the official languages of Hong Kong.
3.3 ECONOMY

The main characteristics of Hong Kong include free trade, low taxation, and minimum government intervention. It is ranked as the world’s 6th largest trading economy, with the mainland as its most significant trading partner. Hong Kong is also a major service economy, with particularly strong links to mainland China and the rest of the Asia-Pacific region.

Being one of the freest markets in the world, Hong Kong has minimal trade barriers for imports. The market is therefore extremely competitive, which means quality products are often competing on price.

- GDP: €324 billion (2021)
- GDP per capita: €43,760 (2021)
- Real GDP growth: 6.4% (2021)
- Labour force: 3.44 million (2021)
- Unemployment rate: 5.0% (April 2022)
- Inflation rate: 1.4% (2021)

Merchandise Trade Performance (2021):
- Total Exports: €559.7 billion
- Total Imports: €598.8 billion
- Total Trade: €1,158.5 billion

Service Trade Performance (2021)*:
- Exports: €68.65 billion
- Imports: €55.46 billion
- Total Trade: €124.11 billion

* A Government spokesman noted that while services trade resumed growth in overall terms in 2021 alongside improved global economic conditions, its recovery remained uneven. In particular, travel and cross-boundary passenger transport services remained in the doldrums as tourism came to a halt throughout the year.

Hong Kong is a trading port. In 2021, mainland China is the number one trading partner of Hong Kong both in terms of import, export, and re-export. Belgium is 18th on the import list.

Because of its central location, free port status, and position as a regional purchasing and distribution centre, 29% of Hong Kong imports are re-exported. Of these, 89% are re-exported to mainland China.

Due to limited land resources and rapid urbanisation, Hong Kong relies on imports. About 95% of its food supply is imported. Local production contributes only 2% of fresh vegetables and 14% of live pigs consumed. There is minimal domestic agricultural production and a small food-processing industry.

With 12,000 restaurants (2021) and a large number of bars, Hong Kong has long been known as one of the world’s culinary capitals. Locals like dining out with their friends, families, and co-workers. Working professionals work long hours and would rather eat out due to the
convenience, variety, and competitive pricing of dining options. On top of that, normally a major demand is also generated from 56 million visitors every year.
4. FOOD TRADING, RETAILING AND DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS

4.1 TRADING AND RETAILING

Hong Kong’s local market is relatively small. However, many food exporting companies find Hong Kong a strategic place for entering the market in China and the neighbouring Asian countries.

Hong Kong is a trading hub for re-exports into mainland China, Macau, and other neighbouring markets in Asia. Hong Kong’s total processed food and beverage exports generated €4.09 billion in 2020. The main market for Hong Kong’s processed food and beverage exports is mainland China, which accounted for 56%, followed by Macao, which accounted for 18%. Re-exports accounted for more than 84% of Hong Kong’s total exports of food and beverages.

Hong Kong’s food retailing and catering market has been changing in recent years as a result of changing lifestyles among the local population. Supermarkets, fast food stores, and theme restaurants continue to grow and have become an integral part of shopping and dining out habits.

Major supermarkets are being transformed into one-stop-shop “superstore” outlets enabling business growth through new set-ups of “wet market” corners (fish and meat counters selling chilled and live seafood, meat, and poultry products), in-store bakeries, take-away food services, and specialty selections.

There has been a trend of retail expansion in the upper-end sector among Hong Kong’s leading food and beverage retailers.
4.2 DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS

4.2.1 Supermarkets

Wellcome, owned by the Dairy Farm Group, and ParknShop, a member of A.S. Watson Group, are the two major supermarket chains. In Hong Kong, supermarket operations are extremely concentrated, with the two major firms accounting for over 70% of the total local supermarket sector.

Many Hong Kong supermarkets charge slotting fees for new product placement. The slotting fees are extremely negotiable and vary greatly among different supermarket chains. Supermarkets will also demand other terms such as promotion discounts, back-end income (a flat annual rebate that a supplier pays to the retail chain based on annual turnover), D.A. (Distribution Allowance - the fee that the supermarkets charge for distributing products from its warehouse to its many branch stores), and incentive rebates (a percentage of turnover rebated to the supermarkets when sales exceed a certain threshold).

Supermarkets can import new products from Belgium directly from a supplier or through consolidators, depending on the product and minimum purchase size.

Most large supermarkets, such as Wellcome and ParknShop, now provide online grocery shopping platforms with discounts and delivery services, which are increasingly appealing to busy Hong Kong shoppers.

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Dairy Farm International Holdings Ltd
Dairy Farm International Holdings Ltd (Dairy Farm) is a major pan-Asian firm that processes wholesales and sells food, health, and beauty goods. Dairy Farm began as a dairy producer in Hong Kong in 1886, and its retail store opened in 1904. Dairy Farm is now a member company of
With more than 70 years of experience, Wellcome is Hong Kong’s largest supermarket chain, offering a diverse product range of meat, fish, dairy, horticulture, processed food, health food, baby items, and daily necessities. Wellcome sells a variety of low- to mid-priced products under Dairy Farm’s labels “First Choice,” “Yu Pin King,” and “Surebuy.”

Wellcome

Market Place by Jasons, Jasons, 3hreeSixty, and Oliver’s the Delicatessen

Dairy Farm’s premium retail shop brands. These retail stores have a large assortment of imported fine foods, as well as wine and spirits. With the expanding popularity of healthy living, these premium supermarkets provide dedicated shelf space for organic, natural, and wholesome products.

A. S. Watson Group

The A.S. Watson Group (A.S. Watson) is one of the world’s largest worldwide food, health, and beauty retailers. CK Hutchison Holdings Limited, a multinational conglomerate, now owns 75% of A.S. Watson.

ParknShop

With 149 physical locations and an online store, it is Hong Kong’s second largest supermarket chain. A.S. Watson has two private label lines, “Best Buy” and “Select,” that sell budget-friendly products.

Fusion, International, and Taste

In recent years, some ParknShop supermarkets in the middle-class suburbs have been rebranded as Fusion, International, and Taste to provide local shoppers with a better shopping experience.
Great Food Hall
A premium retail brand with its location in prime Hong Kong neighbourhoods. Affluent local and expatriate clients are the target market for these retail brands. Compared to the other A.S. Watson store brands, these two provide a larger assortment of luxury imported Western products.

Food le Parc
Has two locations in Cheung Kong Centre and Taikoo Place. With its electronic shelf labelling and self-checkout counters, they provide a new shopping experience. Food le Parc establishments have designated areas for organic and natural products.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Retailer</th>
<th>Number of stores</th>
<th>Positioning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ParknShop</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>Mass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fusion</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>Medium – High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Medium – High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taste</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Medium – High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Le Parc</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Premium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Food Hall</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Premium</td>
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</table>

DCH Food Mart
Dah Chong Hong (DCH) Holdings is a Hong Kong-based integrated food and fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) trading corporation with operations in food manufacturing, importation, distribution, and retailing of frozen meat, seafood, fresh fruits and vegetables, and everyday necessities. DCH launched the DCH Food Mart Deluxe branches in 2007 to cater to the middle-class market, and it has since grown to become the market leader among frozen food specialty chain stores in Hong Kong.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Stores</th>
<th>Positioning</th>
<th>Target Customer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>Mass – Medium</td>
<td>Mainly Local</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

U Select by Tesco
A supermarket chain founded in 2015 as a joint venture between China Resources Vanguard and U.K.-based Tesco, which provides a large share of the products in the store. www.uselect.com.hk/

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<tr>
<th>No. of Stores</th>
<th>Positioning</th>
<th>Target Customer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Mass – Medium</td>
<td>Mainly Local</td>
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</table>

CR Vanguard
China Resources Vanguard’s major food retail division. China Resources Group is a Fortune Global 500 Enterprise and a Chinese state-owned firm. In 1991, China Resources Vanguard launched its first store in Mainland China, and it now has locations in 242 cities in 29 provinces.


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<tr>
<th>No. of Stores</th>
<th>Positioning</th>
<th>Target Customer</th>
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<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Mass</td>
<td>Mainly Local</td>
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</table>
YATA Limited
Sun Hung Kai Properties, a Hong Kong developer, bought this supermarket chain from the Seiyu Group of Japan in 2005, and has been expanding in Hong Kong since then. With almost half of its products imported from Japan, YATA promotes itself as a modern Japanese lifestyle destination. Every year, YATA hosts regular country-themed and Thankful Week promotions. www.yata.hk/eng/

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<tr>
<th>No. of Stores</th>
<th>Positioning</th>
<th>Target Customer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Medium – Premium</td>
<td>Mainly Local</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

AEON
AEON Hong Kong is one of the international businesses of AEON Co., Ltd., based in Japan. It has 11 supermarkets, 55 “Living Plaza by Aeon” lifestyle businesses, 8 “Bento Express by AEON” takeaway stalls, and six “La Bohème” pastry shops. Two AEON stores in Hong Kong were upgraded to high-end branches in 2017. www.aeonstores.com.hk/

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<th>Positioning</th>
<th>Target Customer</th>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Medium – High</td>
<td>Mainly Local</td>
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City Super Limited (City’Super)
A Hong Kong-based premium supermarket and retail business with three distinct brands: City’Super, CookedDeli by City’Super, and LOG-ON. Many imported food products are only available through an exclusive deal with City’Super. All City’Super locations are conveniently positioned within first-tier retail malls and are regularly frequented by tourists visiting Hong Kong. www.citysuper.com.hk/en/

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<th>No. of Stores</th>
<th>Positioning</th>
<th>Target Customer</th>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Premium</td>
<td>Local &amp; Expat</td>
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SOGO
SOGO has two locations in Causeway Bay and Tsim Sha Tsui. It is a well-known Japanese-style all-in-one department store complete with a supermarket in the basement, popular with tourists. SOGO holds regular country-themed specials in its stores. www.sogo.com.hk/en

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<th>Positioning</th>
<th>Target Customer</th>
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<td>2</td>
<td>High – Premium</td>
<td>Local &amp; Expat</td>
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APITA & UNY
Unicorn Stores (HK) Ltd. operates APITA and UNY, two store brands owned by Hong Kong real estate developer Henderson Investment Ltd. In 1985, the first APITA store opened in the Cityplaza shopping mall, and it eventually moved to Lok Fu in Hong Kong’s Kowloon district. https://apitauny.com.hk/?lang=en

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<th>No. of Stores</th>
<th>Positioning</th>
<th>Target Customer</th>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Medium – High</td>
<td>Mainly Local</td>
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</table>
4.2.2 Convenience stores

There are over 1,300 convenience stores in Hong Kong. The most popular are 7-Eleven and Circle K.

7-Eleven
7-Eleven is the largest convenience chain store in Hong Kong. It has been operating since 1981 under license of Dairy Farm International Holdings Ltd., which oversees product selection and franchisee training for this market.

www.7-eleven.com.hk/en

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Stores</th>
<th>Positioning</th>
<th>Target Customer</th>
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<tr>
<td>1000</td>
<td>Mass – Medium</td>
<td>Local &amp; Expat</td>
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</table>

Circle K
Circle K is a global convenience chain store with locations in the United States, Asia, and Latin America. Li & Fung Retailing initially opened a Circle K in Hong Kong in 1985, and it is now owned by a Canadian multinational operator of convenience stores, Alimentation Couche-Tard.

www.circlek.hk/en/

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Stores</th>
<th>Positioning</th>
<th>Target Customer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>354</td>
<td>Mass – Medium</td>
<td>Local &amp; Expat</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Many convenience stores are strategically positioned around Hong Kong, including near Hong Kong subway and railway stations, popular shopping malls, and housing developments.

Because there is a limited selection of brand names and costs are often lower, most transactions are “convenience” in character, meaning things are typically purchased in small quantities for immediate consumption. Packaged drinks, beer, and snacks are all popular commodities in these businesses. Convenience product suppliers must also pay listing fees.

4.2.3 Wet markets and independent grocery stores

Ubiquitous in Hong Kong, and particularly popular among elderly customers. The stores sell daily necessities and negotiate with importers to purchase smaller quantities due to a lack of space.

4.2.4 Discount chain stores

Discount chain stores such as “759 Store”, “BestMart 360°” and “PrizeMart” have recently expanded, putting supermarkets and convenience stores under further pressure.

759 Store
Founded in 2010 by CEC International Holdings Limited, 759 is known for its large assortment of low-cost Japanese snacks and confectionery products. It also imports frozen and ambient food.

www.759store.com/

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<tr>
<th>No. of Stores</th>
<th>Positioning</th>
<th>Target Customer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>182</td>
<td>Mass</td>
<td>Mainly Local</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
BestMart 360°
BestMart 360° opened its first store in Sheung Shui in 2013 to cater to cross-border visitors from mainland China. It has grown into a dedicated snack chain store with over 85 locations in Hong Kong. It sells a variety of trendy ambient food and beverage products from Japan, Taiwan, Korea, the US, Canada, Australia, and Europe. www.bestmart360.com/

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<tr>
<th>No. of Stores</th>
<th>Positioning</th>
<th>Target Customer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>85</td>
<td>Mass</td>
<td>Mainly Local</td>
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PrizeMart
PrizeMart is a local retail chain that specializes in low-cost OEM and bulk-buy ambient food and domestic supplies (confectionery, condiments, etc.), while frozen items are available in some locations. It currently stocks quite a few products from Belgium, e.g. chocolate, fruit jams, etc. www.prizemart.com/index.php/en/store

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<td>Mass</td>
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4.2.5 Online shopping

In recent years, online grocery shopping is growing more common because of the COVID-19 outbreak. Online shopping provides consumers with an alternate and safer source for goods normally purchased in traditional supermarkets. The e-commerce market is bound to keep growing, because of Hong Kong’s high internet penetration rate (91%).

Furthermore, Hong Kong is one of the most expensive cities in the world when it comes to rents. Therefore, setting up virtual shops could significantly bring down the fixed costs for companies. Consumers on the other hand can enjoy greater flexibility in shopping. Shopping is made possible when retail doors are closed.

Online shopping continues to grow as consumers grow more confident in the quality and authenticity of products available online. Food and drink e-commerce reached €395.20 million in 2020, it is estimated to reach €502.16 million by 2025.

HKTV mall
By far the largest player in Hong Kong is HKTVMall, an online retailer which offers nearly one million products to its consumer. Its food & beverage offer is also quite extensive, and several Belgian brands are already on sale on the platform. www.hktvmall.com/hktv/en/

Saladplate
As a B2B food & beverage platform, Saladplate brings suppliers and buyers in the F&B industry together. Saladplate is not only active in Hong Kong, but targets most of South-East Asia. www.saladplate.com/
5. CONSUMER PREFERENCES AND TRENDS

5.1 CONSUMER PREFERENCES

Hong Kong is a consumer’s paradise, with a vast selection of options. Food and beverage selections range from Asian goods to well-known multinational brands in the city’s supermarkets and convenience stores.

Hong Kong is a sophisticated and mature market with a healthy demand for gourmet products. At the same time, the majority of Hong Kong customers are price-conscious and seek “value for money” goods. Still, consumers are willing to spend more on new products and high quality items.

European products are generally regarded as high-end goods. Consumers are familiar with Belgian chocolate and beers. The promotion of Belgian food exports to Hong Kong is aided by the image of a European manufacturing environment and high food safety standards.

Traditionally, Hong Kong consumers shop daily because of a preference for fresh food. Much of the shopping is still done in traditional markets including street (wet) markets and locally-owned shops. Overall, street market sales lean toward fresh foods while supermarkets dominate in processed, chilled and frozen, high-value added, and canned food products. The competition between street markets and supermarkets has intensified in recent years.

This competition has led to major supermarket chains transforming their stores into one-stop-shops, enabling business growth through the setting up of “wet market” corners (fish and meat counters selling chilled and live seafood, meat, and poultry products), in-store bakeries, take-away food services, and specialty selections.

There is a higher demand for convenience food since the number of dual income families is increasing. This makes ready-to-cook meals more popular. The major supermarket chains have installed pre-prepared sections to serve ready-to-eat foods.
Because of the limited living space in Hong Kong, it is inconvenient for Hong Kong consumers to store food products. Therefore, bulk-pack food products do not sell well in Hong Kong, and small package food products are preferred.

5.2 TRENDS

5.2.1 Health food industry

Along with an increase in expected life span and the growing demand for various kinds of convenient food items, consumers are becoming more conscious about what they eat. As a result, there is a rising trend towards healthy, functional, and organic foods.

The desire to consume nutritious, unprocessed foods increases as people look to boost their immunity and support their health during the pandemic.

Overall, more and more people adopt a “flexitarian” diet, whereby they choose to consume less meat, dairy, and eggs for health, environmental and ethical reasons. A recent survey showed that about 65% of respondents in Hong Kong said that they had consumed plant-based alternatives to animal-based food products.

In 2020, plant-based food and beverage businesses grew 36% in Hong Kong.

The most popular replacements are plant-based milk: soy, rice, almond, or oat milk. Over 80% of all age categories would replace cow milk with an alternative product. Secondly, over 60% of respondents would swap meat products for plant-based alternatives: plant-based burgers, mock meats, and plant-based chicken nuggets. Plant-based condiments and egg substitutes are less attractive to respondents.

---

### Most popular plant-based alternative types in Hong Kong, by age group (Nov. 2021)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alternative Type</th>
<th>16-24 years</th>
<th>25-34 years</th>
<th>35-44 years</th>
<th>45-54 years</th>
<th>55 years and older</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plant-based milk</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant-based meat</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dairy products substitutes</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egg substitutes</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant-based condiments</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Plant-based alternatives (Source: Statista)
As you see below, people are heavily influenced by the trendiness of eating plant foods, whereas middle-aged and older people take personal health into consideration. Animal welfare and the environmental impact of livestock farming are also important factors.

Organic beverage sales are expected to increase as consumer awareness of food safety grows. While this growth is unlikely to be observed in sports drinks or carbonates, it is likely to be seen in categories like juices and coffee, which are frequently consumed and are of particular interest to younger consumers, who are increasingly focused on finding healthier alternatives for consumption.

Belgian companies that produce top quality and exclusive products have a good chance of entering the health food market, which is always looking for new products and flavours. However, it is also highly competitive, so a local presence in the market is very important to gain direct access to partners and consumers.

5.2.2 Worldwide cuisine

Hong Kong has long been renowned as one of the world’s culinary capitals. Eating out is prevalent in Hong Kong and is not limited to special occasions. Professionals work long hours and would rather eat out due to the convenience, variety, and competitive pricing of dining options.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic makes it less convenient and common for Hong Kong residents to travel abroad, the industry is trying to offer a more international and colourful range of cuisines.

This can be an opportunity for Belgian-style cuisines and bars.
5.2.3 Sustainability

Sustainability has become more important in Hong Kong in the last couple of years since people are becoming more cautious about waste and the importance of sustainable initiatives and eco-conscious packaging. The sector will aim for less plastic packaging and wastage. Circular City, for example, aims for cities “to go zero waste.”

www.circularcity.asia/

There is also a strong drive for urban farming, better recycling initiatives, and renewable energies. The social enterprise Rooftop Republic plays into this trend by offering urban farming solutions.

rooftoprepublic.com/

People in Hong Kong are more open to learning about sustainable initiatives. To better inform and raise awareness about eco-consciousness, several retailers are taking this opportunity to influence change.

Green Common

Green Common (www.greencommon.com/) is founded by the Green Monday Group (https://greenmonday.org/en/), a pioneer in Asia for its large-scale plant-based movement by advocating a flexitarian lifestyle. Green Common is a one-stop plant-based platform combining retail, distribution, and dining service in over 20 markets, empowering communities in Asia and beyond with sustainable, innovative, and wholesome food choices. One of its major breakthroughs is that it can offer plant-based meat and fish alternatives at the same prices as the animal-based ones.

Green Common recently also opened stores in Shanghai and Singapore, and plans to expand in the rest of Asia. Its stores offer a wide range of vegan products from abroad, which makes it potentially interesting for Belgian exporters of high-quality vegan convenience food to enter the market through Green Common.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Stores</th>
<th>Positioning</th>
<th>Target Customer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Medium - Premium</td>
<td>Mainly Local</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GreenPrice

GreenPrice is a social enterprise that specialises in retailing surplus and short-dated stock, all in the name of sustainability. Started in a university social innovation competition, the idea soon became a standalone store in December of 2016 in Kowloon Peninsula.

www.greenprice.com/

You can find everything from snacks and beverages to skincare and makeup products sold at a hugely discounted price. The catch is that some of them have a considerably shorter sell-by or best-before date than products you would find in a supermarket or drugstore. The shelved products always change as they do not keep replenishment in stock.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Stores</th>
<th>Positioning</th>
<th>Target Customer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Mass</td>
<td>Mainly Local</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.2.4 Take-out and Delivery services

Food delivery has exploded in popularity in Hong Kong in recent years. Smartphone use, along with user-friendly apps and a desire for convenience, has resulted in tremendous growth. The prevalence of delivery platforms has only increased as a result of the pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic is expected to have a long-term impact on the city’s food and beverage delivery market.

The main players in this market are Foodpanda and Deliveroo, which together control 97% of the city’s food delivery services.

Foodpanda
Foodpanda, owned by Delivery Hero, is an online food and shopping delivery platform. Foodpanda is Delivery Hero’s primary brand in Asia, having its headquarters in Singapore. Outside of China, it is the largest food and grocery delivery platform in Asia, with operations in 12 Asian markets.

Since its launch in 2014, the on-demand delivery service has expanded to include nearly 7,000 partner restaurants and 1,000 pandamart partners across Hong Kong Island, Kowloon, and the New Territories.

www.foodpanda.hk/

 Deliveroo
Deliveroo is a British online food delivery service launched in 2013 in London. It has approximately 200 sites in the UK, the Netherlands, France, Belgium, Ireland, Italy, Australia, Singapore, Hong Kong, the United Arab Emirates, and Kuwait. Deliveroo Editions, a subsidiary of Deliveroo, focuses on expanding a network of “ghost kitchens”: kitchens located off-site from restaurants that prepare delivery-only meals.

deliveroo.hk/en/

Delivery platforms may charge fees according to their conditions. If restaurants are “exclusive” to the platform and do not sign on with another delivery provider, Foodpanda and Deliveroo charge businesses roughly 20% to 25% commission for every order. If a business is “non-exclusive,” meaning it works with more than one delivery platform, it has to pay up to 30% to 35% extra.

Pick-up services are also available on Foodpanda and Deliveroo, allowing clients to order meals using the apps and pick them up themselves. Restaurants get compensated for these orders as well, with commissions ranging from 3% to 8%.

Although Foodpanda and Deliveroo are the main players on the market, there are many more companies sensing opportunities in food delivery services. The health food industry is no exception, with the growing trend of health consciousness, sustainability, and delivery services, there has never been a greater possibility of attracting new consumers.

Eatology
Eatology is a premium nutritional food delivery service in Hong Kong founded by Guillaume Kaminer and Christopher Daures. Eatology offers a meal plan to assist consumers in making healthy food choices, the recipes take inspiration from a wide range of global cuisines. The
meals are designed by registered dieticians and nutritionists and customised to suit individual needs.

In 2021, Eatology moved to a larger food factory delivering to more than 30,000 consumers in Hong Kong at present. During the past two years when the restaurant business was been hit hard by COVID-19, Eatology has gained a growing customer base instead. Since 2019, Eatology has doubled its business volume as well as its number of new clients. They are aiming to develop businesses in other Asian cities such as Singapore and Shanghai.

The orders are processed within a day and can be delivered within two days of ordering, with delivery starting from 7 a.m. daily. Prices vary depending on the plan chosen and length but start from around HK$323 per day.

www.eatologyasia.com/

Nosh
Founded in 2015 by Maximilian von Poelnitz, Nosh offers a selection of health-oriented and convenient foods. Nosh’s team of chefs carefully selects ingredients to prepare healthy and tasty meals. The brand also has a strong focus on sustainably, using biodegradable packaging for all of its products.

The COVID-19 pandemic has helped Nosh grow more rapidly than expected. Nosh expanded to Singapore in 2019 under the name Spoonful.

The orders are processed on Saturday before 9 am for daily delivery between 7 am and 9 am the following week. For a Tuesday start, orders must be placed before Monday 9 am. Prices start from around HK$136 a day, depending on which plan, fitness goal, and amount of days chosen.

www.nosh.hk/

Nutrition Kitchen
Founded by a team of certified personal trainers, all Nutrition Kitchen meals are tailored for fitness goals with high-protein, low-carb, and reduced-calorie options. The presentation is simple and efficient, and there is a clear breakdown of the ingredients, calories, and macronutrient contents of each meal.

Like its counterparts, Nutrition Kitchen saw tremendous growth during the COVID-19 pandemic, as people are more aware than ever that a nutritious, well-balanced diet is the cornerstone of a strong immune system, which can help people fight COVID-19. Nutrition Kitchen expanded to Singapore in 2019 and launched in the UK in 2021. There are plans to expand to Australia and the US in 2022.

The orders are processed before 12 pm on Friday for daily deliveries between 6 am and 10 am the following week. Prices start from around $75 a day, depending on which plan, portion size, and amount of days chosen.

https://nutritionkitchenhk.com/
6. MARKET ENTRY STRATEGY

6.1 MARKET ENTRY

6.1.1 Representative office

Setting up a rep office in Hong Kong is probably the most effective way to sell your products in Hong Kong, as you can build trade relationships and implement marketing programs. Flanders Investment & Trade can help eligible Flemish companies with subsidies for the setting up of a local rep office.

Apart from this entry strategy, there are three different ways for new-to-market exporters to enter the Hong Kong market.

6.1.2 Through agents

Exporters may consider hiring a local agent for representation and distribution. Most of the food importers also work with Macau and on the mainland markets. Hong Kong agents very often request exclusive sales rights. This is common and acceptable due to Hong Kong’s small geographical size.

6.1.3 Selling directly to supermarkets

Supermarkets usually require exclusive rights in selling the products in Hong Kong through their own outlets only. In this case, expensive slotting fees may be waived. For non-branded and large turnover products, supermarkets tend to buy directly from overseas exporters for cost savings.

6.1.4 Through consolidators

Major supermarkets in Hong Kong often work with European consolidators for bringing smaller-volume or new products to Hong Kong. Some companies serve European exporters and Hong Kong importers, so both sides can benefit from expanded options and cost-effective shipping.

Convenience stores like 7-Eleven and Circle K generally buy goods from local importers and agents. Therefore, Belgian F&B exporters have to go through local importers to get into such stores.
6.2 MARKET STRUCTURE

Figure 1. Market Structure

6.3 HONG KONG – ADVANTAGES AND CHALLENGES

6.3.1 Advantages

▪ Hong Kong is one of the top markets in the world for food and beverage products.
▪ Hong Kong’s production of local food and beverages is very limited.
▪ Hong Kong is a major trading hub for re-exporting products to China and other parts of Asia.
▪ Belgian food and beverage products enjoy an excellent reputation among Hong Kong consumers, as they view European products as being of high quality and safe.
▪ Hong Kong is a quality and trend-driven market, so the price is not always the main driver for food and beverage consumption.

6.3.2 Challenges

▪ Transportation time and costs of Belgian products can make them less competitive than products available from regional suppliers such as China, Australia, and New Zealand.
▪ The Hong Kong food and beverage market is highly competitive.
▪ Because of COVID-19, marketing food and beverage products has gotten more difficult with the advent of people staying at home. There are fewer possibilities to showcase products by means of tastings and sampling.
7. TARIFFS, REGULATIONS AND CUSTOMS

7.1 TARIFFS

Hong Kong follows a free-trade policy and hence maintains no barriers on trade. There is no customs tariff on goods imported into or exported from Hong Kong. The Hong Kong Government levies excise duties on four commodities: hard alcohol (distilled spirits), tobacco, hydrocarbon oil, and methyl alcohol.

The current list of dutiable goods and corresponding rates and other detailed information is available at: www.customs.gov.hk/trade_faciliation.

7.2 REGULATIONS

Import and export licensing in Hong Kong are kept to a minimum. Most products do not need licences to enter or leave Hong Kong. Where licenses or notifications are required, they are only intended to fulfill obligations under various international undertakings or to apply for public health, safety, or security reasons. These food items are the high-risk food items upon which additional legal criteria are imposed: thus, they include meats of all sorts, dairy products, eggs, and marine products. Meat importers, for example, need to apply for import licenses for bringing meat and poultry products to Hong Kong. There are also guidelines related to food recalls as well as to pesticide residues in food that is to be sold or consumed in Hong Kong.

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (FEHD) is responsible for implementing policies of food safety control. It also enforces food legislations and takes food samples for bacteriological and chemical analyses when necessary. www.fehd.gov.hk

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS), under the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, is the food safety authority created by the Hong Kong Government. Its mission is to ensure food sold is safe and fit for consumption. More detailed information on regulations is available at: www.cfs.gov.hk or directly to the page of import guidelines at: www.cfs.gov.hk/import.

7.3 LABELLING REQUIREMENTS

All food for sale in Hong Kong, whether imported or manufactured locally, should comply with the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Hong Kong Cap. 132) and the Food and Drugs (Composition and Labelling) Regulations (Hong Kong Cap 132W) and be marked and labeled appropriately.

7.3.1 Name of the Food

The food name shall not be false, misleading or deceptive. It should also serve to make the nature and type of food known to the purchaser.
7.3.2 List of Ingredients

Preceded by an appropriate heading consisting of the words "ingredients", "composition", "contents" or words of similar meaning, the ingredients shall be listed in descending order of weight or volume determined as at the time of their use when the food was packaged.

Declare the presence of any of the eight substances, namely cereals containing gluten; crustacea and crustacean products; eggs and egg products; fish and fish products; peanuts, soybeans and their products; milk and milk products (lactose included); tree nuts and nut products; and sulphite in concentrations of 10 parts per million or more, which are known to cause allergy.

If an additive constitutes one of the ingredients of a food, it should be listed by both the functional class and the specific name or the identification number under the International Numbering System for Food Additives adopted by the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

7.3.3 Indication of "use by" or "best before" Date

Use either the words "use by 此日期或之前食用" or "best before 此日期前最佳", as the case may be, followed by the date up to which specific properties of the food can be retained, to indicate the shelf life of the food.

7.3.4 Statement of Special Conditions for Storage or Instructions for Use

If special conditions are required for storage to retain the quality or special instructions are needed for the use of prepackaged food, a statement should be legibly marked on the label.

7.3.5 Name and Address of Manufacturer or Packer

The prepackaged food should be legibly labelled with the full name and full address of the manufacturer or packer, or otherwise in accordance with the requirements as stipulated in the Regulations.

7.3.6 Count, Weight or Volume of Food

The food label should include the numerical count or net weight or net volume of the prepackaged food.

7.3.7 Nutrition table (Energy and Seven Specified Nutrients)

Food labelling defines the need for prepackaged food to provide nutrition labels with standardised format and content. This requires information on energy and seven specified nutrients, or so called “1+7” to be listed on food labels. The “1+7” on the nutrition label refers to energy values and the amount of seven specified nutrients, namely: protein, carbohydrate, fat, saturated fat, trans fat, sodium, and sugars.

Products selling less than 30,000 units a year can apply for a “small volume exemption” provided that the products do not carry any nutritional claims.
Food and beverage products must comply with local composition and labelling regulations as stated on the following websites:

Labelling Guidelines on Food Allergens, Food Additives, and Date Format:  
www.cfs.gov.hk/labelling_guidelines

Technical Guidance Notes on Nutrition Labelling and Nutrition Claims:  
www.cfs.gov.hk/technical_guidance

Or:

On the website of the Department of Justice, the complete labelling law in food regulations, Cap 132W, can be found:  
www.elegislation.gov.hk/cap132W

7.4 FOOD ADDITIVE REQUIREMENTS

For manufacturers, there are three aspects to look into regarding ingredients:

1. Colouring Matters in food regulations, Cap 132H:  
www.elegislation.gov.hk/132H
2. Sweeteners in food regulations, Cap 132U:  
www.elegislation.gov.hk/cap132U
3. Preservatives in food regulations, Cap 132BD:  
www.elegislation.gov.hk/cap132BD

Positive (permitted) lists of colouring matters, sweeteners, and preservatives can be found in the links.

As a conclusion, reference can be taken from the following regulations:

- Food and Drugs (Composition and Labelling) Regulations (Cap. 132W)
- Colouring Matter in Food Regulations (Cap 132H)
- Sweeteners in Food Regulations (Cap. 132U)
- Preservatives in Food Regulation (Cap. 132BD)

If, after checking with the aforesaid regulations, you are still not sure whether a particular food additive can be used in food, you may send an email enquiry with the following information for processing:

- name of the food additive;
- INS No. of the food additive;
- nature of the substance e.g. extract or the whole plant;
- technological function of the food additive in the food;
- nature/type of food in which the food additive is being added;
- amount of the food additive used in the food;
- other useful information or special concern.

Enquiries can be sent directly to:

**Centre for Food Safety**  
Risk Assessments and Communication Division  
43/F, Queensway Government Offices, 66 Queensway
7.5 CUSTOMS

To ensure hygienic standards of food, importers are encouraged to obtain health certificates issued by health authorities of countries of origin to accompany their imports certifying that the food products concerned are fit for human consumption.

There are specific legal requirements or administrative arrangements for the import of the following selected food items due to their perishable or high-risk nature:

- Game, meat, poultry and eggs;
- Milk and milk beverages;
- Frozen confections; and
- Marine products.

Beverages with less than 30% alcohol content, primarily wine and beer, are not subject to excise duty. Beverages containing more than 30% alcohol content are subject to a 100% excise duty unless the product is to be re-exported and not consumed in Hong Kong, in which case there is no excise duty.

Wine and spirit shipments to Hong Kong do not require a health certificate. However, the Hong Kong Center for Food Safety encourages shipments, regardless of food/beverage type, to include health certificates.

For alcoholic beverages that are subject to duty, a license from the Customs and Excise Department is required to import dutiable goods into Hong Kong and to store dutiable goods for which duty has not yet been paid. A permit is also required to remove dutiable goods from bonded warehouses to the market.

Where duty is payable, it must be paid upon delivery of dutiable goods from the importing carrier or bonded warehouse to the market. The Customs and Excise Department assesses the amount of duty payable and issues a removal permit for the duty-paid goods upon payment of duty.
8. MAJOR TRADE FAIRS AND EVENTS IN HONG KONG

8.1 TRADE SHOWS

HOFEX – www.hofex.com
Asia Fruit Logistica – www.asiafruitlogistica.com
Restaurant & Bar x Gourmet Asia (RBHK x GA) – www.rbhk-ga.com
Vinexpo Hong Kong – www.vinexpomission.com/vinexpo-hong-kong
Natural Products Expo Asia – www.naturalandorganicasia.com
Vegetarian Food Asia – www.en.vegfoodasiahk.com

8.2 EVENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates in 2022</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Website</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20/07 – 26/07</td>
<td>World of Snacks</td>
<td><a href="http://www.event.hktdc.com/HKTDC-World-of-Snacks">www.event.hktdc.com/HKTDC-World-of-Snacks</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29/07 – 01/08</td>
<td>Spring Shopping Fest</td>
<td><a href="http://www.event.hktdc.com/HKTDC-Spring-Shopping-Fest">www.event.hktdc.com/HKTDC-Spring-Shopping-Fest</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/08 – 15/08</td>
<td>Food Expo</td>
<td><a href="http://www.event.hktdc.com/HKTDC-Food-Expo">www.event.hktdc.com/HKTDC-Food-Expo</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/08 – 13/08</td>
<td>HK Int’l Tea Fair</td>
<td><a href="http://www.event.hktdc.com/Hong-Kong-International-Tea-Fair">www.event.hktdc.com/Hong-Kong-International-Tea-Fair</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. (TBC)</td>
<td>HK Wine and Dine</td>
<td><a href="http://www.discoverhongkong.com/hong-kong-wine-and-dine-festival">www.discoverhongkong.com/hong-kong-wine-and-dine-festival</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9. GOVERNMENT, BUSINESS AND TRADE RESOURCES IN HONG KONG

Centre for Food Safety – www.cfs.gov.hk
Hong Kong Customs & Excise Department – www.customs.gov.hk
Hong Kong Food and Environmental Hygiene Department – www.fehd.gov.hk

Food & Environmental Hygiene Department Headquarters
44/F Queensway Government Offices, 66 Queensway, Hong Kong
T +852 2381 6096
F +852 2869 0169
www.fehd.gov.hk
enquiries@fehd.gov.hk

Centre for Food Safety, Food and Environment Hygiene Dept
43/F Queensway Government Offices, 66 Queensway, Hong Kong
T +852 2868 0000
F +852 2834 8467
www.cfs.gov.hk
enquiries@fehd.gov.hk

Department of Dutiable Commodities, Hong Kong Customs and Excise Department
Office of Dutiable Commodities Administration
6-9th Floors, Harbour Building, 38 Pier Road, Central, Hong Kong
T +852 2815 7711
F +852 2581 0218
www.customs.gov.hk
customsenquiry@customs.gov.hk

Trade and Industry Department
18/F, Trade Department Tower, 700 Nathan Road, Kowloon, Hong Kong
T +852 2392 2922
F +852 2789 2491
www.tid.gov.hk
enquiry@tid.gov.hk

Intellectual Property Department, Trade Marks Registry
24-25th Floors, Wu Chung House, 213 Queen’s Road East, Wan Chai, Hong Kong
T +852 2803 5860
F +852 2838 6082
www.ipd.gov.hk
enquiry@ipd.gov.hk
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