

**Regulations and requirements for imports of products to the United Kingdom  
(Non-EU Members)**

All the information required and a step by step process for importing to the UK from a non – EU Member can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/starting-to-import>

Imports of products to the United Kingdom by non – EU Members are regulated by the following norms/documents:

	<b>Norm / Document</b>	<b>Description</b>
1.	A guide to Importing and Exporting. Enterprise Europe Network London. June 2010	Even though this is not an official rule, this guide explains the basic requirements for investors looking for importing and exporting from the United Kingdom. From trading with non – EU countries, to the way the British government supports foreign and national trade, this document offers some general guidance in this regard.
2.	Single Administrative Document (SAD) – Form C88.	<p>The main customs form used in international trade is known as the Single Administrative Document (SAD) - also known as form C88 in the UK. Traders and agents can use the SAD to assist with declaring import, export, transit and community status declarations in manual processing situations.</p> <p>The SAD was introduced to control goods arriving from outside the EU and goods being exported outside of the EU. The SAD isn't necessary for trade within the EU single market. The SAD also covers the movement of non-EU goods within the EU.</p> <p>The SAD is harmonised in line with other European versions of the form and is largely restricted to instances when computer systems aren't working and customs resort to manual processing, or as an advice to shipping agents.</p>
3.	Reinforced checks on seafood guides (November 2016)	It describes the specific procedures applied to marine products with reinforced checks according to article 24 of the Regulation 97/78/EC.
4.	Guidance note on the contaminants in food (England) regulations 2013.	It provides informal guidance and a general introduction to The Contaminants in Food (England) Regulations. The Regulations, which are made under The Food Safety Act 1990, make provision for the enactment and enforcement of European Commission Regulation 1881/2006 which sets maximum limits for certain contaminants in foodstuffs, and implement a number of allied enforcement Commission Regulations dealing with sampling and analysis procedures.
5.	Regulation (EC) No.	Regulation 178/2002 is the centrepiece of the



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	178/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council. 28 January 2002.	Commission's strategy for a food policy covering the entire food chain, from the "farm to the fork". It provides the general principles and requirements applicable to all food legislation. Some of the key provisions concern issues such as: risk analysis, transparency, responsibility of food operators, traceability and presentation of food. Where new EU proposals are drafted in relation to food policy, this legislation provides the basic principles, definitions and orientation for doing so.
<b>Animal products</b>		
6.	The Trade in Animals and Related Products Regulations 2011.	It describes the requirements to commercialise animal products in England. Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have their own similar regulation.
<b>Non-animal products</b>		
7.	Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on official controls performed to ensure the verification of compliance with feed and food law, animal health and animal welfare rules.	Main legislations in terms of trade and food control of non-animal products.
8.	The Official Feed and Food Controls (England) Regulations 2009.	
9.	Regulation 669/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council. Increased level of official controls on imports of certain feed and food of non-animal origin.	It describes the special requirements to trading and commercialising non-animal products subject to an increased level of official controls. The Annex I of this regulation lists the goods and the countries of origin of each product.
10.	Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between the Cariforum States, of the one part and the European Community and its Member States, of the other part.	Free trade and cooperation agreement between the Cariforum States and the European Union signed in 2008. The Economic Partnership Agreement between the EU and the 15 Caribbean countries provides predictability in the market access into the EU for these countries. The agreement will lead to a general opening of the EU market beyond WTO commitments in the services sectors, including creative and



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		entertainment industries. It ensures duty-free-quota-free market access into the EU for all products.
11.	Foodstuffs with current European Union (EU) restrictions. December 2016.	It establishes some restrictions to some products import to the EU and the UK. In Dominican Republic's case, some kind of pepper is controlled due to the presence of pesticides residues.
12.	Regulation (EC) No 258/97 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 January 1997 concerning novel foods and novel food ingredients.	This Regulation concerns the placing on the market within the Community of novel foods or novel food ingredients.
13.	Chapter 29 of the Trade Descriptions Act 1968.	This is the core instrument for the imports and exports of products to the UK. Some provisions have been amended by EU Parliament rules.
14.	Regulation (EC) No 1333/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2008 on food additives	This Regulation lays down rules on food additives used in foods with a view to ensuring the effective functioning of the internal market whilst ensuring a high level of protection of human health and a high level of consumer protection, including the protection of consumer interests and fair practices in food trade, taking into account, where appropriate, the protection of the environment.
15.	Regulations 852, 853 and 854 of 2004 on food hygiene of the European Parliament and of the Council.	The general hygiene requirements for all food business operators are laid down in Regulation 852/2004. Regulation 853/2004 supplements Regulation 852/2004 in that it lays down specific requirements for food businesses dealing with foods of animal origin. Regulation 854/2004 relates to the organisation of official controls on products of animal origin intended for human consumption.

**UK's Food Standards Agency – Special norms for trading food:**

	<b>Norm</b>	<b>Description</b>
1.	Trade Information Sheet – 1 (Bakery products)	<u>General information</u> Imports of bakery products such as bread, cakes, biscuits, cookies from countries outside the European Union (EU) must meet the same or equivalent food hygiene and compositional standards and procedures as food produced in the UK or other EU Member States. You do not normally need a health certificate to import these



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products.

### Import licences (\*)

You may not need a health or hygiene licence to import food, but many foods from countries outside the EU require licences for trading purposes and may be subject to quotas. For further information please contact the Rural Payments Agency on 03300 416500 or by email at: [Trader@rpa.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Trader@rpa.gsi.gov.uk).

### Food colourings, flavourings and sweeteners (\*)

Some bakery products may contain food colourings, flavourings or sweeteners. Although these may be approved by the food authority in the country of origin, some of them may not be approved in the EU. For information on food flavourings, sweeteners, colourings and preservatives, please contact the Food Standards Agency (FSA)'s Food Additives team on 020 7276 8570 or by email at [foodadditives@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:foodadditives@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk).

### Labelling (\*)

Food and drinks labelling for imports must be:

- Clear and easy to read (in English)
- Enduring
- Easy to understand
- Visible
- Not misleading

Front label must specify:

- Name of the product
- Expiry date (or its location on the product)
- Any necessary warning
- Any food additives
- Allergen information
- Amount of the product (grams, kilograms, millilitres or litres)

At the front, side or back of the product, you must also show:

- List of ingredients (If there are more than two)
- Name and address of the manufacturer, packer or seller.
- The lot number (or use-by date if you wish)
- Any special storage conditions



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		<p>➤ Instructions for use or cooking, if necessary</p> <p><u>Packaging (*)</u></p> <p>Food contact materials and articles, including those used for food packaging, are controlled by a comprehensive EU harmonised legislation that has been fully implemented in the UK. This legislation is particularly thorough in its control of plastic materials and articles intended for food use. For information on the safety of packaging please contact the Food Contact Materials Team on 020 7276 8570 or by email at: <a href="mailto:FoodContactMaterial@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk">FoodContactMaterial@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk</a></p> <p>According to the Regulation 2015 (SI 2015/1640):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ (1) A responsible person must not place any packaging on the EU market unless it complies with the essential requirements.</li> <li>➤ (2) Reused packaging is not considered to be placed on the market for the purposes of this regulation.</li> <li>➤ (3) Packaging complies with the essential requirements             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) if it satisfies national standards which implement the relevant harmonised standards; or</li> <li>(b) where there are no relevant harmonised standards, if it satisfies national standards which have been communicated to the Commission pursuant to Article 9 (3) of the Directive and which are notified by the Commission to the member States as being deemed to comply with the essential requirements.</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ (4) In paragraph (3), “harmonised standard” means the standard the reference number of which is published in the Official Journal of the European Union in accordance with Article 9(2)(a) of the Directive.</li> </ul> <p><i>For more information about the specific packaging requirements, please go to</i>  <a href="http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/1640/pdfs/uksi_20151640_en.pdf">http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/1640/pdfs/uksi_20151640_en.pdf</a></p>
2.	Trade Information Sheet – 2 (Cereal and	<p><u>General information</u></p> <p>Imports of cereals and cereal products from countries outside the European Union (EU) must meet the same or equivalent food hygiene and compositional standards and procedures as food produced in the UK or other EU Member States. This applies to</p>



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	cereal products)	cereals such as oats, barley, bran, rye, wheat, millet, corn, soya, flour and rice as well as products made from them such as pasta, noodles, breakfast cereals and cereal bars. You do not normally need a health certificate to import these products.
3.	Trade Information Sheet – 3 (Confectionary Products)	<p><u>General information.</u></p> <p>Imports of confectionery products from countries outside the European Union (EU) must meet the same or equivalent food hygiene and compositional standards and procedures as food produced in the UK or other EU Member States.</p> <p>Cakes, pastries, sweet pies and chocolate can contain small amounts of products of animal origin, such as eggs, milk, butter or suet. They may be treated as products of animal origin when they are imported if they have high levels of dairy products and have not undergone sufficient heat treatment or if they are not ambient stable (if they require refrigeration).</p> <p><u>Gelatine</u></p> <p>Whilst gelatine is a product of animal origin (POAO), gelatine-based confectionery products are considered by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to be finished confectionery items and therefore are not covered by POAO regulations.</p> <p><u>Chocolates</u></p> <p>Although chocolates may contain milk, cream or butter in the ingredients, they are not normally considered by DEFRA to be products of animal origin and therefore their importation is covered by The Official Feed and Food Controls (England) Regulations 2009 (as amended).</p> <p>However, if the chocolates contain a fresh cream filling, they are considered to be products of animal origin. The import of such products will be covered by the Trade in Animals and Related Products (TARP) (England) Regulations 2011, and similar regulations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. These imports may only enter the UK/EU through approved Border Inspection Posts (BIPs) where they will be checked to ensure that they comply with the relevant animal and public health conditions. For more information please contact the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) in Carlisle on 01228 403 600 (option 3) or by email at</p>



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		<p>imports@apha.gsi.gov.uk . APHA is an Executive Agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)</p> <p><u>Milk based sweets</u></p> <p>Sweets that contain high levels of dairy products (for example Indian sweets) are also considered to be products of animal origin when imported. This means that each batch you import may need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Have a veterinary and/or public health certificate.</li> <li>➤ Come from European Union (EU) approved premises.</li> <li>➤ Enter the EU through a Border Inspection Post (BIP) where veterinary checks must be carried out.</li> <li>➤ Be pre-notified to the BIP by a Common Entry Veterinary Document.</li> <li>➤ Come from a country authorised by the EU to export this type of product to the EU.</li> </ul> <p>For more information please contact the Animal and Plant Health Agency (details as above)</p> <p><u>Non-permitted ingredients, Novel foods and Medicinal ingredients (*)</u></p> <p>Many confectionery items from non-EU countries contain ingredients that are not permitted in the EU. Other ingredients may be new to the EU and these may be considered to be Novel Foods – all foods that do not have a significant history of consumption within the EU prior to May 1997 are subject to the terms and conditions of the Novel Foods Regulation (EC) No 258/97. Other types of confectionery are marketed as an aid to increase energy or as an aid to stop smoking – like nicotine gum – may be considered as medicinal products rather than as food items. The onus is on the importer to ensure that all of the ingredients in their products are acceptable under UK food law.</p> <p>To check that all of the ingredients in your confectionery have a significant history of consumption in the EU and do not require authorisation under the Novel Foods legislation, please contact the Novel Foods Division by email at <a href="mailto:novelfoods@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk">novelfoods@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk</a></p>
4.	Trade Information Sheet – 4	<p><u>General information</u></p> <p>Imports of cooking oils from countries outside the European Union</p>



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	(Cooking oils)	(EU) must meet the same or equivalent food hygiene and compositional standards and procedures as food produced in the UK or other EU Member States. You do not normally need a health certificate to import cooking oils.
5.	Trade Information Sheet – 5 (Drinks)	<p><u>General information</u></p> <p>Imports of drinks which do not contain products of animal origin from countries outside the European Union (EU) must meet the same or equivalent food hygiene and compositional standards and procedures as food produced in the UK or other EU Member States. You do not normally need a health certificate to import such drinks and beverages.</p> <p>There are different, stricter rules covering the import of drinks that are made from animal products from countries outside the EU. They must come from establishments that have been approved to UK or EU standards. Examples of these are drinks made with milk or milk products (like ‘Nesquik’ or smoothies) or with egg products (like advocaat or eggnog).</p> <p>The import of these types of drinks is regulated by the Trade in Animals and Related Products (TARP) (England) Regulations 2011, and similar regulations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Imports may only enter the UK/EU through approved Border Inspection Posts (BIPs) where they will be checked to ensure they comply with the relevant animal and public health conditions. For further information please contact the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) in Carlisle on 01228 403 600 (option 3) or by email at <a href="mailto:imports@apha.gsi.gov.uk">imports@apha.gsi.gov.uk</a>. APHA is an Executive Agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).</p> <p><u>Energy/Sports drinks</u></p> <p>Some energy drinks may contain ingredients which might be considered as medicines. Products like this where claims are made for the treatment or prevention of disease, or which are administered to restore, correct or modify physiological functions, fall within the definition of a medicine.</p> <p>Your local Trading Standards Office should be contacted in the first instance. After reviewing this information, if it becomes evident that the product would not fall under the Food regulations and it is a medicinal product then you should contact the Medicines Borderline Section of the Medicines &amp; Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) on 020 3080 6000 or by email at <a href="mailto:info@mhra.gsi.gov.uk">info@mhra.gsi.gov.uk</a>.</p>





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		<p><u>Import restrictions</u></p> <p>The permitted level of benzoic acid in soft drinks in the EU is 150 mg/l, imported drinks that exceed this level do not comply with EU requirements. Brominated Vegetable Oil (BVO) is not a permitted food additive in the EU. Calcium disodium EDTA (E385) and Erythorbic acid (E315) are not permitted food additives in drinks.</p>
6.	Trade Information Sheet – 6	Food from within the European Union
7.	Trade Information Sheet – 7 (Food/dietary supplements & health foods)	<p><u>General information</u></p> <p>In the United Kingdom most products described as dietary or food supplements are regulated as foods and subject to the general provisions of the Trade Descriptions Act 1968, the Food Safety Act 1990 and the Food Information Regulations of December 2014. The Food Safety Act makes it an offence to sell food that is not safe for consumption, not of the nature, substance or quality demanded by the consumer or that is falsely or misleadingly described or labelled.</p> <p>It is the responsibility of the importer to ensure that their product complies with the necessary legislation. You will find general information about food labelling in the GOV.UK website: <a href="https://www.gov.uk/food-labelling-and-packaging/overview">https://www.gov.uk/food-labelling-and-packaging/overview</a></p> <p>For advice on the labelling of specific products, please contact your local authority’s Trading Standards Department or Environmental Health Department. You can find contact details for these via the following link: <a href="https://www.gov.uk/find-local-trading-standards-office">https://www.gov.uk/find-local-trading-standards-office</a></p> <p>Food/dietary supplements and health foods imported from countries outside the European Union (EU) which do not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Contain products of animal origin (POAO)</li> <li>➤ Make any claims for the treatment or prevention of disease</li> </ul> <p>or which are not administered to restore, correct or modify physiological functions must meet the same or equivalent food hygiene and compositional standards and procedures as food produced in the UK or other EU Member States. These standards and procedures also apply to food supplements containing POAO.</p>
8.	Trade	<u>General information</u>



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	Information Sheet – 8 (Fruits and vegetables)	Imports of fruit and vegetables (whether fresh, dried, tinned, processed or frozen) from countries outside the European Union (EU) must meet the same or equivalent food hygiene and compositional standards and procedures as food produced in the UK or other EU Member States. You do not normally need a health certificate to import fruit and vegetables.
9.	Trade Information Sheet – 9 (Herbs and spices)	<p><u>General information</u></p> <p>Imports of herbs and spices from countries outside the European Union (EU) must meet the same or equivalent food hygiene and compositional standards and procedures as food produced in the UK or other EU Member States. You do not normally need a health certificate to import herbs and spices.</p> <p><u>Standards of spices</u></p> <p>UK law does not define standards for spices. However, advice from the Health Protection Agency (HPA) on ‘end product’ microbiological criteria may be helpful. The HPA is an independent body that protects the health and wellbeing of everyone in England and Wales.</p> <p>More information on these criteria can be found at <a href="http://www.hpa.org.uk">www.hpa.org.uk</a></p>
10.	Trade Information Sheet – 10 (Nuts)	<p><u>General information</u></p> <p>Imports of nuts from countries outside the European Union (EU) must meet the same or equivalent food hygiene and compositional standards and procedures as food produced in the UK or other EU Member States. You do not normally need a health certificate to import nuts, unless they are subject to Emergency Control Procedures – see Import restrictions below.</p>
11.	Trade Information Sheet – 11 [Plant products (not fruit/vegetables) & vegetarian products]	<p><u>General information</u></p> <p>Imports of plant products and vegetarian foods from countries outside the European Union (EU) must meet the same or equivalent food hygiene and compositional standards and procedures as food produced in the UK or other EU Member States. This information sheet covers plant products like chickpeas, kidney beans, tofu, peas, beans, pulses and mycoproteins such as quorn, soy products such as textured vegetable protein (TVP), millet, sunflower seeds and pumpkin seeds.</p>
12.	Trade Information	<u>General information</u>



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	Sheet – 12 (Salt or low salt alternatives)	Imports of salt, or low sodium salt alternatives from countries outside the European Union (EU), must meet the same or equivalent food hygiene and compositional standards and procedures as food produced in the UK or other EU Member States. You do not normally need a health certificate to import salt.
13.	Trade Information Sheet – 13 (Sauces containing products of animal origin)	<p><u>General information</u></p> <p>There are strict rules for importing from non-EU countries sauces which contain products of animal origin and these cover sauces that contain any meat, poultry, fish, eggs and egg products, honey etc. These types of sauces must meet the same or equivalent food hygiene requirements for European Union (EU) compositional standards and procedures as food produced in the UK or other EU Member States.</p> <p>They must also be accompanied by a health certificate issued by the competent authority in the country of origin. Examples of such products include carbonara sauce, cheese sauce, mayonnaise, béchamel sauce, hollandaise sauce, parsley sauce and certain meat gravies or stocks.</p>
14.	Trade Information Sheet – 14 (Sugar and sweeteners)	<p><u>General information</u></p> <p>Imports of sugar and sweeteners from countries outside the European Union (EU) must meet the same or equivalent food hygiene and compositional standards and procedures as food produced in the UK or other EU Member States. You do not normally need a health certificate to import these products.</p> <p><u>Import restriction</u></p> <p>Approved food additives, such as sweeteners, are controlled in the European Union by way of a positive list in the legislation once their safety has been rigorously assessed. The legislation describes the rules for the sale and use of sweeteners, describes the food categories in which they are permitted to be used and the maximum usable dose levels allowed in these categories. Sweeteners that do not appear in the list are not permitted in foods if used primarily for an additive function. <i>More information can be found in the Regulation 1333/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council on food additives.</i></p> <p>From 2nd December 2011 the use of Steviol glycosides are permitted in certain foods at set levels. Steviol glycosides (including stevioside and rebaudioside A) are high intensity sweeteners, 250-300 times sweeter than sucrose. They are isolated and purified from the leaves</p>



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		of the stevia plant ( <i>Stevia rebaudiana</i> Bertoni). Steviol glycosides complying with specific purity criteria will be permitted in specified food types (such as soft drinks, confectionary and table-top sweeteners) subject to specified maximum levels.
<b>15.</b>	Trade Information Sheet – 15 (Table sauces, preserves, pickles and chutney)	<p><u>General information</u></p> <p>Imports of table sauces which do not contain products of animal origin, preserves (but not honey), pickles and chutneys from countries outside the European Union (EU) must meet the same or equivalent food hygiene and compositional standards and procedures as food produced in the UK or other EU Member States. You do not normally need a health certificate to import these products.</p>
<b>16.</b>	Food Safety Act – 1990.	<p>The main responsibilities of all type of food businesses are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ To ensure you do not include anything in food, remove anything from food or treat food in any way which means it would be damaging to the health of people eating it;</li> <li>➤ To ensure that the food you serve or sell is of the nature, substance or quality which consumers would expect;</li> <li>➤ To ensure that the food is labelled, advertised and presented in a way that is not false or misleading.</li> </ul>

*(\*) Applicable to the import and trade of all kind of products in the UK.*

The following observations must be written on the labelling, depending on each case:

- A warning for drinks with an alcohol content above 1.2%.
- A warning if the product contains GM ingredients, unless their presence is accidental and 0.9% or less.
- A warning if the product has been radiated.
- The words «packaged in a protective atmosphere» if the food is packaged using a packaging gas.
- Meat, beef, fish, seafood, honey, olive oil, wine, most fruit and vegetables and poultry imported from outside the EU must show the country of origin. *Please check the Country of Origin Labelling Guidance.*



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**References:**

- Government of the United Kingdom (2017). *Starting to import. Non-EU Countries*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/starting-to-import/importing-from-noneu-countries>
- Food Standard Agency (2017). *Trade Information Sheets 1- 15*. Available at: <https://www.food.gov.uk/>
- Other references cited in the text.