

United Arab Emirates Seafood - Market Share Analysis, Industry Trends & Statistics, Growth Forecasts (2025 - 2030)

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Report description:

The United Arab Emirates Seafood Market size is estimated at 1.38 billion USD in 2025, and is expected to reach 1.46 billion USD by 2030, growing at a CAGR of 1.21% during the forecast period (2025-2030).

The increase in focus on aquaculture favors the market's growth

- The United Arab Emirates imports around 70% of the seafood. Hence, the UAE government is focusing on investing in aquaculture projects due to the increasing demand for seafood, as it is a viable source of improving the region's food security, which is a major concern in the country because the nation relies majorly on imports to meet the seafood demand. In the United Arab Emirates, more than 67% of the seafood is consumed through the on-trade channel, which includes restaurants and food services. Around 40% of seafood consumers dine out at least 2-3 times per week due to various restaurant options driving the growth of the seafood market in the country.
- Fish is the primary type of seafood consumed in the United Arab Emirates. Fish sales were increased by 2.07% by value in 2022 compared to the previous year. In UAE, local seafood includes Hammour (local grouper), Sultan Ibrahim (threadfin bream), Sheri (emperor fish), and Safi (rabbitfish). Additionally, imported fish species, such as salmon, tuna, and sea bass, are popular. Overall, small pelagic fish, such as sardines and mackerel, and large pelagic fish, such as tuna and barracuda, are the most consumed species in the United Arab Emirates.
- Shrimps are anticipated to register a CAGR of 1.98% by value during the forecast period. The UAE's coastal location and access to fresh seafood contribute to the popularity of shrimp. The country has a coastal line of around 1,318 kilometers. Coastal cities like Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Sharjah have bustling seafood markets where consumers can find a wide variety of shrimp options. There is a growing demand for sustainably farmed shrimp among consumers in the UAE, which is anticipated to grow during the

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forecast period.

United Arab Emirates Seafood Market Trends

The rising number of initiatives is anticipated to propel the production of seafood

- Fish production in the United Arab Emirates increased by 0.81% in 2022 compared to 2021. With the growing need to boost local production to meet the rising demand in the country, the government is taking various steps to boost production. Among these are the cultivation of coral reefs and mangroves, the installation of artificial caves, the specification of permitted fishing zones and equipment, the imposition of a seasonal fishing ban on several species during their spawning seasons, and a permanent ban on endangered species, as well as the designation of 16 marine protected areas covering 12% of our marine and coastal territory.
- The government is encouraging the adoption of new fish production technologies, such as the Recirculating Aquaculture System (RAS) and aquaponics. MoCCAIE has launched applications aimed at fishermen to increase local fishing catch, ranging between 78,000 and 79,000 tons per year.
- In 2021, stocks of hamour and other commercially traded fish increased significantly in Abu Dhabi waters as the Sustainable Exploitation Index increased from 8.9% in 2018 to 62.3% in 2021. The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries aimed to increase this through aquaculture investments. For instance, in 2021, the Sheikh Khalifa Marine Research Centre delivered 600,000 fish fingerlings to several aquaculture companies in the United Arab Emirates, including Emirates National Fish Farming Company and Fish Farm's Jebel Ali facility, which produces 3,000 tons of fish annually. It plans to increase the production of salmon to fully meet local demand as part of the country's efforts to develop the sector as a means to support the nation's food security plans.

Dependency on imports is leading to not having a grip on the market prices

- Hot summer and lack of supply resulted in increased fish prices in the United Arab Emirates by 1.81%, from USD 3,914 per ton in 2019 to USD 4,020.5 in 2022. The country consumes 220,000 tons of fish per year, over 75% of which is imported, while aquaculture provides only 2% of the fish consumed locally. The import quantity of fish increased in 2022 due to the increasing consumer demand.
- In 2023, the retail price range for the UAE fish was between USD 4 and USD 20/kg. In 2023, the approximate wholesale price range for the UAE fish was between USD 2.8 and USD 14/kg. Cobia is one of the favorite fish consumed in the country, with retail prices ranging from USD 6 to USD 8 per kg in 2023, around 15-20% lower than the previous year's prices due to an increase in domestic production. This species has good aquaculture potential due to its fast growth rate. A few private enterprises are growing cobia in the United Arab Emirates on an experimental/pilot scale. Household consumers prefer 3-4 kg fish, while hotels, restaurants, and labor camps prefer larger fish, thus boosting the demand.
- Dependency on imports is the major reason for the country not having a hold on its fish prices. In 2021, the country imported 46 thousand tons of frozen fish. The government and the private sector players in the country are working together to develop advanced technical and lucrative business concepts to overcome the major challenges faced by the industry. This includes figuring out how to produce and farm non-endemic fish species in the harsh UAE climate, especially working at a high salinity

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while developing the local market by making the quality and price work.

United Arab Emirates Seafood Industry Overview

The United Arab Emirates Seafood Market is fragmented, with the top five companies occupying 5.44%. The major players in this market are Almunajem Foods, Conagra Brands Inc., Tabuk Fisheries Co., The Deep Seafood Company and The Savola Group (sorted alphabetically).

Additional Benefits:

- The market estimate (ME) sheet in Excel format
- 3 months of analyst support

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