Global Citric Acid Market Assessment, By End-user Industry [Food and Beverages, Pharmaceuticals, Cosmetics and Personal Care, Detergent and Cleaning, Textile, Others], By Region, Opportunities and Forecast, 2018-2032F

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Report description:

Global citric acid market is projected to witness a CAGR of 4.04% during the forecast period 2025-2032, growing from USD 3.81 billion in 2025 to USD 5.23 billion in 2032. Citric acid is a natural organic acid found in fruits such as citrus fruits, owing to which it is mainly used in the food and beverage, pharmaceutical, and cosmetics industries. The global citric acid market is expected to grow due to its natural acidity, along with its antioxidant potential. Citric acid has a key application in the wine-making process in the food and beverage industry, where it is used to regulate acidity as well as flavor. It is also used in confectionery, soft drinks, and baking powder.

Global demand for citric acid is driven by the growing need for processed food, beverages, and the emerging pharmacy industry. In the pharma industry, citric acid finds applications as an effervescent tablet coating agent and in other applications. With more people demanding natural products, the market is moving towards citric acid, which is predominantly a bio-based product. Moreover, the developing countries are importing citric acid to utilize in different industries.

For instance, in 2023, India imported approximately USD 112 million of Citric acid and became the 3rd largest importer of Citric acid in the world. The food and beverage industry is using citric acid as a preservative and flavor enhancer in soft drinks, packaged foods, and candies, which is driving the import of citric acid in the country. This development highlights that with rising demand for consumable goods in developing countries will boost the citric acid market growth in the forecast period.

Enhancing Citric Acid Production with Advanced Technology and Sustainable Research Innovations

Technological innovations in the production of citric acid have been prompted by demands for greater efficiency, sustainability, and cost savings. Key drivers among them are breakthroughs in novel fermentation methods, genetic modification, and process optimization. Developments in microbial strain selection, especially that of Aspergillus niger, have made possible greater production at lower costs. Technologies of automation and data science, such as machine learning and AI, are utilized for monitoring and real-time optimization of the fermentation process. The move towards cleaner production techniques, such as the

use of renewable raw materials and waste minimization, is also complementary to global efforts at sustainability.
For instance, in November 2024, a collaboration was announced between the Technical University of Vienna and Jungbunzlauer Suisse AG for research on the optimization of citric acid production by refining fungal strains at the newly opened Christian Doppler laboratory. In this scenario, the objective is to upgrade fungal strains to make the biologically complex process of converting sugars to citric acid better. By using the choice and development of naturally occurring strains under controlled conditions, the study will strive for high yield and sustainability. This project not only promotes the efficacy of citric acid production but also makes it widely used in food, beverages, pharmaceuticals, and supplements, demonstrating the capability of advanced research to transform industrial processes.
Citric Acid Market Trends and Opportunities in Sustainable Material Development
Demand for citric acid is growing immensely, with an expanding use in the production of green materials. As industries are moving towards alternatives in green chemistry, citric acid has become a bio-based, multi-functional raw material to create sustainable resins, coatings, and polymers. Being non-toxic, renewable, and biodegradable, it has a high potential to be utilized in green chemistry. Demand for citric acid is also driven by stricter environmental laws and increased focus on cutting down dependence on petrochemical-derived products. Among the driving forces is the advancement of high-performance bio-based resins for coatings and adhesives. Citric acid is a first-rate building block in material development that is not only functional but also environmentally friendly.
For instance, in May 2023, a new ultraviolet-curable hyperbranched polyester-urethane-acrylate resin from the application of citric acid as a bio-based building block was synthesized. The resin was prepared via reaction between isophorone diisocyanate and citric acid-based polyester-polyol and end-capped with 2-hydroxyethylmethacrylate to yield a tetra-functional acrylate precursor. The ester-urethane-acrylate-linked green resin was utilized effectively as a coating material on metal and wood substrates and exhibited improved functionality for green coating applications. These advancements are evidence of the capacity of citric acid to help make a shift towards eco-friendly material solutions.
Dominance of Food and Beverages End-user Segment
Food and beverages are the largest end-user industry segment for citric acid since it is utilized comprehensively as a flavoring component, a preservative, and an additive. Citric acid finds immense use in the form of baked foods, dairy products, soft drinks, and confectioneries as a flavoring component, acidulant, and stabilizer. It is a processor's favorite ingredient as it is a natural component with growing consumer demands for natural as well as clean-label ingredients.
Growing demand for processed food and packaged food, along with growing demand for beverages, especially from the emerging market, also increases the demand for citric acid further. In addition, its use in the beverage industry is one of the primary ingredients for acidity regulation and balancing flavors continues to propel its place in the beverage industry.
According to the India Chamber of Food and Agriculture, the Indian food processing sector occupies a 32% share in the overall food market of India and is also one of India's largest industries. The sector is also a contributing factor toward improving economic development, preventing loss of food, and achieving food security. Expansion within the sector directly helps to favor the market for citric acid because it forms the central backbone of food protection and quality in foods.
Asia-Pacific Dominates Citric Acid Market
Asia-Pacific has an established market for citric acid with food, beverage, and pharmaceutical industries witnessing the growing demand. Citric acid is a natural acidulant found in citrus fruits and is reported to be widely utilized as a stabilizer, flavor enhancer, and preservative. A growing population, growing disposable incomes, and expanding demand for sustainable and natural products are major drivers of growth for the region. Further, the rapidly growing food and drinks sector, especially in nations such as India, China, and Southeast Asia, is generating spectacular opportunities for food and drinks use of citric acid such as in bakery products, confectionery, and soft drinks.
Cosmetics and the nutraceuticals market are also propelling the demand for citric acid due to its high value for antioxidant activity and product stabilization. Meeting this consumers' clean label and plant-based origin trend is by verifying green sourcing and processes during manufacturing. The trend mirrors that of the region's shift toward healthier, sustainable products. Moreover, companies in China are looking to increase the production and export of the citric acid to another countries.
For instance, in the recent years, Chinese producers are continuing to increase production of citric acid in the country and focusing to increase the export of citric acid. In the first quarter of 2024, China had exported more than 300 kilo tons of citric acid.

This development highlights that the country is the top exporter of the product, which makes the region dominate in the global market.

Impact of the United States Tariffs on the Global Citric Acid Market

- The United States has imposed high antidumping duties on citric acid imports from major producers such as China, Belgium, Colombia, and Thailand, with rates for Chinese exporters ranging from very high.
- Tariffs on imported citric acid have increased costs for food, beverage, and pharmaceutical companies, leading to higher operational expenses and squeezing profit margins.
- Supply chain disruptions and compliance hurdles are expected to cause delays and limited availability of citric acid, impacting the production of food and beverage products in the current situation.
- The interplay of tariffs, global demand fluctuations, and supply shortages has made the United States' citric acid market more volatile. Manufacturers and buyers are expected to face ongoing uncertainty regarding pricing and availability, which is prompting more cautious inventory and procurement strategies in the forecast period.

Key Players Landscape and Outlook

Global citric acid market is dominated by large players dominate the market with their massive production capacity and strategic growth initiatives. The market is being driven by increasing demand for citric acid and citrates in food, beverages, detergents, and industrial uses, with the increasing trend towards the consumption of sustainable and biodegradable ingredients. Expansion of the new economy, as well as growing use of bio-based products, also drives market growth. Companies are investing in new fermentation technology as well as green technologies to enhance efficiency during production and align with environmental legislations.

For instance, Jungbunzlauer Suisse AG is expanding the size of its Port Colborne Citrics plant in Canada to fulfill growing global demand for citric acid and citrates. These plant-derived raw materials are extensively utilized in food, drink, household cleaning, and industrial applications following market demand for environmentally friendly, easily degradable products. Jungbunzlauer Suisse AG boasts a sound manufacturing base, vertically integrated supply chain of raw materials, and an adjacent corn wet mill manufacturing plant.

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*Companies mentioned above DO NOT hold any order as per market share and can be changed as per information available during research work.

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