

# Beyond Potential

The Realities and Future of Iran's Date Industry

# DATE



**Title: Beyond Potential:** The Realities and Future of Iran's Date Industry  
**Prepared for:** Trade and Promotion Organization of Iran ([www.tpo.ir](http://www.tpo.ir))  
Iran Expo 2024 Exhibition ([www.iranexpofair.com](http://www.iranexpofair.com))  
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**Date:** March, 2024  
**Edition:** The first



**Executive Summary:** This report sheds light on Iran's dominance in the global date industry. We begin with a concise examination of Iran's food and agriculture sectors. We then delve into the distinctive qualities of Iranian dates and explore the country's remarkable production capacity. Following this, the report analyzes Iran's position in the global date export market and the industry's overall structure. Finally, we showcase prominent Iranian companies that are instrumental to the sector's success. This report equips businesses and investors with valuable insights for navigating the opportunities within Iran's thriving date industry.

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## Introduction

Standing at the crossroads of East and West, Iran boasts a rich history, diverse resources, and a strategic geographical location that holds immense potential for its global trade landscape. This report delves into the heart of this potential, exploring the strengths and capabilities that position Iran as a valuable player in the international market. From its vast reserves of natural resources to its vibrant industrial sector, we unveil the factors that contribute to Iran's competitive edge. We will meticulously analyze specific export sectors with high growth potential, highlighting the opportunities that await both domestic and international actors. This report serves as a valuable resource for businesses, policymakers, and investors seeking to explore the untapped potential of the Iranian market. As we delve deeper, you will gain a comprehensive understanding of the factors shaping the future of trade and export in this dynamic nation.

The food industry in Iran plays a significant role in the country's economy, contributing to both domestic consumption and export markets. The sector encompasses a wide range of products, including dairy, nuts, fruits and vegetables, grains, and processed foods. With a rich agricultural heritage and diverse climate zones, Iran has the potential to produce a wide variety of food products to meet the needs of its population. Despite facing challenges such as water scarcity and international sanctions, the food industry in Iran has shown resilience and growth in recent years. The government has implemented policies to support domestic production and reduce reliance on imports, leading to increased investment in food processing facilities and infrastructure. Additionally, Iran's strategic location between Europe and Asia provides opportunities for trade partnerships and export markets for its food products. By providing a comprehensive overview of Iran's agriculture and food industry, this report aims to offer valuable insights into its current status and future potential.

This report was prepared with the support of the promotion organization of Iran (TPO). TPO stands as a pivotal force in fostering trade between Iran and other nations. Established in 1966, it carries the crucial mission of promoting and developing Iran's non-oil trade through a comprehensive set of initiatives. The TPO role extends far beyond simply being a mediator. It actively engages in various endeavors to cultivate a thriving trade environment. Iran Expo Exhibition is one of the TPO plan to facilitate trading with Iran. Iran Expo is a global platform dedicated to showcasing the achievements and exceptional products of Iran, held in Tehran, serves as a bridge, connecting the world with the rich heritage and dynamic industries of this captivating nation.

# Structure of the Report

## Topics

<b>Report Specifications</b>	<b>Mission Statement</b>
	<b>Purpose of the Report</b>
	<b>Scope of the Report</b>
	<b>Research Methodology</b>
	<b>Limitations</b>
<b>An Overview of Iran</b>	<b>Target Audience</b>
	<b>Iran at a Glance</b>
	<b>GDP</b>
<b>Agriculture and Food Industry in Iran</b>	<b>Exchange Rate</b>
	<b>Trade Volumes</b>
	<b>Iran's Exports</b>
	<b>Production and Trade</b>
<b>Iranian Dates</b>	<b>Global Rank</b>
	<b>Scientific and Technological Opportunities</b>
	<b>Challenges and Risks</b>
	<b>Types of Iranian Dates</b>
	<b>Date Production in Iran</b>
<b>International Regulatory Frameworks</b>	<b>Iran's Date Export</b>
	<b>The Future of Date in the Global Market</b>
<b>Iranian Prominent Companies in Date Industry</b>	<b>SWOT Analysis</b>



## Report Specifications

### Mission of the Report

Empowering Iran's Agriculture and Food industry for Global Excellence is the main mission of this report. This mission is driven by a commitment to:

- Access to critical market insights
- Direct Access to Potential Partners
- Establish Valuable and Strategic Connections
- Minimize trade Risks

### Purpose of the Report

The primary purpose of this report is to serve as a comprehensive resource for foreign businesses and investors interested in exploring export opportunities in Iran's Agriculture and Food industry. It aims to provide a holistic understanding of the sector current status, strengths, opportunities, challenges, and future prospects.

### Scope of the Report

The report encompasses a broad scope, covering various aspects of the Iranian Agriculture and Food industry export potential. It delves into the following key areas:

- Key Export Products
- The most attractive Target Markets
- Trade Promotion and Investment Opportunities
- Industry Challenges

### Research Methodology

This report analyzes the export potential of

Iran's Agriculture and Food industry for international traders. It employs a three-step approach:

#### Macroeconomic Analysis

Secondary Data Collection: Data on Iran's GDP, trade volume, and major trading partners was gathered from reputable sources such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and International Trade Center (ITC). This data was analyzed to draw a big picture of the overall economic landscape, highlighting market size, growth potential, and relevant consumer trends.

#### Industry-Specific Research

Information on Iran's Agriculture and Food industry exports, key product categories, and major competitors was collected from specialized databases like Trade Map, FAOSTAT, and COMTRADE. Based on this data, specific Agriculture and Food industry segments with high export potential were identified for further study.

#### Primary Data Collection & Company Profiling

Company Interviews: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with representatives of prominent Iranian Agriculture and Food industry export companies within the chosen segments. Company Profiles were created for key players, highlighting their strengths, target markets, and export capabilities.

#### Limitations

It is important to acknowledge that this study has limitations. Access to certain primary data, particularly within specific industry segments, might be restricted due to market competitiveness or data availability. Additionally, the dynamic nature of the global economy and trade regulations necessitates continuous updates to maintain the report accuracy.

#### Target Audience

The report is primarily tailored to foreign businessmen and investors seeking opportunities to collaborate or invest in Iran's Agriculture and Food industry. It aims to cater to a diverse range of stakeholders, including:

- Agriculture and Food industry producers and processors
- Agriculture and Food industry technology companies
- Investment firms and financial institutions
- Consulting firms and advisors

# Overview of Iran

## Iran at a Glance

- Area: 1,648,195 square kilometers
- Population: 88,860,005 people
- Capital: Tehran
- Official religion: Islam
- Official language: Farsi (Persian)
- Currency: Rial
- Number of provinces: 31
- Number of industrial parks: 824
- Number of science & technology parks: 54
- Number of technology incubators: 264
- Number of high-tech companies: 9620
- Number of industrial companies: 30400
- Number of universities: 2183
- Number of ports: 12
- 2023 GDP: 368 billion USD
- The export volume in 2023: 81 billion USD
- The import volume in 2023: 59 billion USD

Iran boasts a rich history and a strategic location, fostering a dynamic and diverse economy. This report delves into the nation's flourishing industries, showcasing its vast potential for international collaboration and growth. With a skilled workforce and a strong entrepreneurial spirit, Iran is poised to play a significant role in the global marketplace. Iran's economy is underpinned by a robust mix of industries. This report explores the strengths of each sector, highlighting the unique investment opportunities they offer. Iran possesses a strategic location and well-developed infrastructure, making it a key player in international trade. This report examines the country's trade landscape, showcasing the opportunities for foreign businesses to partner with Iranian companies and reach new markets.

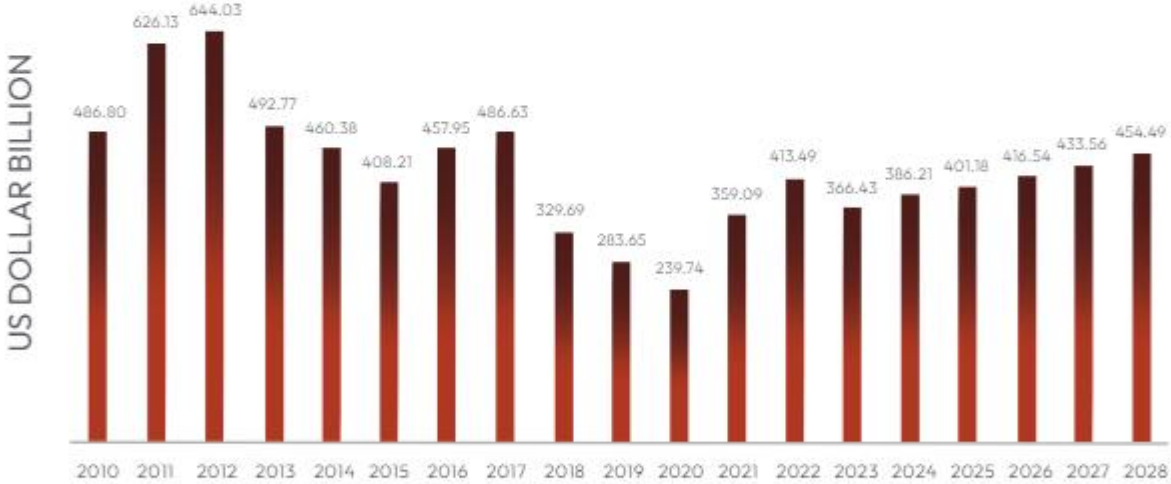
Iran possesses a diverse and dynamic economy exhibiting both strengths and challenges that influence its overall economic performance and the prospects for its Agriculture and Food industry exports. This section will provide a comprehensive overview of Iran's economic indicators, including GDP, exchange rates and trade volumes. By exploring these key areas, this report provides a comprehensive overview of Iran's dynamic economy, emphasizing its potential for future growth and collaboration. It serves as a valuable guide for businesses seeking to navigate the exciting opportunities the Iranian market presents.

# GDP

The Exhibit 1 shows the GDP (current USD) of Iran from 2010 to 2028, with projections for 2023 to 2028. The GDP is a measure of the total value of goods and services produced within a country in a given period. The graph shows that the GDP of Iran has been growing steadily in recent years, with an average annual growth rate of around 2%. In 2022, the GDP of Iran was

estimated to be around 414 billion USD. According to the graph, the forecast for Iran's GDP growth between 2023 and 2028 is for modest growth, in the range of 2% to 3% per year. This means that the Iranian economy is expected to grow slowly but steadily over the next few years.

Exhibit- 1- GDP (USD) of Iran from 2010 to 2028 (Source: World Bank)





## Exchange Rate

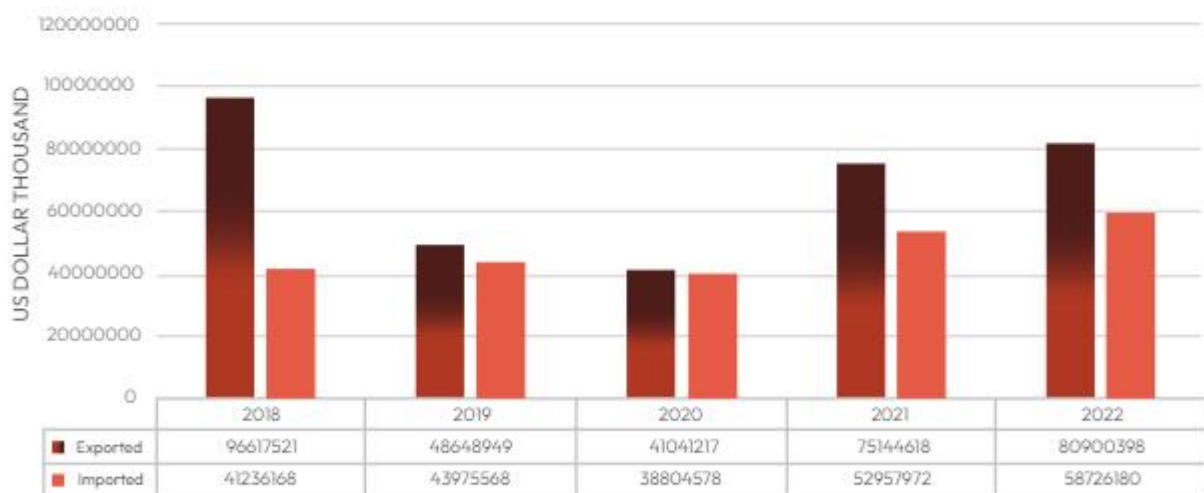
The Iranian Rial has weakened against the US dollar in recent years. This weaker exchange rate, meaning more rials are needed per dollar, can make Iranian exports cheaper on the global market. This could potentially lead to increased demand and production due to lower labor costs (in dollar terms) and a decrease in the unit cost of goods.

## Trade Statistics

Iran's overall import statistics have experienced an approximate growth of 40% during the last four years. Iran's largest imports in 2022 are from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) accounting for 30.7%, followed by China at 26.5%, Turkey at 10.4%, and India at 4.6%.

Iran's overall export statistics are also going through an upward trend, especially in the last two years. Exports from 2020 to 2022 have grown by 100 percent. Iran's largest export in 2022 is to China with 27.7%. The reason for the drop in exports in 2019 is the withdrawal of the United States from the JCPOA signed by Donald Trump, the former president of this country, and the return of sanctions in 2018, which resulted in a significant drop in Iran's oil exports. This trend reached its lowest level in 2020 regarding the impact of the Corona pandemic. After that and under the same conditions, Iran was able to increase its exports.

Exhibit 2- Value of Iran's Export and Import from 2018 to 2022 (Source: TRADE MAP)





## Agriculture and Food Industry in Iran

Iran boasts a rich agricultural heritage and a vibrant food industry, contributing significantly to its economy and cultural identity. This report delves into the current state of this sector, exploring its market dynamics, trade activities, and the unique position Iran holds.

Iran's diverse climate allows for a vast array of agricultural products. From staple crops like wheat, rice, and barley to an abundance of fruits, nuts, and vegetables like pistachios, saffron, dates, and watermelons, Iran ranks among the top five global producers of many of these items. The agricultural sector plays a crucial role in Iran's economy, contributing significantly to both Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and non-oil exports. The government prioritizes self-sufficiency in food production, making it a stable and reliable supplier.

Roughly 28.5% of the total land area of Iran, or 47 million hectares, is dedicated to cultivated agriculture. This allows Iran to be self-sufficient in many staple crops and a major producer of various fruits and nuts. Additionally, forests cover approximately 6.5% of the country, with

the Caspian region boasting the most commercially valuable woodlands. These forests provide valuable timber and contribute to Iran's overall environmental health.

(Source: World Bank)

 Land area(sq. km) - Iran	<b>1,648,195</b>
 Agricultural land(sq. km) - Iran	<b>470,670</b>
 Forest area(sq. km) - Iran	<b>107,656,3</b>

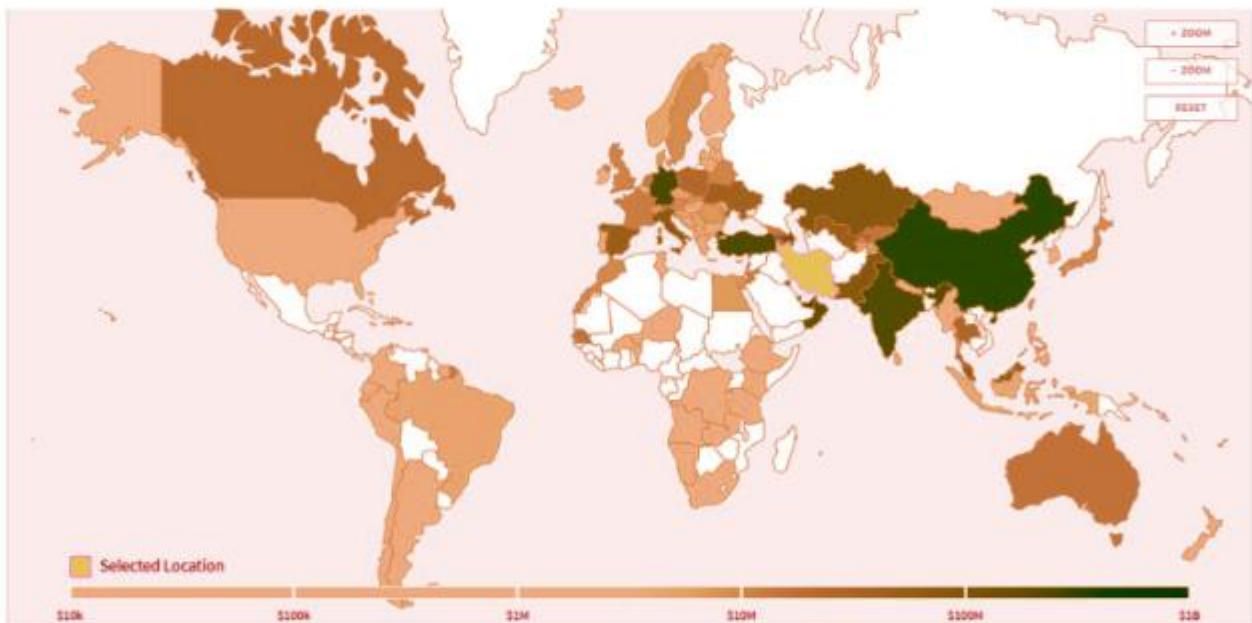
Despite its achievements, Iran's agriculture and food industry possess significant potential for further growth. Modernization efforts, improved water management practices, and collaboration with international partners can unlock even greater productivity and export capacity. Iran recognizes the importance of international trade and actively seeks partnerships with other players. This report explores the opportunities available for foreign companies to invest in Iran's food processing, packaging, and distribution sectors.

## Iran's Agricultural Trade

Iran exported a total of 2.888 billion USD worth of agricultural goods in 2021. Iran's top export partners for agricultural goods in this year were:

China (477 million USD)  
United Arab Emirates (266 million USD)  
Germany (243 million USD)  
Turkey (225 million USD)  
India (223 million USD)

Exhibit 3- Destination of Iran's Exports of Agricultural Goods in 2021  
(Source: Atlas Harvard)



## Agricultural Production and Trade of Iran (Source: Atlas Harvard, FAO)

Selected Indicators		2010	2015	2021
Share of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing Value Added In Total GDP (USD 2015 prices) (PERCENT)		8.1	10.1	11.0
AGRICULTURAL LAND (CROPLAND) BY USE (THOUSAND HA)		17 062.4		17 590.0
Top 3 Trade Partners	Export Value	China (16.53%), United Arab Emirates (9.24%), Germany (8.43%)		
	Import Value	Brazil (22.30%), United Arab Emirates (11.15%), India (10.85%)		
Gross Agriculture Production Value (current thousand USD)		33,073,822	45,087,918	122,702,354

The share of agriculture, forestry, and fishing value added to total GDP increased from 8.1% in 2010 to 11.0% in 2021. This indicates that agriculture is becoming an increasingly important sector of the Iranian economy.

Iran's top 3 trade partners for agricultural exports are China, the United Arab Emirates, and Germany.

Iran's gross agricultural production value increased from 33,073,822 thousand USD in 2010 to 45,087,918 thousand USD in 2015 to

122,702,354 thousand USD in 2021. This indicates that Iran's agricultural production is growing rapidly.

According to the research conducted on the major non-oil export products of Iran, the 5 products including saffron, dates, pistachios, caviar, and dried grapes are among the high-quality products with export potential, which are also very important at the global level.

## Global Rank of Iran in Export of the Agricultural Products

Product	Global Rank of Iran in Export		
	2020	2021	2022
Fresh or Dried Dates	1st	3rd	3st
Saffron	1st	1st	1st
Fresh or dried pistachios	2nd	2nd	2nd
Caviar	12th	14th	14th
Dried Grapes	2nd	3rd	3rd

(Source: Trade Map)

- Iran has a strong position in the global market for dried fruits, particularly dates. In 2022, Iran was the world's third-largest exporter of dates.

- Iran is also a leading exporter of saffron,

holding the top spot in global exports for the past three years.

- Iran's pistachio exports have been consistently ranked among the top two globally for the past three years.



According to the data published by the International Trade Center (ITC) in the field of caviar exports:

- Iran has experienced an upward growth in caviar exports since 2019, which is more than 25% in 2021-2022. In the same year, however, the big exporters of caviar such as Germany, Netherlands, and Spain experienced a downward trend.
- The unit value of Iranian caviar is about 4 times the average global unit value, which indicates the high quality and grade of Iranian caviar in the world.

### Scientific and Technological Potential and Opportunities

- More than 50 publications from two of the country's most authoritative scientific quarterly journals are dedicated to publishing new research in the field of agriculture and the food industry.
- A total of 113 universities are active in the field of the food industry. They offer programs in fields like Food Science and Industry, Food Industry Science and Engineering, and Food Industry Machinery Engineering, equipping graduates with the knowledge and skills to drive innovation and growth in this vital sector.
- During the last three years, 5 Iranian researchers with h-index rank higher than 57 were in the food industry.
- By 2023, Iran had a remarkable 9,620 knowledge-based companies, a 17% increase from the previous year. Among them, around 400 companies specifically focus on biotechnology, agriculture, and the food industry, fostering innovation and propelling the sector forward.

### Challenges and Risks

While Iran's food industry holds immense promise for export growth, it's crucial to acknowledge the challenges and risks that can potentially hinder its progress. Understanding these issues is essential for foreign investors and businesses seeking to enter the Iranian agriculture and food market.

#### Impact of Sanctions

International sanctions have undoubtedly restricted Iran's access to global markets, limiting the presence of Iranian products on the world stage.

#### Climate Change

Like many countries, Iran faces the challenges of climate change, which can affect the production levels of some agricultural products. Mitigating these effects will be crucial for long-term food security and export potential.

#### Raw Material Focus

Currently, a significant portion of Iran's agricultural exports consist of raw or semi-raw materials. While these exports hold value, there's an opportunity to increase the export of higher value-added processed food products.

By acknowledging these challenges and working towards solutions, Iran can further unlock the vast potential of its food industry and become a major player in the global food market.



## Iranian Dates

Iran is known for its rich history and culture, and one aspect of this is its long tradition of date production. Dates have been cultivated in Iran for thousands of years, with the country's warm climate and fertile soil providing ideal conditions for their growth. Iranian dates are prized for their high quality and unique flavor, making them a popular choice both domestically and internationally. Iran's capabilities in the international date market are significant, with the country being

one of the largest producers and exporters of dates in the world. Iranian dates are in high demand due to their superior taste and texture, as well as their versatility in culinary applications. The country's strategic location also allows for easy access to global markets, further enhancing its position as a key player in the international date trade. With a strong reputation for quality and reliability, Iran continues to be a major supplier of dates to countries around the world.

## Types of Iranian Dates

The global market for healthy and organic foods is experiencing explosive growth, driven by a growing awareness of health and wellness. This presents a unique opportunity for Iran, a nation blessed with a rich agricultural heritage and diverse natural resources. By leveraging its fertile lands and unique offerings, Iran can position itself as a major player in the global organic and healthy food market.

One area ripe for expansion is the date industry. Iran boasts an impressive 54 native date varieties listed in its national registry, each offering a distinct flavor profile and nutritional value. This incredible biodiversity allows Iran to cater to a wide range of consumer preferences within the healthy food market.

Among these varieties, five stand out for their exceptional quality and export potential: Mazafati, Kabkab, Estameran, Piarom, and Zahidi dates. Notably, Mazafati and Piarom varieties have already established themselves as international favorites, gracing shelves worldwide. By focusing on these high-demand varieties and scaling up organic production practices, Iran can significantly increase its share of the global organic date market.

Iran's rich date heritage boasts a stunning diversity of varieties, each offering a unique taste and texture. Here, we delve into the distinctive features of these five most prized dates.

**Mazafati:** Renowned for its luxurious texture, the Mazafati date is a true indulgence. This large, dark brown fruit boasts a soft, almost creamy flesh that melts in your mouth. Its sweetness is intense and rich, with a hint of caramel, making it a favorite among those seeking a decadent treat.

**Kabkab:** In contrast to the Mazafati's softness, the Kabkab date offers a delightful textural experience. This medium-sized fruit has a dry, chewy flesh with a satisfying bite. Its flavor profile is complex, with a balance of sweetness and a subtle hint of spice. The Kabkab is a popular choice for those seeking a date that is both flavorful and satisfyingly chewy.

**Estameran:** The Estameran date is a visual delight. This medium-sized fruit boasts a vibrant amber color with a translucent flesh. Its texture is pleasantly soft, with a delicate sweetness that is neither overpowering nor bland. A touch of floral notes adds a unique dimension to its flavor profile, making it a favorite among those who appreciate a more nuanced taste.

**Piarom:** Living up to its name (Piarom translates to "aromatic" in Farsi), this date offers a delightful sensory experience. The Piarom is a medium-sized fruit with a light brown skin and a soft, slightly sticky flesh. Its sweetness is complemented by a distinct and pleasant aroma, reminiscent of honey and vanilla. The Piarom is a popular choice for those seeking a date that is both flavorful and fragrant.

**Zahidi:** The Zahidi date is a champion of versatility. This medium-sized fruit has a golden brown hue and a semi-dry texture that holds its shape well. Its sweetness is pleasant and balanced, with a hint of caramel. The Zahidi's excellent keeping qualities and ability to withstand transportation make it a popular choice for both fresh consumption and dried fruit applications. Its well-rounded flavor profile makes it a crowd-pleaser, appealing to a wide range of palates.

**Mazafati**



**Kabkab**



**Estameran**



**Piarom**



**Zahidi**



These five Iranian date varieties represent just a glimpse into the incredible diversity offered by this nation's date palm cultivation. Each variety possesses its own unique characteristics, ensuring there's a perfect date to suit every taste preference.

The global date market, as per a 2023 report by Fortune Business Insights, is segmented into distinct categories: Medjool, Barhi, Zahidi, Deglet Noor, and Others. Notably, Iran is a prominent contributor to this market, with Zahidi dates being a key export variety. This focus on Zahidi dates aligns strategically with global trends, as this variety is prized for its versatility and consumer appeal.

Zahidi dates are medium-sized with a golden brown hue and a distinct semi-dry texture. They boast a naturally sweet flavor with a subtle caramel undertone, making them a popular choice for both fresh consumption and dried fruit applications.

### Production of Dates in Iran

Iran reigns supreme as a global leader in date production, boasting a rich heritage and diverse varieties cultivated across its vast territory. Fourteen provinces contribute significantly to this impressive output, with Sistan and Baluchestan, Fars, Kerman, and Khuzestan leading the pack.

Their excellent keeping qualities and ability to withstand transportation further enhance their global appeal.

Beyond Zahidi dates, Iran's diverse varietal offerings cater to a wide range of consumer preferences. From the luxurious sweetness of Mazafati dates to the unique texture of Kabkab dates, Iran offers a true bounty for date connoisseurs worldwide. This biodiversity positions Iran as a one-stop shop for international buyers seeking high-quality dates to meet the demands of their markets.

By leveraging its leading position in date production, diverse varietal offerings, and focus on key export varieties like Zahidi dates, Iran is well-positioned to solidify its dominance in the global date market. Continued investment in sustainable farming practices, innovative processing and packaging techniques, and strategic partnerships with international players will further propel Iran's leadership role in this dynamic and ever-growing industry.

These four powerhouses account for a staggering 63.3% of the country's total date production, with individual contributions of 18.1%, 15.2%, 15.1%, and 14.9%, respectively.



This geographic spread highlights the ideal climatic conditions found throughout Iran, making it exceptionally suitable for date palm cultivation. The varied climates across these provinces allow a remarkable range of date varieties to flourish, each with its unique taste, texture, and nutritional profile. This biodiversity positions Iran as a one-stop shop for date connoisseurs worldwide, catering to a diverse range of palates and preferences. Beyond the sheer volume of production, Iran is also renowned for the exceptional quality of its dates. Many of the country's native varieties are prized for their superior taste, rich sweetness,

and long shelf life. Notably, Mazafati and Piarom dates have garnered international acclaim, becoming favorites among global consumers seeking a healthy and delicious treat. By leveraging its leading position in date production and diverse varietal offerings, Iran has the potential to further solidify its dominance in the global market. Continued focus on sustainable farming practices, innovation in processing and packaging, and strategic partnerships with international players can propel Iran even further as a leader in the world of dates.

Exhibit 4- Dominant Varieties in the Important Date Production Provinces of Iran  
(Source: Radfar, 2023)

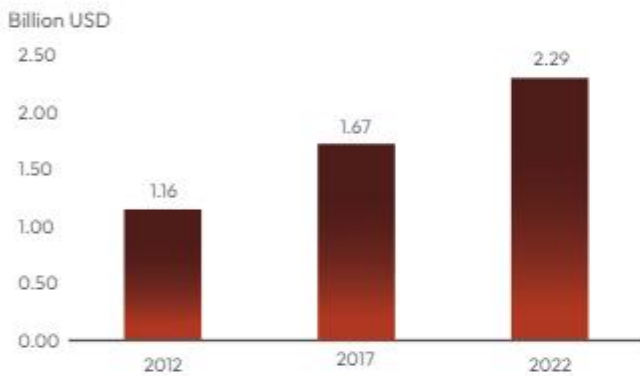


## Export of Iranian Dates

The graph below illustrates the total Iran's export value of dates worldwide over the three years: 2012, 2017, and 2022. As can be seen, the total value of date exports has grown significantly over the years.

### Exhibit 5- The Total Value of Global Date Exports

(Source: : TRADE MAP )



Iran has carved its place as a dominant force in the global date export market, consistently ranking among the top five nations in terms of both export value and weight. Notably, 2022 saw Iran claim the coveted position of the world's largest date exporter by weight, boasting an impressive export volume of 339,000 tons. This achievement underscores Iran's vast production capacity and its significant contribution to satisfying the global demand for dates.

Looking beyond 2022, Iran's date export industry exhibits a promising trajectory. The country has demonstrated a steady quantitative annual growth rate of 6% in date exports between 2018 and 2022. This consistent growth indicates a maturing and efficient export infrastructure capable of handling increasing volumes.

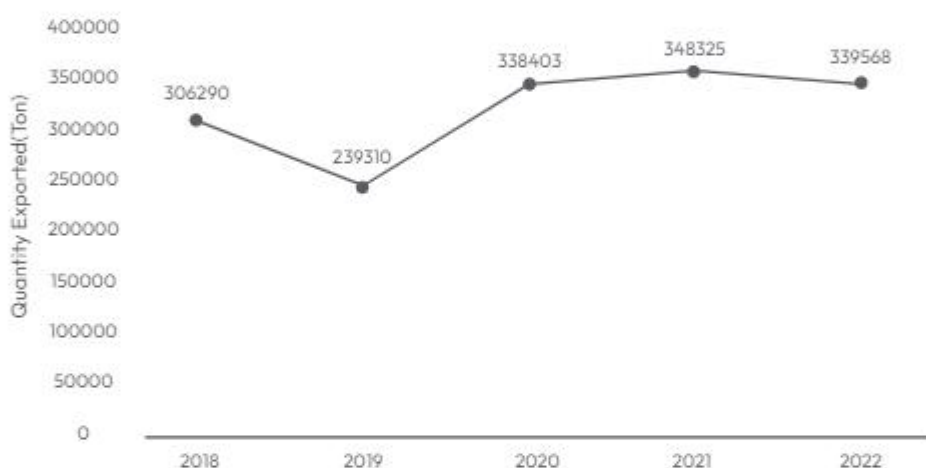


While leading the world in weight, Iran also secured the third position as the world's largest date exporter by value in 2022, with exports valued at a staggering 289 million USD. This achievement highlights the strategic focus on exporting high-quality, premium date varieties that command a higher price in the international market.

These impressive figures solidify Iran's position as a global leader in date exports. Its vast production capacity, consistent growth rate, and focus on high-value exports position it for continued success in this dynamic market.

Exhibit 6- The Quantity Exported from Iran- 2018 to 2022

(Source: TRADE MAP )



Iran reigns supreme as a global leader in both date production and exports. Consistently ranking **second or third in the world**, Iran boasts an annual output exceeding a staggering **1.4 million tons** of dates. This impressive volume fuels a thriving export industry, making Iran a dominant force in the international date market. In 2022, several nations emerged as key players in importing dates from Iran. Notably, India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Turkey, and Kazakhstan played leading roles in this international trade.

Among these import partners, Afghanistan stands out for its remarkable dependence on Iranian dates. With a concentration ratio of 0.95, a staggering 95% of Afghanistan's date imports originate from Iran. This high concentration ratio reflects the deep-rooted trade ties between the two nations and the unique preference Afghan consumers have for Iranian date varieties. Generally, this monopoly market characteristic reflects the level of diversity among countries importing a specific product from a particular country. A higher concentration of suppliers results in a more exclusive market for the importing nation.

While Afghanistan presents a unique case of exclusivity, Iran's reach extends far beyond. It holds the third-largest exporter position when it comes to supplying dates to India, the world's leading importer of these sweet treats. This further underscores Iran's vital role in fulfilling the global demand for high-quality dates.

By leveraging its vast production capacity, strategic partnerships with key import markets, and a focus on high-quality varieties, Iran is well-positioned to maintain its dominance in the global date industry. As consumer demand for healthy and natural food products continues to rise, Iran stands to benefit immensely, solidifying its position as a leading supplier of this delectable and nutritious fruit.

## The Future of Date in the Global Market

### Exhibit 7- Projected Growth of the Global Date Market

(Source: Mordor Intelligence)



The global date market is experiencing a surge in popularity, and this trend is expected to continue for the foreseeable future. According to Mordor Intelligence, the market size reached an estimated USD 15.47 billion in 2024. Furthermore, projections suggest a steady rise, with the market value anticipated to hit USD 18.18 billion by 2029. This translates to a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 3.27% during the forecast period (2024-2029).

This positive outlook is further bolstered by insights from Fortune Business Insights. Their analysis indicates that the Middle East and Africa regions are poised for significant growth in both production volume and market share. This suggests a potential shift in the global date landscape, with these regions playing an increasingly prominent role in the future of the industry.

## Strengths

**Favorable Climate:** Ideal growing conditions naturally support diverse date varieties.

**Production Powerhouse:** Top global producer ensures consistent and reliable date supply.

**Export Leader:** Ranks among top date exporting countries with established infrastructure.

**Growing Exports:** Experience impressive export growth, indicating a maturing export sector.

**Unveiling a World of Flavor:** Iran boasts a remarkable diversity of date varieties, each offering unique taste profiles and textures. This rich varietal portfolio caters to a wider range of consumer preferences, creating the potential for market expansion and product diversification.

**Access to High-Quality Dates:** Consistent supply of premium Iranian dates, renowned for their natural qualities.

**Reliable Production:** Confidence in a steady flow of dates from a leading producer.

**Experienced Partner:** Collaboration with a nation possessing established expertise in date export.

**Growth Potential:** Opportunity to capitalize on the expanding Iranian date export market.

## Weaknesses

**Limited Processing and Value-Added Products:** The focus on exporting raw dates restricts the sector's ability to capture greater market value. Collaboration with international partners can introduce advanced processing technologies to create date-based products like syrups, pastes, and date-infused snacks, maximizing profit margins.

**Modernization of Postharvest Handling:** Traditional methods of postharvest handling can lead to spoilage and reduced shelf life. Partnerships with international expertise in cold chain logistics and storage solutions can enhance product quality and extend shelf life, leading to increased export opportunities.

**Branding and Marketing Challenges:** Despite the high quality of Iranian dates, limited global brand recognition hinders market penetration. Collaboration with international marketing agencies can elevate brand awareness and develop targeted marketing strategies to reach a wider audience.

## Opportunities

**Expanding Markets:** Rising global demand for dates, particularly in the Middle East and Africa, presents an opportunity for Iran to tap into new markets and diversify its export base.

**Value-Added Products:** Processing dates into value-added products like date syrups, spreads, and snacks can increase profit margins and cater to evolving consumer preferences.

**Brand Building:** Building a strong national brand for Iranian dates can elevate their perceived value and appeal to premium markets.

**Technological Advancements:** Utilizing advancements in processing, packaging, and cold chain logistics can increase shelf life, reduce spoilage, and enhance product quality in international markets.

**E-commerce Growth:** Leveraging e-commerce platforms can facilitate direct sales to consumers globally, expanding reach and potentially increasing profit margins.

**Untapped Potential:** While Iran is already a major date producer and exporter, there's still room for substantial growth.

## Threats

**Competition:** Intensifying competition from other date-producing countries like Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Tunisia could put pressure on market share and pricing. Collaboration could involve joint marketing initiatives or product differentiation strategies to maintain a competitive edge.

**Trade Restrictions:** Potential trade restrictions or fluctuations in international trade policies could disrupt export channels and impact market access. Collaboration could involve joint lobbying efforts or exploring alternative export markets to mitigate these risks.

**Climate Change:** The long-term effects of climate change, such as water scarcity or extreme weather events, could pose a threat to date palm cultivation and overall yields. International partnerships could lead to research and development initiatives focused on drought-resistant date varieties and sustainable farming practices.



## International Regulatory Frameworks

The global date industry operates within a framework of international standards and licenses designed to ensure product quality and safety. Understanding these regulations is crucial for successful participation in the date trade.

### Essential Standards:

#### Food Safety

A range of health standards play a critical role in the date industry. These include ISO 9001 (Quality Management), Halal (Islamic dietary law compliance), HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points), GMP (Good Manufacturing Practices), GAP (Good Agricultural Practices), SSOP (Sanitation Standard Operating Procedures), IFS (International Featured Standards), BRCGS (Brand Reputation Compliance Global Standards), ISO 22000 (Food Safety Management Systems) and ISO 17025

(Testing and Calibration Laboratory Accreditation). These standards mandate a series of tests to ensure the physical characteristics, microbiological safety (absence of harmful bacteria), pest residue control, proper use of preservatives and food additives in dates.

### Global Guidelines:

**UNECE Standard DDP-08:** The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) has established the UNECE Standard for Dates (DDP-08). This framework provides clear guidelines concerning quality requirements, including minimum maturity, size, moisture content, freedom from defects (blemishes, insect damage, foreign matter), and proper packaging. Meeting these standards allows date producers and exporters to cater to a wider international market.

### Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS):

**SPS Agreement:** The World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement) establishes the framework for SPS measures. These measures aim to protect human, animal, and plant health from risks associated with the import and export of food products.

**A140 Special Authorization:** Certain SPS requirements necessitate a Special Authorization (A140) for importing dates. This entails prior import authorization and stringent regulations regarding the import, export, transport, and handling of potentially hazardous materials like genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and irradiated foods. A permit from the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee is required for GMOs, while irradiated food necessitates a license from the Department of Atomic Energy.

Understanding and adhering to these standards and licenses is paramount for date industry participants. By ensuring the quality and safety of their products, date producers and exporters can navigate the global market with confidence and contribute to a flourishing international date trade.

The background of the page is a photograph of several large white sacks filled with dates, arranged in a row. The sacks are set against a backdrop of palm trees and a woven basket filled with dates. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent brown filter. The text is positioned on the left side of the page.

## Some Iranian Prominent Companies in Date Industry

Iran's Date industry thrives due to the efforts of a multitude of companies, each contributing its expertise to various segments of the value chain. Here, we highlight a few prominent companies.



# Salam Rouyan Rastak Company



## Brief Overview

Founded in 2015, Salam Rouyan Rastak Co. (Azil Organic) has established itself as a prominent player in the Iranian organic food sector. They hold the distinction of being the most diverse production chain of organic products in the Middle East including Nuts and Dried Fruits, Medicinal Herbs, and Essential Oils.

Their dedication to organic practices is evident through their EU Organic certification, ensuring adherence to stringent European standards. Also, products undergo annual laboratory testing in certified European facilities, guaranteeing consistent quality and compliance with regulations.

Azil Organic caters to both bulk and retail buyers, offering flexible packaging solutions to meet diverse needs. Also, customers can request analyses (pesticide and heavy metal tests), certificates, and product specifications, fostering trust and informed decision-making. Azil Organic offers freeze-drying services based on customer requirements, providing a tailored approach to product development. The company's foresight allows them to secure supply contracts with large corporations and chain stores before harvest. This ensures production aligns with pre-determined standards and quantities, fostering long-term partnerships.



[www.azilorganic.com](http://www.azilorganic.com)



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(+98) 9178952603

## Products/Services

Dates, Pistachios, Raisins, Saffron, Medical herbs, and Resins

## Exhibition Participation

- Nuremberg Germany Biofach Exhibition
- Years 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024
- China CIIE Exhibition (Years 2020-2023)
- China CINHOE Exhibition (Year 2023)
- Organic Natural (Dubai Year 2018))

\*They have bank accounts both in the EU and out of the EU. Customers can pay even in their own local currency in some countries such as India.

## Certificate and Standards

- HALAL certification
- European Union's organic certification
- ISO 22000 certification
- ISO 9001 certification
- HACCP certification
- IFS certification

## Points

Passing through metal, stone & glass detectors, all products will become free from any contamination before every shipment. Besides, doing pasteurization in a completely natural way without any use of Gamma rays or heat.

# Mojtaba Bonab Company



## Brief Overview

Mojtaba Bonab company was founded in 2004, under management of Mr.Haji Mostafa Haddadi Bonab.

Company Features:

- Skilled manpower
- High capacity of production
- High quality
- Production and services according to customer demand
- Competitive price
- On-time delivery

## Points

- All their raisins pass through Metal Detectors & Laser Machines, and they uGMO free and natural vegetable oil.
- The plant is also equipped with a laboratory which allows making the physical and microbiological analyses.
- The plant also has metal detecting equipment.

## Products/Services

Dates, Pistachios

## Exhibition Participation

- France, SIAL Paris (2012, 2010)
- United Arab Emirates, Gulfood Dubai (2012)
- Germany, Anuga Cologne (2011) (Corrected spelling of Cologne)
- Singapore, FHA Singapore (2012)
- Spain, Alimentaria Barcelona (2012, 2010)
- Georgia, Iranian National Exhibition (2011) (Location might be more specific, if known)
- United Arab Emirates, ITCA Dubai (2011)

## Certificate and Standards

- HALAL certification
- ISO 22000 certification
- HACCP certification
- KOSHER certification



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# Novin Taam Bam Trading Company



## Brief Overview

Years of experience in the Bam date palm maintenance industry and the trade of this valuable and nutritious product led to the establishment of Novin Taam Bam Trading Company in 1989. The company was founded with the aim of branding in the Iranian date market and subsequently entering the global date markets. In this regard, some of the company's efforts include increasing the cold storage capacity to 2000 tons, constructing a packaging hall, installing date washing and packaging machines, creating changes and diversity in packaging, and obtaining the necessary permits.

## Points

The company boasts a diverse international clientele, with customers spanning continents from Russia and Kazakhstan in the north to Canada and the United States in the south, and reaching eastward to India and Pakistan, and westward to Turkey, France, and England.

## Products/Services

Types of Dates

## Exhibition Participation

- France, SIAL Paris
- China, SIAL Shanghai

## Certificate and Standards

- ISO 22000 certification
- HACCP certification
- ISO 9001 certification

 [www.novindates.com](http://www.novindates.com)

 [info@novindates.com](mailto:info@novindates.com)

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 (+98) 9130582889

# Babaei Trading Company



## Brief Overview

Founded in 2004, Babaei Trading Co. operates under the guiding principle of "Good Food, Good Life." Their mission is to provide clients with the highest quality goods. Since its inception, Babaei Trading Co. has become a member of the Iran Chamber of Commerce. The company specializes in exporting goods where they hold a competitive advantage in the global market. This includes products like pistachios, saffron, raisins, dates, and more.

## Points

They Established their sister company in Istanbul Turkey as Anita Food Industry and international trading to have better support on our clients and support dried fruits from Turkey Too.

## Products/Services

Date, Pistachio, Raisin, Saffron


## Exhibition Participation

- United Arab Emirates, Gulfood Dubai (2012, 2018)
- Germany, Anuga Exhibition (2011, 2013, 2015)
- France, Sial Paris (2012)
- Russia, Moscow Expo Centre (2013)

## Certificate and Standards

- ISO 9001 certification
- ISO 22000 certification
- HACCP certification

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[info@anita-co.com](mailto:info@anita-co.com)

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# Saman Radman Sajad Group Company



## Brief Overview

Founded in 1996, Saman Radman Sajad Group stands out from other date producers by offering the highest quality product. Their dates are meticulously hand-selected and hygienically packaged according to world-class standards.

## Points

The company exports its products to a wide range of countries, including Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, India, Canada, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Iraq, Lebanon, Denmark, Germany, Russia, and Turkey.

## Products/Services

Types of Dates

## Exhibition Participation

- United Arab Emirates, Gulfood Dubai (2018)

## Certificate and Standards

- ISO 9001 certification
- ISO 22000 certification
- HACCP certification
- ORGANIC (BCS) certification

 [www.sajaddates.com](http://www.sajaddates.com)

 [info@sajaddates.com](mailto:info@sajaddates.com)

 (+98)34 44350021

 (+98) 9131440071

# Middle East Products Export (MEPE) Company



## Brief Overview

Middle East Products Export (MEPE) was founded in 1950. Over the past seven decades, MEPE has become a major dried fruits producer in the region and a pioneer and leader in Iran's dried fruits trading industry. The company has been instrumental in transforming the Iranian dried fruit industry by introducing solutions to modernize and sustain practices previously hindered by a large number of small-scale farms and outdated trading schemes.

## Points

MEPE prioritizes the highest quality standards by utilizing Bühler Sortex machinery equipped with laser sorting technology. This ensures only pistachios and raisins meeting exact specifications are processed. An integrated process control system automatically rejects any off-spec products. To further guarantee quality, MEPE partners with an accredited ISO-17025 third-party laboratory with on-site testing facilities. This ensures compliance with both internal specifications and international testing protocols, including those of the European Union.

## Products/Services

Dates, Pistachio kernels, Pistachio

## Achievements

- Eight-time recipient of the "Best Iranian Dried Fruits Exporter" award
- MEPE has established a presence in over 45 countries across five continents, providing convenient shipping and exceptional service.

## Certificate and Standards

- ISO 9001 certification
- ISO 22000 certification
- HACCP certification
- HALAL certification
- IFS Global Markets Food certificate



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(+98)21 22051262

# Middle East Senate Exporting Company



## Brief Overview

One of the leading Iranian manufacturer and exporter of dried fruits and nuts, Middle East Senate Exporting Co. (MESC) is known for its "Unique" brand. Their motto, "Actions speak louder than words," reflects their commitment to achieving their vision of being "Unique in the Middle East." MESC prioritizes delivering high-quality products, competitive pricing, and exceptional customer service worldwide. This focus on innovation, quality, and personalized service has fueled the company's significant growth over the past 15 years.

## Points

The company uses modern & hygienic technology:

- X-Ray Scanning.
- Laser Sorting
- Metal Detection

## Products/Services

Dates, Pistachio, Raisins

## Exhibition Participation

- France, SIAL Paris (2014)
- Russia, World Food Moscow (2014)

## Certificate and Standards

- ISO 9001 certification
- ISO 22000 certification
- HACCP certification
- HALAL certification
- KOSHER certification

 [www.middleeastsenate.com](http://www.middleeastsenate.com)

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 (+98) 9144176229

# AHT Company



## Brief Overview

Founded in 1963, AHT is a leading Iranian manufacturer of a wide variety of organic and conventional dried fruits, nuts, and freeze-dried produce. Their extensive product line includes dates and date products, sultanas, raisins, dried figs, apricots, saffron, pistachios, and more. AHT prioritizes safety and sustainability, integrating these values into both their products and manufacturing processes. Hand-selected at peak ripeness, each AHT product undergoes rigorous quality checks to ensure only the finest selections reach consumers.

## Points

AHT operates fully automated plants and factories equipped with cutting-edge technology. This includes laser sorters, X-ray scanners, inline and online metal detectors, and automated pitting and hair-removal machinery. Their commitment to quality extends beyond machinery, with a team of well-educated and experienced staff overseeing a comprehensive quality control system that complies with GFSI standards

## Products/Services

Dates, Saffron, Dried Fruits, Freeze-Dried Fruits and Vegetables, Nuts

AHT empowers customers with complete packaging customization. They can personalize their packaging with their desired name, logo, address, or any other relevant information.

## Achievements

- The Best Iranian Dried Fruit Exporter by the "Ministry of Commerce" Trade Promotion Organization of Iran" for eight years in a row.

## Certificate and Standards

- IFS certification
- Halal certification
- Kosher certification
- ISO 9001 certification
- ISO 22000 certification
- SEDEX
- USDA ORGANIC certification
- Food and Drug Administration
- FSSC 22000 certification
- The European Union organic
- STAR-K

 [www.ahtfoods.com](http://www.ahtfoods.com)

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 (+98)21 26217316

 (+98) 9123865564



# Sobhi Trading Company



## Brief Overview

Established in 2002, Sobhi Trading Company has quickly become a prominent player in the Middle East. Their expertise spans the entire date supply chain, from sourcing and processing to distribution and export. Sobhi Trading Company offers a wide range of date products, including dates, date syrup, date paste, date concentrate, raisins, pistachios, and other dried fruits.

## Products/Services

Fridge, Processing, and Packaging of Dates, Dates Syrup and Dates Paste, Raisins  
\*Customizes Packaging Services

## Achievements

- Sobhi Trading Company utilizes a team of experts and advanced machinery to ensure the thorough washing, sorting, disinfection, and packaging of their assorted products.
- This company achieved exporting to over 37 European, Asian and African countries.
- Sobhi Trading Company has been recognized as a Top Industrial Unit in Iran for 17 consecutive years (2002-2023).

 [www.nakhlsabzsobhi.com](http://www.nakhlsabzsobhi.com)

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 (+98) 9143073417

# Zista Group Company



## Brief Overview

Zista Group entered the Food Sector in 2014. Zista Group has secured high-quality supplies of various food items, including caviar, barberry, jujube, capers, dates, and fruit concentrates. By implementing exceptional packaging solutions, Zista Group has enhanced product quality, extending shelf life and facilitating long-distance transport. This has allowed them to develop export markets for Iranian fruit juice concentrates, including those of pomegranate, apricot, barberry, and date.


## Points

Zista Group exports its products to various markets, including those in the Middle East (Iraq, UAE, and Yemen) and Europe (Spain and Turkey).

## Products/Services

Zista Group specializes in supplying a wide range of Iranian fruit concentrates, with a particular focus on these four key items: date concentrate, apricot puree, barberry concentrate, and pomegranate concentrate.

 [www.food-iran.com](http://www.food-iran.com)

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# Karvan Tandis Toos Company



## Brief Overview

Established in 1994 under the "Narmak" brand, Karvan Tandis Toos Company has become a major player in Mashhad's commercial landscape. Its mission is to provide the highest quality nuts and dried fruits to both international and domestic customers, with a dedicated team committed to exceptional service that ensures complete satisfaction.

## Products/Services

Dates, Pistachios, Mixed Nuts, Types of Almonds, seed kernels, Dried Figs, Dried Cherries, Raisins

## Exhibition Participation

- Malaysiaj, Mihas (2013)
- France, Sial (2012)


## Certificate and Standards

- Halal certification
- HACCP certification
- ISO 9001certification
- ISO 22000 certification
- ISO14001 certification
- BS OHSAS 18001 certification

 narmaknuts.com

 Info@narmaknuts.com

 (+98)51 38416632

 (+98) 912 2245423

# Surin Company



## Brief Overview

Surin Export is a consortium of Iranian factories and manufacturers, acting as a one-stop shop for international buyers. Surin prioritizes quality and customer satisfaction. They welcome inspections by reputable companies like SGS to ensure product excellence. Surin offers a comprehensive export experience, handling everything from sourcing and transportation to customs clearance and insurance within Iran. This ensures your products reach their destination safely and efficiently. Specializing in the agricultural, fruit, and food industries, Surin leverages its vast network to provide a wide variety of products, including fruits from their 2,400 hectares of orchards across Iran.


## Products/Services

Dates (Mazafati, Sayer, Pyarom, and Zahedi varieties), Pistachios Saffron, Dried fruits and raisins

## Points

Leveraging state-of-the-art sorting and packaging facilities in Bam, Surin Export meticulously selects and packages the finest Iranian dates for discerning international markets.

 [www.surinexport.com](http://www.surinexport.com)

 (+98)11 33242774

 (+98) 911 3979698

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# Beyond Potential DATE

This report sheds light on Iran's dominance in the global date industry. We begin with a concise examination of Iran's food and agriculture sectors. We then delve into the distinctive qualities of Iranian dates and explore the country's remarkable production capacity. Following this, the report analyzes Iran's position in the global date export market and the industry's overall structure. Finally, we showcase prominent Iranian companies that are instrumental to the sector's success. This report equips businesses and investors with valuable insights for navigating the opportunities within Iran's thriving date industry.