



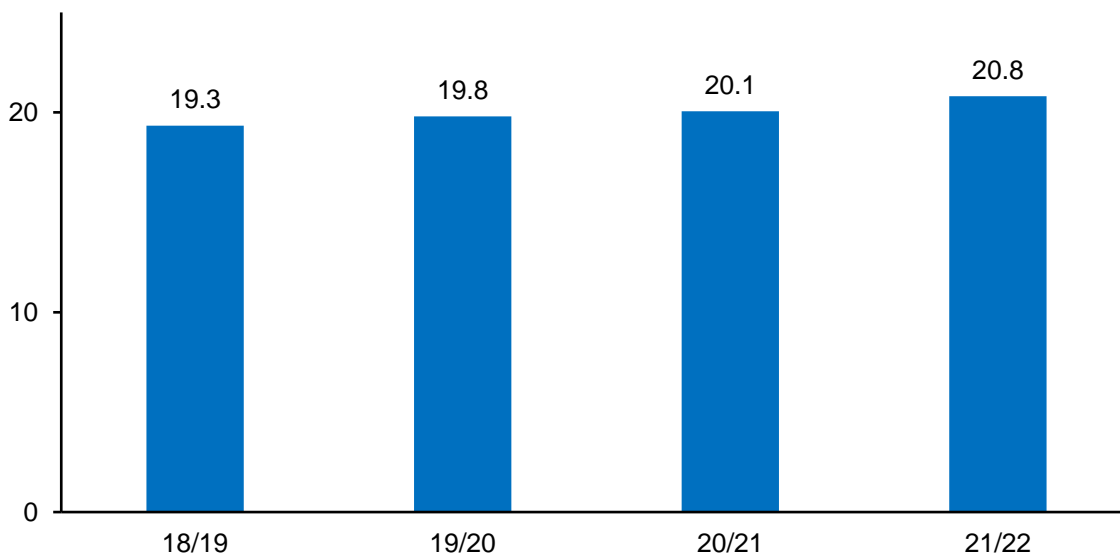
In this Bulletin: Imports of goods

This Bulletin releases new estimates of the value of goods imported to St Helena during the 2021/22 financial year. This publication, and the main data tables, can be downloaded from the St Helena Statistics website in the 'External Trade.xls' file at: <https://www.sainthelena.gov.sh/st-helena/statistics/the-economy>.

Value of goods imported

Chart 1 shows the total value of goods imported to St Helena for the last four years, which increased slightly over this period by just under 8%. Most of this is due to inflation in the prices of goods purchased overseas, which over the four year period was 6.7% and 12.9% in the United Kingdom and South Africa respectively.

Chart 1. Total imports of goods to St Helena, 2018/19 to 2021/22, £ millions (current prices)

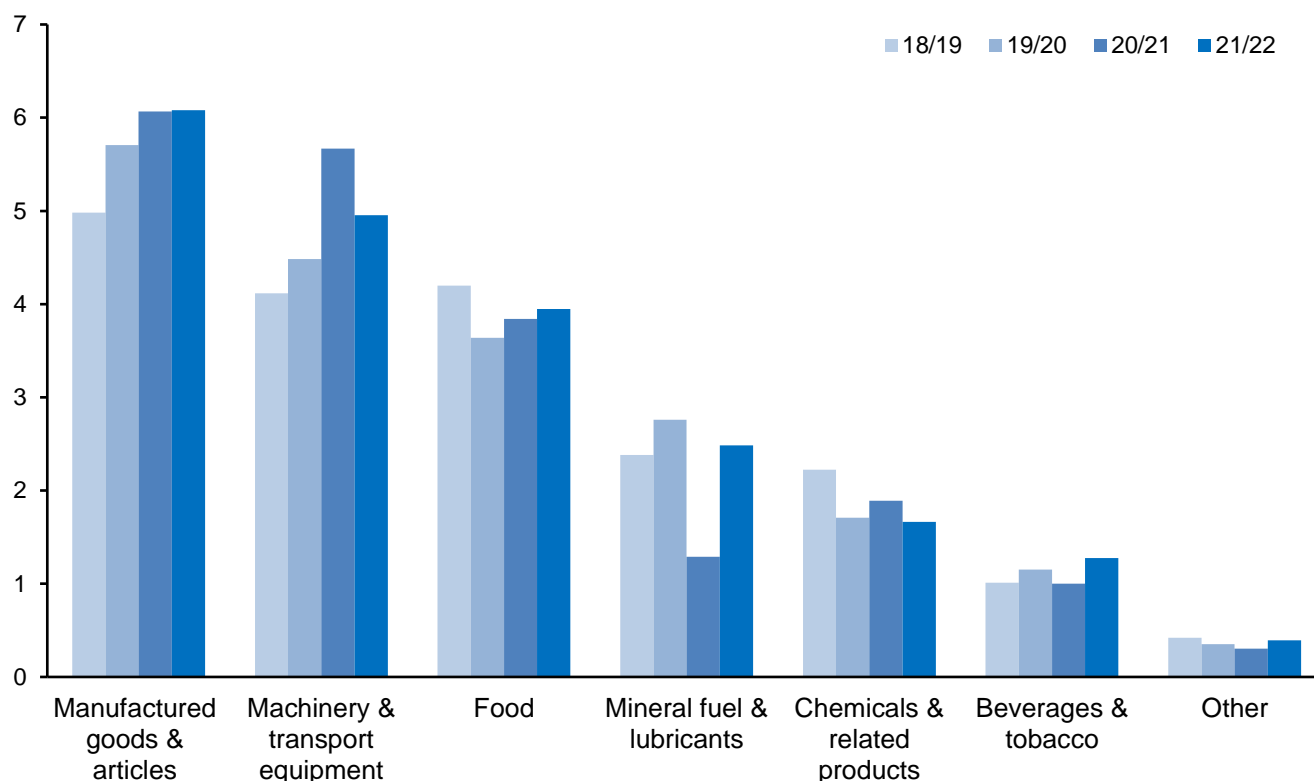


Type of goods imported

Chart 2 shows imports for the last four financial years, classified into broad commodity groups. A large proportion of the value of St Helena's imports relate to manufactured goods and machinery and transport equipment, together accounting for over half of the total for each year. Within these two groups, the category with the highest value of imports was Road Vehicles, which was £1.4m in 2021/22 and £1.5m the year before (2020/21); this category includes passenger cars and trucks, buses, commercial vehicles, and parts and spares.

Imports of machinery, manufactured goods, and vehicles varies from year to year and can be affected by large-scale infrastructure projects. For instance, in 2017/18, some of these imports were related to construction work related to the Airport, and more recently some imports in these categories are related to goods, machinery and equipment for the new undersea telecommunications cable.

Chart 2. Imports of goods to St Helena by broad commodity group, 2018/19 to 2021/22, £ millions (current prices)



Food is the third largest group of imported goods, with a value of £3.9m in 2021/22, and it is relatively stable from year to year. Some commodities are imported infrequently in bulk; the most significant is mineral fuel, which is imported via a fuel tanker arriving roughly once every three months, or four times a year, plus smaller quantities of aviation fuel imported on St Helena's cargo ship, the *MV Helena*. Although consumption of fuel is usually quite steady – it is used to generate electricity, and for air, road and sea transport – the annual total value can vary depending on the timing of the fuel tanker, as well as the price paid. This helps to partly explain the drop in fuel imports in 20/21, but the fall in demand for aviation fuel caused by the COVID-19 pandemic was also a factor: in 2019/20 there were around 100 passenger plane arrivals at St Helena Airport, in 2020/21 there were only 31 (and many of these were smaller aircraft used for medical emergencies), and in 2021/22 there were 62.

Imports of food, beverages and tobacco

Within the broad food grouping, imports of meat products had the highest value in 2021/22 of £953 thousand (Table 1). Cereals and cereal preparations was second (£666 thousand), and vegetables and fruit, and dairy products and eggs, were third and fourth in the table (£540 thousand and £505 thousand respectively).

The value of alcoholic beverages imported in 2021/22 was £713 thousand, an increase on the value in 2020/21. The value of tobacco imports was £174 thousand, which is similar to the value in 2020/21.

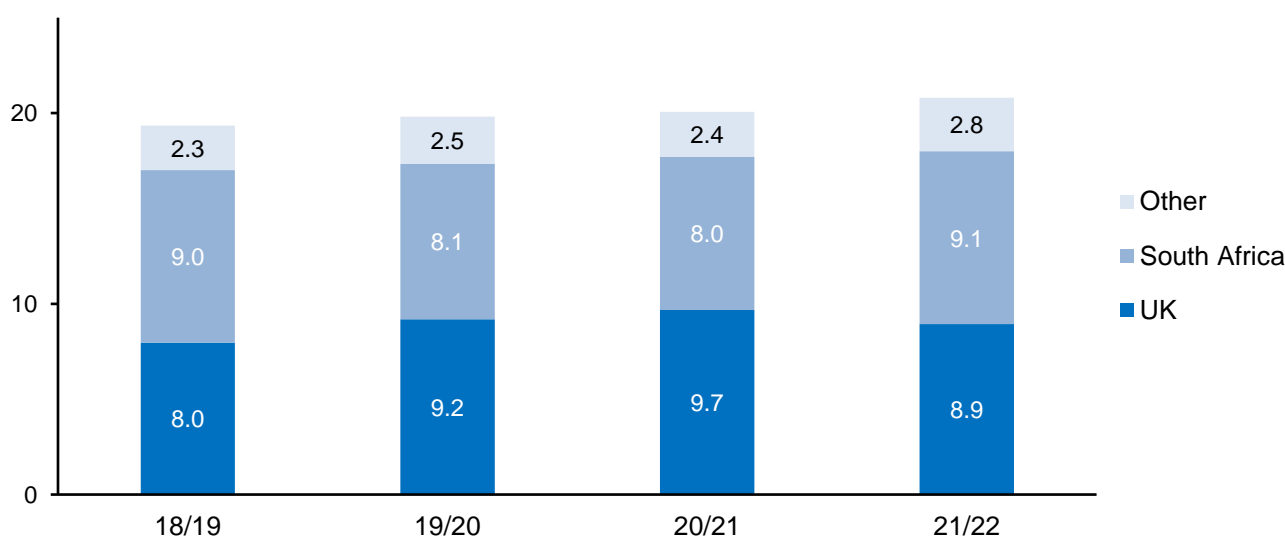
Table 1. Imports of food, beverages and tobacco, 2018/19 to 2021/22, £ thousands (current prices)

	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22
Food				
Meat & meat preparations	925	775	670	953
Cereals & cereal preparations	635	532	670	666
Vegetables & fruit	646	554	530	540
Dairy products & eggs	488	480	429	505
Animal feed	320	343	277	340
Coffee, tea, cocoa, spices	371	271	289	338
Sugars & sugar preparations	169	122	118	131
Fish, crustaceans, molluscs	59	59	49	66
Other food products	586	502	811	408
Beverages & tobacco				
Non-alcoholic beverages	395	386	335	389
Alcoholic beverages	421	580	494	713
Tobacco & tobacco products	196	185	171	174

Country of purchase of imported goods

Most goods imported to St Helena are purchased in the United Kingdom or South Africa, reflecting the route of St Helena's main cargo ship (the *MV Helena*) between Cape Town in South Africa and Jamestown, and the close ties between St Helena and the UK. St Helenians spend roughly the same in the UK and South Africa on imported goods (see Chart 3); imports from other countries include fuel (i.e. petrol and diesel).

Chart 3. Imports of goods to St Helena by recorded country of purchase, 2018/19 to 2021/22, £ millions (current prices)



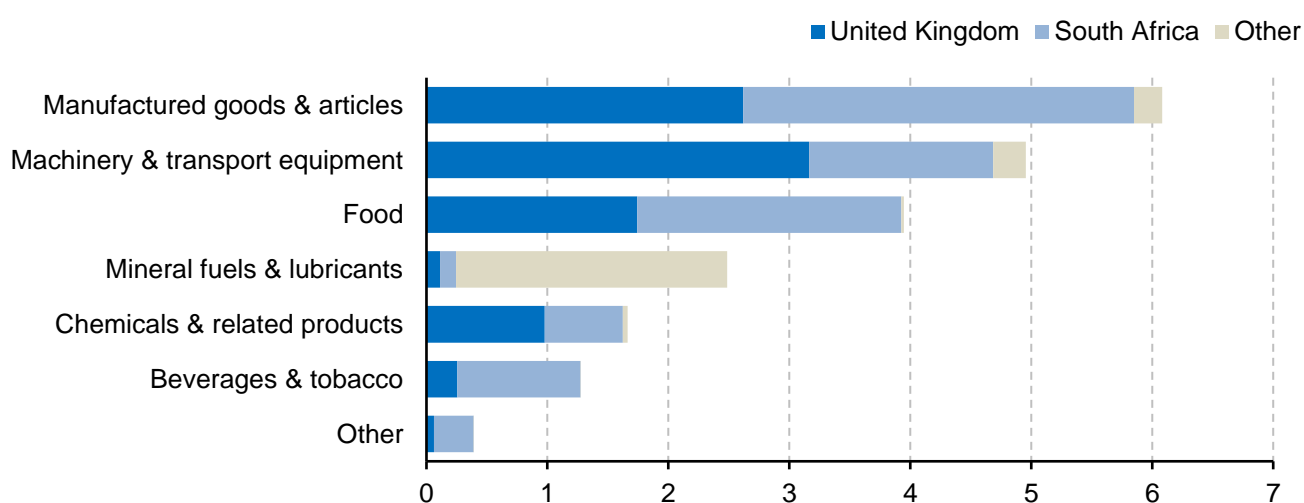
Some of the trends in Chart 3 are caused by price inflation and by the change in the value of the Rand compared to the Pound: goods from South Africa must be bought in Rand, the South African currency, and so the value of goods imported from there may reflect the value of the Rand compared to the St Helena Pound at the time of purchase. When the Rand weakens compared to the Pound, St Helenian importers can buy more goods with the same amount of St Helena Pounds – providing the price of those goods in Rand remains unchanged (in practice, a weakening currency is likely to result in price increases).

In 2021/22 just under half of the value of all food imports was from the United Kingdom, and most of the rest in South Africa (Table 2 and Chart 4). In the same year, more than half of the value of all machinery and transport equipment purchased was paid to United Kingdom suppliers, and most mineral fuel was purchased from suppliers in other countries. Based on value, around 80% of beverages and tobacco products were imported from South Africa.

Table 2. Imports of goods to St Helena by broad commodity group and country of purchase, 2021/22, £ millions (current prices)

	United Kingdom	South Africa	Other	Total
Manufactured goods & articles	2.62	3.23	0.23	6.08
Machinery & transport equipment	3.16	1.52	0.27	4.96
Food	1.74	2.18	0.02	3.95
Mineral fuels & lubricants	0.11	0.13	2.24	2.49
Chemicals & related products	0.98	0.65	0.04	1.66
Beverages & tobacco	0.25	1.02	0.00	1.28
Other	0.06	0.33	0.00	0.39

Chart 4. Imports of goods to St Helena by broad commodity group and country of purchase, 2021/22, £ millions (current prices)



Methodology

The compilation methodology for international trade statistics on St Helena uses the guidelines published by the United Nations Statistics Division. More details on the international concepts and definitions can be found here: <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/trade/imts/methodology.asp>.

Data source

Statistics of imports of goods are derived primarily from the administrative records resulting from the Customs process, particularly the legal requirement for a declaration to be made to the Customs authorities whenever goods are imported or exported. These declarations are stored in a computer system called ASYCUDA, managed by the Customs Office. Although the Statistics Office conducts a number of consistency checks to identify and correct valuation and classification errors, the data quality of statistics on international trade depends on the quality of information entered into the ASYCUDA system by importers and by Customs officials.

Imports and exports

Generally, imports and exports are transactions involving the exchange of goods or services between residents and non-residents of St Helena. For goods, imports and exports are usually recorded whenever a commodity crosses St Helena's boundaries, typically a border entry point, or a 'bonded' warehouse (a place where goods liable to import taxes are stored until those taxes are paid).

Valuation

Values are reported in 'current' prices, that is, the value recorded at the time of the customs transaction, without any adjustment for price inflation (i.e. the changes in prices of commodities over time).

On St Helena, the value recorded by importers for the assessment of import taxes and duties is 'free-on-board' (or FOB), rather than inclusive of 'cost, insurance and freight' (or CIF); import statistics are therefore also based on the FOB valuation of goods. This means that St Helena's import statistics are based on the invoice value paid by the importer in the country of purchase, and they do not include the costs of shipment, or any duties or taxes paid.

Goods are counted as imported when they enter the domestic economy; in this regard, goods imported into bonded warehouses are only counted when they are released from bond. Goods imported after being temporarily exported for repair are also not included. Similarly, machinery imported on a temporary basis, for example to support construction projects, is not included.

Goods purchased with prices in foreign currency (such as the Rand) are valued in Pounds based on the exchange rate used for the Customs transaction, rather than the exchange rate used by the importer when they purchased the goods.

Volumes

The quality of the information collected by the Customs Office on the quantities of commodities imported does not currently permit the calculation of trade statistics on volumes or quantities.

Classification of commodities

Commodities are classified by importers on their customs declarations using an eight digit tariff code, which is based on the international six digit 'Harmonised System' classification maintained by the World Customs Organisation. In this report, and for the presentation of St Helena's trade statistics generally, the Standard International Trade Classification is also used; this was developed for analytical purposes by the United Nations Statistics Division, while the Harmonised System is primarily designed for the administration of Customs systems. There are correspondence tables between these two classification systems maintained by the United Nations, which enables St Helena's trade statistics to be analysed and presented using either classification.

Data frequency

The trade statistics in this Bulletin are presented by financial year, and the Statistics Office currently analyses the ASYCUDA database every year. However, data are computed by quarter, which can allow calculation of trade statistics by calendar year, or by quarter if required. Any analysis of quarterly import statistics should be made with care, however, since they can be affected by the timing of the *MV Helena* in particular.

Imports and exports of services

This Bulletin focuses on the imports of goods but it should be noted that St Helena's trade with other countries also includes imports and exports of services. Imports of services include medical treatment and training programmes abroad, communications services, and services delivered by persons visiting the Island but who do not live on St Helena. St Helena's service exports include spending on St Helena by tourists and short-term visitors; estimates of this non-resident spending on St Helena are available from Statistical Bulletin 5 of 2021 on Arrivals and Departures.

Get the data

For tables of the main aggregates of trade statistics, please visit: <https://www.sainthelena.gov.sh/st-helena/statistics/the-economy> and download the 'External Trade' data file. For any questions or queries about the imports of specific commodities, please contact the staff of the Statistics Office (see below). Other datasets, bulletins and reports are also available on our website: <http://www.sainthelena.gov.sh/statistics>.

Have more questions or comments?

Please get in touch: we are Neil Fantom, Statistical Commissioner, Kelly Clingham and Justine Joshua, Senior Statistical Assistants, and Bertina Benjamin, Statistical Assistant. You can find us in person at the Statistics Office on the **top floor of the Post Office building**, Jamestown, or you can also contact us by telephone on **22138** (if calling from overseas, the international dialling code for St Helena is +290). Our general office e-mail address is: **statistics@sainthelena.gov.sh**, or you can email team members directly: the format is `firstname.lastname@sainthelena.gov.sh`.