

China's Taste for Avocado Boosts Imports

- Imports from Latin America soar; tariff reduces
- Staying healthy and keeping up the trend add to its taste

More conscious about eating healthy and willing to learn from abroad, Chinese consumers are now developing a taste for Latin American avocado.

“China is consuming 15-million-kilogram Mexican avocado in 2017,” Jack Ma, the CEO of Alibaba, disclosed at his meeting with Mexico President.

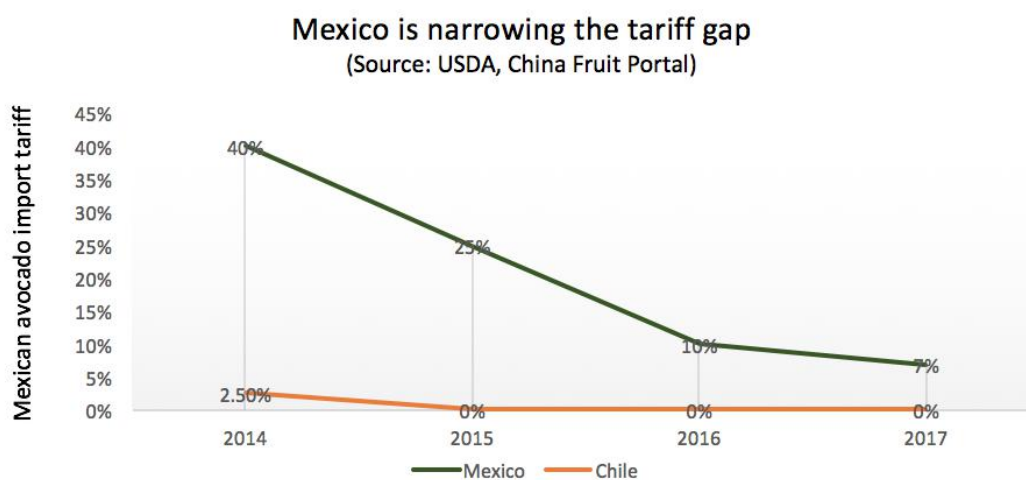


Avocado sells on shelf in Beijing BHG Market Place. *Photographer: Lin Su*

According to Chinese Customs, the gross import of avocado jumped from 31.8 thousand kilograms in 2011 to 4.07 billion kilograms in 2014. Averagely, every Chinese consumes 3 avocados three years ago. Past two years witnessed an even more rapid growth of 375 percent, reported by International Fruit and Vegetable Channel.

Avocado is picky about environment conditions, Liu Kangde said in his report of Avocado production in China. “It has almost no experience in commercial avocado cultivation, which makes this exotic fruit heavily relies on imports from Mexico, Chile and Peru.”

Trade favors was published by Chinese government toward Mexico. The 25 percent tariff in 2015 has been cut in total by 18 percent in two years, helping to narrow the gap between this tax paying country and the free trade one, Chile.



Having tariff-free special discount, Chile reported its avocado export to China grows at the rate of 327 percent. The growth ranks the second place after Switzerland, the world wealthiest country. In 2017, avocado has become the major import resource for this remote country, who is now top supplier of avocado to China, surpassed the fore runner Mexico.

Expensive but still welcomed

Besides long transportation on the sea from Latin America, perishability of this delicate fruit adds to its costs.

Weng Jingsi, a 22-year-old student of Zhejiang University, keeps a regular buying habit of avocado for 2 years. “It is much more expensive than normal fruit. But I really like its taste of making milkshake, so it is worth the price,” she buys two weeks a time, each time for three.

Living in the hometown of Alibaba, Weng still prefers buying avocado from offline retailers. “In this way, I can actually touch and select the best ones.”s

Turning “healthy” into profit

Li Changjiang, the manager of a Japanese restaurant called “Boyuewan”, told the reporter that nowadays people are willing to spend more money on nutritious foods and they want to eat decently.

He noticed this business opportunity, and began serving avocado related course in 2008, saying “6 years later,

we applied avocado in almost every dish in order to create a kind of creamy taste.”

One in every three tables orders the meal called “shrimp and avocado salad with special sauce”, Li revealed.

According to this restaurant franchiser, the profit margin of selling avocado related food is considerable.

“The wholesale price for avocado is about 10 yuan for each, way below a bowl of salad sold,” he further explained.

Following the trend

Famous for eating at the Super Bowl party in 2016, the taste for avocado, with the marketing slogan of “healthy food”, spreads quickly from America to China through social media.

“Chinese youngsters are found of following the trend,” talking about the market, Li said. “This bright-colored fruit becomes a new darling for those who like to try out new things and share their experience on the Internet.”

Weng posts her “works” on her Instagram, Wechat and Weibo accounts. “It attracts more followers for me, just like being a fashion blogger,” she said.

“The stalls nearby are all selling it, so I decide to keep up the trend,” a street vendor called “Kai Xin” told the reporter.