PREMIUM FOOD
People all over the world trust Australian food and beverages to be premium quality, nutritious, clean and sustainably produced. Now growing numbers of buyers are choosing Australian products for special occasions as well as everyday enjoyment.

With local specialties like beef, wine, seafood, truffles and olive oil ranked among the best in the world, Australia’s unique and diverse offerings have become a major drawcard for visitors. Recent research showed that people who have visited Australia rank it in the top one or two countries worldwide for food and wine experiences.

Australia’s different regions all bring something special to the table. Distinctively Australian products like lean and healthy kangaroo meat, or novel indigenous ingredients like lemon myrtle, aniseed myrtle and mountain pepper are also catching the attention of chefs looking to develop new menus.

FROM THE LAND

Australia’s sheer size and geographic and climatic diversity mean it can offer an amazing variety of food and beverages, many of them coming from some of the most spectacular natural landscapes in the world.

‘I think what is pretty special in Australia is some of the experiences you can have around food and wine … amazing locations on our coast, incredible views and vistas of nature’

Peter Gilmore, executive chef, Quay Restaurant, Sydney
**MEAT – TOP QUALITY FROM PADDOCK TO PLATE**

Australia has a well-established tradition of producing some of the finest meat in the world. Producers are meeting evolving international tastes with an extensive range of grass-fed, grain-fed and lean options, raised and processed to stringent standards, including freedom from hormonal growth promotants. Specialty products like organic and halal meats and breed-specific products such as Wagyu and Angus beef are also winning fans at home and abroad.

Free-range Australian lamb is prized for its natural, grass-fed quality, with products tailored to meet the specific needs of international markets.

The industry-wide systems that guarantee premium eating quality, along with sustainable production and environmental measures, mean that Australian meat appeals to the most discerning customers.

**DAIRY – PREMIUM TASTE FROM GREEN PASTURES**

Australia’s dairy heritage goes back over 200 years. Fresh Australian milk is enjoyed across Asia as well as at home, and Australia produces a range of high-quality consumer products, including fresh milks, custards, yogurts, ice-creams and a wide variety of cheese types from Gouda and cheddar through to Brie, Camembert, mascarpone, crème fraiche, feta and haloumi.

In recent years, numerous artisanal cheese producers have begun to offer specialty cheeses for the most discerning palates, and Australian cheeses have started winning international awards. Regions like the beautiful King Island, off the coast of Tasmania, are now known around the world as the home of premium dairy products.

Customers all over the world are finding Australian cheeses very much to their taste. One example is Lemnos Foods, which has developed a strong market presence in India with its range of speciality cheeses and dairy products. Its variety of fruit cheeses, cream cheeses, organic ricotta dips, paneer, and natural yoghurt are now found across all of India’s largest cities including Mumbai and Delhi.

In addition to retail sales, many dairy companies, like Yea Brand in the famous Yarra Valley region, produce premium cheese products for food service professionals.

**CASE STUDY**

**CAPE GRIM BEEF**

The northwest coast of the island state of Tasmania is one of Australia’s most fertile and pristine regions. Along with high and consistent rainfall, the coastal plains boast some of the richest grazing country in Australia and are home to premium beef brand Cape Grim, named after a spectacular volcanic headland in the area.

Peter Greenham, managing director of the company that founded the Cape Grim brand, says the quality of the beef is inextricably linked to its provenance. ‘You can’t go past the rainfall. It allows for year-round green grass on which our cattle fatten.’ Greenham works with almost exclusively small family farmers who raise their cattle to strict standards. Cattle are selected in the paddocks, again in the stockyards, and finally only the best carcasses make the Cape Grim Beef label.

Today, Cape Grim beef is on the menu in top Australian restaurants such as Rockpool Bar and Grill, Tetsuya’s, Movida and The Point. It is also exported throughout the Asia Pacific region and available through premium retailers in Asia and the US.

**Image courtesy of Cape Grim Beef**
FRUIT, NUTS AND VEGETABLES – YEAR-ROUND FRESHNESS AND TASTE

Australia is known as a reliable supplier of top quality fresh fruit, nuts and vegetables. This reputation is enhanced by clean and green credentials forged by best-practice food safety management, quality assurance systems and the environmental stewardship of Australian farmers and land managers. All of this means that customers receive a product that is not only good to eat, but also good for the environment.

A broad range of fruit and vegetables are available for export virtually year-round thanks to a range of climatic zones and growing conditions. Australian truffles have quickly become recognised as world leaders for quality, while fresh Australian cherries, stone fruit, berries, grapes, avocados, mangoes, citrus fruits, macadamias and almonds are gaining favour with many chefs.

Australia’s location means that it can supply counter-seasonal fruit and vegetables to northern hemisphere markets, while proximity to Asia shortens transport times and maximises freshness of produce.

Growing demand for top-quality Australian produce has seen consumers turning to online malls like China’s JD.com and YHD.com to snap up each season’s harvest. The popularity of cherries as a Chinese New Year gift saw boxes of Tasmanian cherries, already loved for their large size, rich colour and flavour, and in-season at just the right time, in hot demand this year. Extra-sweet Australian ‘high brix’ varieties of oranges, with sugar scores that measure well above global industry averages, are also appealing to discerning consumers in Japan and other countries throughout Asia.

Horticultural industry focus on research and development and new production techniques helps producers meet the changing requirements of markets and offer new varieties for evolving consumer tastes and lifestyles.

FROM THE OCEAN

Australia has a worldwide reputation as a supplier of premium quality seafood, produced using environmentally sustainable practices in wild-catch fishing and aquaculture.

The pristine waters around Australia’s island state of Tasmania have made Tasmanian salmon famous domestically and amongst the visitors who come to taste it while enjoying the sights of its natural environment. Australian rock lobsters, prawns, tuna, oysters, crabs, salmon and abalone are also in high demand around the world. The quality of the seafood on offer is underpinned by high quality fisheries management.

CASE STUDY

DECADES OF DAIRY TRADITION FIND NEW FANS OVERSEAS

The Northern Rivers region of New South Wales is known for rich soil and reliable rainfall – and for quality whole milk, cheese and butter production for over 120 years. A particular favourite is the handmade cultured butter made by the Byron Bay Cheese Company, an artisan cheese producer specialising in boutique dairy products. At the farm’s tasting rooms visitors are encouraged to sample their fresh and sharp feta, creamy brie-style cheeses and delicious semi-hard cheeses.

The quality of milk produced in the region is renowned throughout the world, so it was no surprise when in 2014 local farmer-owned dairy cooperative Norco announced a joint venture with Dairy Connect NSW and Peloris Global Sourcing for a trial of shipments of fresh milk from Northern Rivers to China via a commercially viable cold chain ‘pipeline’.

A year on, demand shows no sign of slowing, with Chinese customers keen to enjoy the clean, pure taste of Australian milk and other Australian dairy companies beginning to air-freight their milk internationally. From 2014 to 2015, fresh milk became the fastest-growing category of dairy imports into China, increasing by over 50 per cent.

FROM PREMIUM FOOD
WINE – TRADITION MEETS INNOVATION

Australian wines are renowned for their quality and value, as well as the sense of place, region and style diversity they offer. Grown in a range of conditions, soils and climates, Australian wines comprise many traditional and innovative varietals and blends. While shiraz and chardonnay are the varieties most familiar to international buyers, the amazing range of grape types that can be grown across Australia has seen winemakers offering an equally broad range of wines. ‘We are a country of not dissimilar size to continental Europe, and we’ve got the diversity of climate and geology to match,’ says Andreas Clark of Wine Australia, now the Australian Grape and Wine Authority.

In contrast to Europe, where specific laws dictate what varieties of grape are allowed to be planted, Australian growers are free to experiment, meaning the Australian wine scene is constantly evolving.

Along with the rise of sustainable viticulture, an emerging trend in recent years is a shift towards organic and biodynamic wines.

Visitors to Australia who are looking to tour wine regions have plenty of choice. There are vineyards in every Australian state, and 63 official wine-growing regions. Australia’s red, white, sparkling and rosé wines from its many wine regions have won major awards around the world.

One of Australia’s best-known winemakers is Penfolds, set in Australia’s most famous wine region, the Barossa Valley in South Australia. Established in 1844, Penfolds has played a leading role in the growth and evolution of winemaking in Australia and across the world. Today the heritage-listed Penfolds Grange is arguably Australia’s most iconic wine.

‘I think the great thing about the Australian industry is our incredible diversity and the fact that we grow about 100 grape varieties across Australia. Our industry continues to evolve in terms of wine styles and new varieties’
Andreas Clark, CEO, Wine Australia

CASE STUDY
FERGUSON AUSTRALIA TAKES KANGAROO ISLAND SEAFOOD TO THE WORLD

Kangaroo Island sits off the coast of South Australia, in the cool, fresh water of the Southern Ocean coming up from Antarctica. The rugged rocks that dominate its southern shoreline make an ideal underwater habitat for southern rock lobsters. Here they are commercially harvested using traditional ‘cray pots’ and processed onshore or exported live by Ferguson Australia, owned by third-generation fishers Debra and Andrew Ferguson.

Over the past forty years, the Fergusons have developed the industry in the area, building on live lobster export by processing lobster into frozen picked meat, tails and medallions. Restaurants like Hong Kong’s renowned Dotcod, the Hong Kong Cricket Club and The Venetian in Macau all serve Ferguson Australia lobster medallions.

‘We have incredible seafood here in South Australia and around Kangaroo Island,’ says Debra Ferguson. ‘It’s due to the rich, pristine waters from Antarctica.’
NON-ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES – REFRESHING CONSUMERS AROUND THE WORLD

Australia’s warm climate and outdoor lifestyle means that premium non-alcoholic cold beverages feature prominently in its dining culture. Embraced by Australian and international consumers alike, they are proving ideal for mini bars, restaurants and cocktail mixers.

Small and medium-sized premium juice companies such as Wild about Juice, Emma and Tom’s, Nippy’s and Nudie Juice are focusing on novel and innovative products designed to appeal to health-conscious customers.

With strong global demand for premium teas and blends, the Australian tea market continues to grow and evolve. Some examples are Nerada Tea, situated in tropical North Queensland and featuring a wide variety of flavours and styles. Madura Tea Estates grows tea in the sub-tropical region of Northern New South Wales and is a pioneer in the use of barrier film to ensure freshness and quality. Premium non-alcoholic carbonated drinks like ginger beer are also rapidly growing in popularity. Long known for the rum that bears its name, the agriculturally rich town of Bundaberg in Queensland is also home to Bundaberg Brewed Drinks, a global leader in naturally brewed non-alcoholic beverages.

FROM THE ARTISANS AND SPECIALTY PRODUCERS

Australia’s food regions are home to a variety of specialty and gourmet food products, from award-winning cheeses and cultured butters through to candied ginger, olive oil, coffee and mueslis.

Regions like South Australia’s Kangaroo Island, the Northern Rivers region of New South Wales, Queensland’s Sunshine Coast and Western Australia’s Southern Forest are becoming known not just for the natural beauty of their environment as for the food and wine experiences they offer the visitor.

Australia also produces premium quality snacks, beverages, condiments and baked goods to suit every taste.

Food processors are able to source high-quality product from a large and diverse agricultural sector, and Australia’s regulatory system enforces stringent quarantine arrangements, food safety regulations and food labelling.

The Australian food and beverage sector has the capacity to create new products tailored to the needs of international consumers. Manufacturers develop food products for the hotel, restaurant and catering, food manufacturing and retail industries. In recent years, many Australian products have found their way onto the tables of international-brand hotels and airline first-class catering.

BEER, CIDER AND SPIRITS – A THIRST FOR NEW TASTES

Australia is a leading producer of beer, with many boutique labels emerging in recent years to join the Australian beer brands already well-known to international consumers.

There are now more than 200 producers in Australia helping satisfy the growing global thirst for craft beers. Styles range from pale ales and pilseners to stouts, porters and specialty beers featuring novel ingredients like coriander, corn and lime.

Craft cider is another fast-emerging boutique industry in Australia. Ciders made from locally sourced apples in regions like Melbourne’s Yarra Valley are winning fans in bars across Asia as well as locally.

Boutique spirits are also beginning to make their mark, ranging from the award-winning Wild Gin produced by artisan distiller Kangaroo Island Spirits using the island’s wild native juniper, to the emerging range of high-end whiskies produced using the pure, soft waters of Tasmania. Whisky drinkers worldwide are rapidly developing a taste for the Tasmanian style, with Lark Distillery a multiple gold medallist at the International Whisky Awards, including a Gold Medal Whisky of the Year victory.

‘What you see in Australian craft beer is a huge amount of personality and character’

Peta Fielding, Craft Beer Industry Association
CASE STUDY
ON THE SCENT OF TRUFFLES FROM THE SOUTHERN FOREST

The Southern Forests region of Western Australia are home to one of the world’s rarest delicacies: the black truffle (Tuber melanosporum), also known as the Perigord truffle. Hazelnut and oak trees inoculated with truffle spores were first planted in Manjimup in 1997, and in 2001 the first truffles were harvested.

‘The winter harvest in the Southern Hemisphere is counter-seasonal to the truffles of Europe,’ says Al Blakers from Manjimup Truffles. ‘The growing conditions here are just perfect for truffles,’ he says. ‘In Europe they have built over their best areas for growing truffles while here we have vast areas perfect for growing more.’ Manjimup Truffles now supplies premium black truffles to top Australian restaurants as well as Michelin-star international restaurants such as Paul Roubuchon and Four Seasons in Hong Kong and Guy Savoy in Singapore.

At the Truffle and Wine Company, also at Manjimup, visitors can join in a truffle hunt. ‘Unearthing your first truffle is a sublime experience,’ says Gavin Booth, CEO. ‘The dogs are excited, there’s a distinct scent in the wintery air, your hands are dirty and there you are holding one of the most prized possessions in the culinary world.’

CASE STUDY
MACADAMIAS FROM THE FERTILE RAINFOREST

To the north of the Northern Rivers region of New South Wales, inland from Byron Bay, are pockets of rainforest that were once part of a massive forest called the Big Scrub.

The macadamia is indigenous to this region and is an important food to the Bundjalung aboriginal people. Since the start of commercial growing post-WWII, macadamias’ popularity has spread worldwide. By 1996, not only had Australia become the world’s largest exporter, it became known for growing the best macadamia nuts in the fertile earth and warm climate.

‘Australian macadamia nut farmers are some of the most innovative in the world,’ says Lynne Ziehlke, Market Development Manager with the Australian Macadamia Society. The industry is proud of its clean and green credentials, with the soil enriched from composted leaves and nut casings, and pest killing wasps introduced instead of using chemical sprays.

Australian macadamias are exported across the world. If you’re eating a white chocolate and macadamia cookie at Subway, then the nuts will very most likely be Australian. They are also a highlighted ingredient in Häagen-Daz’s Macadamia Nut Brittle and in Japan they are an essential ingredient to Meiji’s Green Tea Machiatto.
HEALTH AND WELLNESS – FOOD THAT REFLECTS CONSUMER VALUES

Global consumer interest in health and nutrition is greater than ever, and Australia has plenty to offer.

More than ever, people want to know that the food they and their children eat is not just clean and safe, but also produced sustainably and using only trusted ingredients and methods. Consumers are also increasingly making the link between nutrition and health. Foods that are perceived as having a positive effect on consumers’ wellbeing include organic foods as well as ‘functional’ or ‘better-for-you’ products.

In response to these global consumer trends, many Australian food growers and processors now specialise in organic products and foods with reduced sugar, salt and fat, and with minimal or no preservatives, as well as addressing specific allergen requirements, such as gluten-free, nut-free and dairy-free products.

SNACK FOODS, MEALS AND DESSERTS – EVERYDAY INDULGENCES

Australian snack foods are enjoyed by consumers around the world, with brands like Kettle Chips well-known in many markets. High quality nut and fruit mixes, including organic options, are another popular snack option, as are muesli bars.

Premium chocolate labels like Haigh’s, Daintree Estates, Zokoko and Kennedy and Wilson are sought out by connoisseurs. At the prestigious World Chocolate Awards in 2014, Haigh’s Chocolates was awarded 2 stars, one of only 58 brands worldwide to receive star ratings. Based in the exotic Daintree Rainforest region of Far North Queensland, Daintree Estates produces the world’s first origin chocolate grown from Australian cocoa.

CASE STUDY

BABY FOODS THRIVE ON ONLINE SALES

Since starting out as a family-owned business in 2004, a Tasmanian-based organic food company has become a household word – especially in households throughout Asia.

Bellamy’s Organic was the first to offer an organic baby formula range to Australian parents. Today its certified organic products span foods and snacks like milk drinks, cereals and rusks, fruit snacks and pasta, and cater for all ages from newborns through to 3 years and above.

With consumer demand for trusted, premium-quality baby and toddler foods reaching an all-time high, particularly in China, many parents began looking online to find the foods they wanted for their children. Bellamy’s Organic was quick to recognise the power of online channels. Today its products are hot favourites on e-commerce sites like China’s TMall. Customers can also purchase the range directly through Bellamy’s English or Chinese language sites.

Bellamy’s Organic now exports to customers in China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam, and New Zealand and, in response to ongoing demand has opened new offices in Singapore and Shanghai.
Australia has grown up on well-known food brands from major local manufacturers. Australian-owned and multinational producers alike take advantage of Australia’s diverse range of fresh raw materials and clean environment to produce a range of convenient ready-to-eat snackfoods, meals and desserts.

From SPC to Sara Lee, Australian-made ready-to-eat foods are finding new markets internationally. Simplot’s Top Cut brand of meals featuring Australian meat are in demand across top hotels, restaurants and catering organisations globally. Award-winning desserts from Priestley’s and Exquisine are airfreighted into restaurants and hotels in Asia, whilst Victoria’s Della Rosa Foods is the first Australian manufacturer to export their gourmet stone-baked frozen pizzas to Metro Supermarkets in China.

**CASE STUDY**

**CARMAN’S CLAIMS A PLACE ON THE TOP SHELF**

The 20-year ‘overnight success story’ of Carman’s Fine Foods began in 1992 when two employees bought out a tiny Melbourne-based muesli-making business from its owners and launched the Carman’s brand. Since then, Carman’s has grown into a nationally known premium brand, with over 30 product lines and exports to 32 countries. The muesli range has grown to include a number of varieties including low GI, gluten-free, vegan-friendly, natural and toasted options all available. The Carman’s range has also broadened to include muesli bars, gluten-free roasted nut bars, protein bars, gourmet porridges, ‘crunchy clusters’ and ‘rounds’ snacks.

Today, Carman’s is a supplier to the national Australian supermarket chains as well as a variety of independent department stores, cafes, delis and food service outlets. Food service and airline catering is another important part of Carman’s range, with bulk and portion-controlled muesli sachets and tubs available, as well as snack products. Both Qantas and Virgin provide Carman’s products as on-board snacks, and research shows that 7 per cent of customers buy the products after having tried them on airlines.
PREMIUM CONDIMENTS AND SPREADS – A LITTLE LUXURY AT THE TABLE

Australia produces a wide range of popular spreads including honey, jams and the iconic product Vegemite. Like their international counterparts, Australian consumers are increasingly seeking gourmet products with fresh combinations and few additives. Companies such as Beerenberg, Buderim Ginger, Yackandandah Jam and Preserving, Chris’ Dips, and Spring Gully Foods are making gourmet jams and spreads to appeal to discerning consumers.

‘We harvest the best herbs and spices grown mostly in central Queensland and process them when their flavour and essential oils are at their peak,’ says Jacqueline Wilson-Smith, Gourmet Garden’s Innovation and Marketing Manager.

Within 18 hours of harvest, locally-grown herbs like garlic, ginger, dill and basil can be processed into fresh pastes ready to dispense from squeeze tubes. The ‘Lightly Dried’ range, in which gently and partially dried chopped herbs are blended with vegetable oil and a little salt, is sold alongside the pastes in the refrigerated shelves of the fresh vegetable section of supermarkets across Australia and across the world.

BAKERY PRODUCTS, MIXES AND INGREDIENTS – THE EXTRA QUALITY IN YOUR FAVOURITE FOODS

Australia’s ready supply of premium quality grains provides the ingredients for premium baking mixes, flours and ingredients for retail consumers, and food service applications.

Numerous Australian companies offer sweet and savoury biscuit products which have achieved success in both Australian and international markets. Ready-to-use pastry products like pie and quiche shells, puff and choux pastries are sold through retail and food service channels, as well as products like biscuits, shortbreads and finger foods.

Many flour milling companies have developed specialty products to meet specific consumer needs, such as organic, high-protein, gluten-free and spelt flours and bread mixes, cereal and rice flour blends, cake and bakery mixes for in-store and franchise bakeries, including doughnut blends, tempura batters, mooncake mix, pizza blends and waffle mix.

Premium ingredients and mixes are another fast-growing product category. Not only are food manufacturers looking for novel ingredients and flavours to feature in their offerings, but more than ever before, global consumers are learning about international cuisine, watching celebrity chefs and finding new recipes online.

A number of Australian companies are responding to this surge of interest with authentic flavours and ingredients, conveniently packaged ready for use.

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CASE STUDY
A LITTLE PACK OF SUNSHINE: GOURMET GARDEN PACKAGES AUSTRALIAN FRESHNESS

Nestled between Australia’s Great Dividing Range and the South Pacific Ocean, Queensland’s Sunshine Coast is a region of rich volcanic soil, regular rainfall and ample sunshine making it one of the most fertile and picturesque regions in the country. It’s in this setting that Australian company Gourmet Garden produces the products that have revolutionised the way home cooks use fresh herbs and spices.

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The following are some of the organisations involved in the Australian premium food and beverage industry. Contact your local Austrade representative about connecting and partnering with the Australian premium food and beverage industry.

**Department of Agriculture** develops and implements policies and programmes that ensure Australia’s agricultural, fisheries and food industries remain competitive, profitable and sustainable. Online resources include detailed publications and statistics on Australia’s major food segments. [agriculture.gov.au](http://www.agriculture.gov.au)

**Australian Food and Grocery Council** is the leading national organisation representing Australia’s food, drink and grocery manufacturing industry. [afgc.org.au](http://www.afgc.org.au)

**Food Innovation Australia Limited (FIAL)** is an industry-led, government-funded initiative to accelerate commercially driven collaboration and innovation in the Australian food and beverage industry. [fial.com.au](http://www.fial.com.au)

**The Australian Grape and Wine Authority (AGWA)** supports a competitive wine sector by investing in research, development and extension (RD&E), growing global demand and protecting the reputation of Australian wine. [agwa.net.au](http://www.agwa.net.au)

**Dairy Australia** is the national services body for dairy farmers and the dairy industry. [dairyaustralia.com.au](http://www.dairyaustralia.com.au)

**Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA)** is the national industry body responsible for delivering marketing and R&D services for Australia’s cattle, sheep and goat producers. [mla.com.au](http://www.mla.com.au)

**Horticulture Innovation Australia Limited (HIA)** is a not-for-profit, grower-owned Research and Development Corporation (RDC) for Australia’s $9.5 billion horticulture industry. [horticulture.com.au](http://www.horticulture.com.au)

**The Australian Seafood Cooperative Research Centre (CRC)** is an Australian government initiative to support collaboration between researchers, industries, communities and governments. Some 35 companies, industry bodies, research institutions and government agencies are core participants in the Seafood CRC. [seafoodcrc.com.au](http://www.seafoodcrc.com.au)

**REFERENCES**


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ABOUT AUSTRADE

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