



EXPORTING WINES TO CHINA: A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

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AN OVERVIEW OF CHINA'S WINE MARKET

China's wine market is one of the fastest growing in the world. According to the Paris-based International Organisation of Vine and Wine, China is now the world's 5th biggest wine consumer and is set to catch up the top four because of the country's fast growing middle class population.

More and more Chinese middle class and young people have shown interests in wines, and many of them prefer imported wines to local brands. This presents great opportunities to foreign exporters.

Wine is no longer only bought as expensive gifts or consumed by wealthy Chinese who have lived abroad. Instead, they are consumed as a day-to-day beverage and are gradually replacing local liquors (such as baijiu or yellow wine) as young people's drinks of choice.

Since the anti-graft campaign started by President Xi in 2012, China's wine consumption did drop substantially for several years, but has recovered in the last couple of years.

One notable characteristic of this recovery is that demand for entry to mid level wines has seen double digit increases, outperforming the fine wine category.

The market trend for red wines are the fruity and simple style, while aromatic whites have big growth potential. Meanwhile, sparkling wines with hint of sweetness are getting increasingly popular.

Having said that, expensive wines are still sought after by rich Chinese and by the more serious connoisseurs. The population of serious wine drinkers is growing fast among the upper middle class who use wine drinking as a way of socialising and networking with the 'right' people.



BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE PROCEDURES TO EXPORT WINES TO CHINA

Wine is considered a food product and is thus more regulated than manufactured goods. As exporter, it's important for you to learn about the local rules and standards that applied and make sure that you understand the export procedures before sending off your wines. The following is a step-by-step guide for exporting wines to China that you may find useful.

A. Signing Agreement With Chinese Importer

First of all, you need to find a Chinese importer who's willing to import your products. The importer needs to register itself with China's General Administration of Customs (China Customs) and the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine (AQSIQ).

B. Register Your Company With AQSIQ

To be qualified to export wine to China, you need to register your company at AQSIQ as well. Upon approval, you'll receive a registration number and your company information will be stored in AQSIQ's database.

C. Register Your Label

Before you ship your products, you need to register your label and send a number of documents to China inspection and Quarantine (CIQ), which is a department of AQSIQ for review. Upon approval, you'll receive a filing number of the product that is now eligible to be imported into China.

The documents required to register your label are:

1. A copy of the label in Chinese (paper version)
2. A digital version of the Chinese label
3. A copy of the original label
4. Ingredients list (if not stated clearly on the label)
5. Certificates for all the award winners you have stated on the label



The information to include in the label are:

When you're ready to export your wines, you should preferably attach Chinese labels to the products directly.

The following information needs to be included on the label :

1. Ingredients
2. Name of your product
3. Type and vintage of producing (for example "red dry")
4. Alcohol content
5. Country of origin (for distilled spirits and drinks with malt products)
6. Net content
7. Production date
8. Name of producer
9. Address and contact of Chinese distributor
10. Storage instructions
11. Filing date
12. Shelf life
13. Food additives added
14. Barcode

In case you don't want to stick the label before shipping, you can request your local importer or agent to label the products on your behalf after the goods have arrived in China and are stored in a supervised warehouse.



D. Send Your Wine to a Local Laboratory for Testing

All food products need to be tested before they can be exported to China. In fact, your national authorities often require exporters to test their products before they can be exported.

For example: if you plan to export more than 100 liters of wine from USA or Australia, national authorities there require you to do product testing before exportation.

If you are a New Zealand wine exporter, you need to ensure that your products comply with the New Zealand Wine Act (2003).

During product testing, the laboratory will analyse various elements including levels of metals, minerals and vitamins.

E. Shipping Your Wines

Documents you need to prepare before you ship your wines:

1. Commercial invoice
2. Customs value declaration
3. Freight insurance documents
4. Packing List
5. Insurance Certificate
6. Certificate of Origin (for distilled spirits and beverages with malt)
7. Health certificate (for distilled spirits and beverages with malt)
8. Certificate of Authenticity/Free Sale (for distilled spirits and beverages with malt)
9. Consolidated wine export certificate

It's important that you secure a health certificate that is stamped and signed by an authority in the country of production.

Unless you need to replace your stock in China urgently, your preferred choice should be sea freight which takes around 6-8 weeks.



F. CIQ Inspection

When your goods arrive in China, your importer or agent should declare the goods at the nearest CIQ office. CIQ officers are responsible for controlling goods that enter or leave China and to manage inspections of goods, to assure that these follow local standards.

If your wines are approved, you'll receive a Certificate of Approval from CIQ and they will let your wines to go ahead with customs clearance.

Once customs are cleared, your wines can be sold to Chinese consumers.

[\(Click here for a full list of Rules and Regulations related to exporting food stuff to China\)](#)