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This table summarises the general requirements and standards for food and agricultural imports into Qatar

Certification/ Requirements	Remarks
Relevant Authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Health Authority (NHA, Ministry of Health - http://www.nha.org.qa/sch/Ar/) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – carries out most functions related to food imports and safety – Responsible for establishing food safety regulations, along with General Organization for Standards and Metrology and the Ministry of Economy & Commerce (MOEC - http://www.mec.gov.qa/) • The Food Control Committee (FCC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – an interagency committee, headed by the Assistant Undersecretary of NHA for Technical Affairs, which incorporates representatives from NHA, Doha Municipality and the Agricultural Development Department – decides on all food safety and control issues, including import bans • The Department of Commercial Affairs, MOEC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – responsible for trademark and agency laws • The Agricultural Development Department of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Agriculture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – responsible for inspecting live animals and plants, animal feed and horticultural products at the port of entry • Gulf Standards Organization (GSO - http://www.gso.org.sa) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – responsible for developing food and other standards in the GCC
Halal (slaughter) certificate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For meat and meat products • Issued by an approved Islamic center in the country of origin
Health certificate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required for all food products • From the country of origin
Pre-approval & Registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For specialty foods i.e. diet and health foods, foods for diabetics and infants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Issued by a joint committee of representatives from the Food Control Division, PHD, and the Pharmacies and Medicines Control Department, National Health Authority (NHA) • Food labels can be approved through a pre-approval process prior to import. Pre-import approval for food labels is strongly encouraged, particularly for new-to-market products
Import Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial invoice • Packing list • Bill of Lading

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Spices must be accompanied by a certificate stating that it is free of pesticides and herbicidesCertificate of origin Invoice and certificates must be notarized by the Qatari Embassy or consulate in the exporting country (In the absence of a Qatari diplomatic mission, any embassy or consulate of another GCC country can do the job).
Labeling	
Standard	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Gulf Standard is adopted for shelf life requirement in Qatari Standards (GSO 150/2007)GSO 9/2007 is the Qatar Labeling Regulations More information on GSO Standards available at: http://www.gso.org.sa/gso/home.do
Required Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Product and brand nameCountry of originIngredients, in descending order of proportionAdditives, if anyOrigin of animal fat (e.g., beef fat), if applicable (must be from Halal slaughtered animals)Net content in metric units (volume in case of liquids)Production and expiry datesThe name and address of the manufacturer/producer/distributor/importer/exporter/vendorSpecial storage, transportation preparation instructions, if any. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Exemptions: Food products that are imported in bulk form for further processing, food samples
Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Labels must be in Arabic or Arabic/ English.Arabic labeling is not necessary, if products are imported directly by the hotels, restaurants and institution (HRI) end-userArabic language stickers are permitted in lieu of original Arabic or bilingual labels provided the sticker:<ol style="list-style-type: none">Is extremely difficult to remove.Includes all required label information.Does not cover required information on the original label.Does not contradict information on the original label. In fact, local officials consider such stickers to be labels

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Nutrition information	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Labeling of nutritional value is voluntary except for specialty foods i.e. diet and health foods, foods for diabetics and infants. The NHA must approve and register these foods prior to import. Must contain information such as:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– vitamin and mineral content– nutritive value per 100 grams– proper use and storage• The U.S. nutritional panel is acceptable• Labeling of recommended daily intake RDI is not required
Date marking	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Must be engraved, embossed, printed or stamped directly onto the original label or primary packaging at the time of production, using indelible ink• Multiple Production and expiry (P/E) dates on the label are not acceptable• The month may be printed in numbers or letters.• P/E dates in English digits alone are acceptable, but it is preferable to have the dates in both languages for the Qatari market.• Day/month/year for products with a shelf-life of 3 months or less Month/year for products with a shelf-life longer than 3 months (the last day of the month will be considered the expiry date)• The expiration date may be printed in one of the following formats:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Expiration date/Use by/Use before/Sell by: (date)– Fit for: (duration) from the date of production• P/E dates are not required for fresh fruits and vegetables, and fresh bakery items.• Production dates alone are sufficient for products deemed to have extremely long shelf-life durations, such as salt, white sugar, spices and condiments, tea, rice and dried pulses.
Irradiated food products	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Permitted. Has to be clearly indicated on the label that the product has undergone such treatment.
Packaging and Container Regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• General requirements for packaged special foods are covered under GS 654/1998, GS 839/2001, and GS 1024/2001
Other Information	
Inspection & Tests	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Qatar's municipality inspectors randomly check food products in wholesale and retail markets• In addition to the visual inspection of labels, samples are collected and analyzed in NHA Central Laboratories to ensure product ingredients match those listed on the label

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Local inspections are unscheduled. If a discrepancy is found, the product is removed from the market and destroyed at the importer's expense after notification.Not all shipments are subject to laboratory analysisIn general, new-to-market products and products that failed a previous inspection are targeted for thorough examination upon importation.Subsequent shipments of a product that has passed the initial testing will be subject to further laboratory analysis again after six months.
Poultry and meat products	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Tested routinely for Salmonella and other pathogensIf Salmonella is detected in more than 20 percent of the tested samples, the shipment will be rejected
Food additives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Most local regulation governing the use of food additives QS 23/2000 are based on CodexNeed to include on label the common name and index no. of additives. E number is acceptableQS 19/2001 regulates additives used in vegetable oils and fats while QS 356, 357, 381, 577, 578 and 1018 regulate other food additivesThe General Organization for Standards and Metrology at MOEC can be contacted for copies of food additive or other standards. The standards are mostly in Arabic. Some standards are available in English, but not all. <p>Director General General Organization for Standards and Metrology Ministry of Economy & Commerce P.O. Box 23277 Doha, Qatar Tel: (974) 440-8651 Fax: (974) 447-9052</p>
Pesticide residue	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Local regulations governing this (QS 382/1996 and QS 383/1996) are based on CodexPesticides must be registered with the Agricultural Development Department, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Agriculture.
Pork and pork products	Prohibited
Food Samples	<ul style="list-style-type: none">For food shows and other types of promotional eventsExempted from regulations covering labeling and shelf-lifeSamples must be accompanied by a health certificate, and an invoice noting that the product is not for sale and is of no commercial value.
Alcohol content	Maximum alcohol content is 0.05%

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Certification/ Requirements	Remarks
Copyright and/or Trademark Laws	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Commercial Agency Law Number 8/2002 regulates Agency matters• Only a Qatari citizen or Qatari company may register a commercial agency• A brand can be registered to only one agent• Law of Trademarks and Commercial Indications No. 9/2002 regulate Trademark matters.• The Commercial Affairs Department, MOEC, is charged with enforcing trademark, as well as, agency regulations• A trademark can be registered directly with Commercial Affairs by a foreign company or through a local firm that specializes in such registrations. The latter is recommended• Intellectual Property and Copyright Law No. 7/2002 regulates Intellectual Property matters.
GCC Unified Customs Law and Single Customs Tariff (UCL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Established a unified customs tariff of five percent on nearly all processed food products.• Live animals, fresh fruits and vegetables, some seafood, grains, flour, tea, sugar, spices and seeds for planting are exempt from tariffs.• Single entry point policy i.e. a product entering any GCC member market would pay the appropriate duty only at point of entry and would then be permitted duty free transit among GCC member countries. In practice, this policy is employed only with unopened containers transshipped between GCC markets. Partial shipments tend to be subject to the five percent import duty again in the country of destination. However, it is expected that all goods, even partial shipments from opened containers, will eventually receive single-entry treatment once customs procedures are fully unified within the next few years.
Product Rejections	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Products denied entry due to labeling infractions may later be cleared upon appeal to the Food Control Section of PHD/NHA, provided the infraction was minor.• Labeling infractions deemed serious will result in rejection of a shipment with little chance of a successful appeal.• Serious labeling infractions include label tampering, missing or incorrectly printed production/expiry dates and dates printed on stickers rather than the original label/packaging.

Reference: USDA FAS GAIN Report

DISCLAIMER:

This document has been prepared by SPRING Singapore with the intention of assisting Singapore based exporters of food products. While every possible care has been taken in the preparation of this document, the information may not be completely accurate as policies may have changed or clear and consistent information on these policies were not available. They cannot be taken as the official interpretation of the regulations. It is highly recommended that Singapore based exporters verify the full set of certification and import

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requirements with the relevant authorities in importing country. **Please note that final import approval of any product is subject to the importing country's rules and regulations as interpreted by custom officials at the point of entry.**