

# Trump's Food Tariffs Could Change the American Diet

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The future tariffs that [Donald Trump](#) has said he will impose on foreign imports could make groceries more expensive and Americans less healthy, some experts have warned.

"Import tariffs are a type of tax imposed on products entering a country, with the usual intention of discouraging imports in order to encourage domestic industries," Bryan Quoc Le told *Newsweek*. Quoc Le is a food scientist, food engineer and food industry consultant.

"So far, Trump's import tariffs are planned to be applied to all imported products from most countries, but especially those from Canada, Mexico and China, with varying tax percentages being proposed."

These tariffs would likely push up the prices of imported goods to encourage more American-grown food, but would have the initial effect of making certain groceries more expensive.

A 2023 report by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration said that 94 percent of seafood sold in the U.S. in 2018 was imported from abroad, along with 55 percent of fresh fruit and 32 percent of fresh vegetables.

"Among the notable products imported are various fruits and vegetables from Mexico; apple juice, tilapia and cod from China; and a small amount of wheat from both Canada and Europe," said Quoc Le. "These products will be more expensive."



A fruit market advertises raspberries and other fruits in Pike Place, with an inset image of Donald Trump in Chicago, Illinois, October 15, 2024. Trump has said he will impose tariffs on imported foreign goods...  
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Usha Haley—Barton Distinguished Chair in International Business at Wichita State University, Kansas—told *Newsweek*: "Americans vote with their pocketbook, and their grocery items have been extremely expensive here, which is one of the reasons why Trump won; he said he would lower the price of groceries

"One of the things that Americans joke about is that you've got to take out a second mortgage these days to buy eggs... Eggs will go up in price."

Not everyone thinks the tariffs will be a bad thing. Dan Miller, founder and CEO of regenerative agriculture company Steward, told *Newsweek*: "Despite warnings about the negative impact tariffs would have on consumers, there will be benefits as well, specifically for American farmers and food supply.

"For example, tariffs would provide agricultural producers with critical safeguards to level the playing field by limiting unfair foreign competition, elevating domestic production and rebuilding U.S.-based agricultural supply chains."

After initial higher costs, said Miller, the eventual rebuilding of American infrastructure would lower costs, "and the U.S. can rely on its own resources and strengthen its strategic position."

Matt Jozwiak, CEO of sustainable food system charity Rethink Food, told *Newsweek*: "Tariffs on imported food could incentivize consumers, retailers and policymakers to prioritize local sourcing.

"This shift has the potential to strengthen regional food systems, reduce dependency on imports and bolster sustainability...by making fresh, locally sourced food more accessible and affordable for all."

Haley said she thought such a shift in the American food system was not "possible or feasible in the short term," saying: "Supply chains can always react, but they aren't that flexible...It will take time.

"Americans are already eating highly unhealthy food; they eat a lot of processed foods, for example. I think they will just slide back and eat more of it."

Quoc Le agreed, adding: "The challenge is that not all fruits and vegetables grow as well in the United States as they do in Mexico all year round."

He said the tariffs were likely to result in Americans eating less fruit, vegetables and seafood, particularly impacting those with lower incomes, "resulting in a higher risk of chronic health conditions in these communities."

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