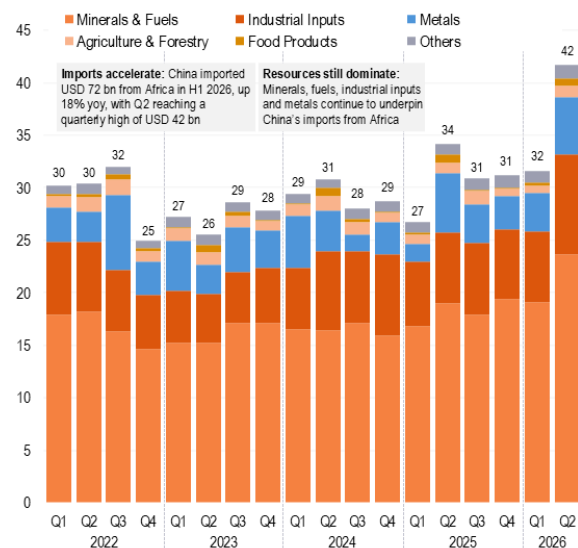


China's Africa Imports Remain Resource-heavy But Consumer Markets Are Opening

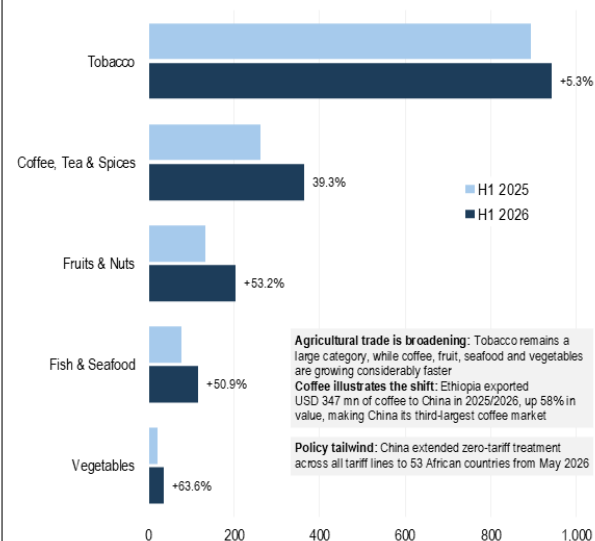
China's imports from Africa topped USD 70 billion in H1 2026, while growth in consumer and agricultural products points to opportunities beyond traditional commodity exports

China Imports from Africa by Category, USD bn (Q1 2022-Q2 2026)



Source: Trade Map, UN Comtrade, ANDAMAN PARTNERS Analysis

China Selected Consumer & Agricultural Imports from Africa, USD mn and YoY Growth, % (H1 2025 vs H1 2026)



China's trade with Africa is still overwhelmingly anchored in resources, but the edges of that relationship are beginning to broaden. China imported USD 72 billion from Africa in H1 2026, up 18% year on year, with Q2 alone reaching a quarterly high of USD 42 billion. Minerals and fuels, industrial inputs and metals continue to underpin the import basket, showing that resources remain at the heart of the commercial relationship.

Beyond that core, however, selected consumer and agricultural categories point to a wider opportunity. Tobacco remains a large established trade at close to USD 1 billion in H1 2026, while smaller categories are expanding considerably faster: imports of coffee, tea and spices rose 39%, fruits and nuts 53%, fish and seafood 51% and vegetables 64% year on year. Ethiopia offers a particularly striking example, exporting USD 347 million of coffee to China in 2025/2026, up 58% in value, making China the country's third-largest coffee market.

The shift should not be overstated: these categories remain small relative to China's resource imports from Africa, and growth rates from a low base can be volatile. But China's extension of zero-tariff treatment across all tariff lines to 53 African countries from May 2026 could lower barriers for a much wider range of African exports. The opportunity is therefore not to replace resource trade, but to gradually add new agricultural, food and consumer-oriented trade alongside it.

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