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BENIN'S TRADE STATISTICS

AFRICAN COUNTRIES' TRADE STATISTICS SERIES



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ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

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Benin's Trade Statistics

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This publication also exists in French.

Introduction

In 2024, the value of Benin's merchandise trade – the sum of its exports and imports – reached US$4.4 billion. Exports rose 8.5% to US$990.8 million, while imports fell 13.8% to US$3.4 billion. As a result, the trade deficit narrowed to US$2.4 billion, from US$3.0 billion in 2023.

Exports accounted for 22.7% of the total value of trade in 2024, an increase of 3.7 percentage points from 2023, while imports accounted for 77.3%.

In 2024, Bangladesh and Pakistan together received 56.2% of Benin's exports, and the three main exported product categories (cotton; oil seeds and oleaginous fruits; and food industry residues and animal feed) accounted for 79.8% of the total.

On the import side, India and China together supplied 30.7% of Benin's purchases in 2024, and the three main imported product categories (cereals; mineral fuels and oils; and machinery and mechanical appliances) accounted for 44.4% of the value of imports.

This document first summarizes Benin's main preferential trade agreements with the rest of the world. It then presents trends in the country's merchandise trade from 2019 to 2024, followed by the breakdown of its exports and imports by main partner country and main product category in 2024.

1. Main Trade Agreements Between Benin and the Rest of the World

Like most African countries, Benin accesses foreign markets through three main types of trade arrangements: unilateral preference schemes granted by developed and emerging economies, trade arrangements with the European Union (EU), and the regional and continental agreements in which it participates. These arrangements reduce or eliminate customs duties on part of the country's exports and shape its regional integration. The rest of this section outlines the main features of each of these arrangements.

a. Unilateral Trade Preferences

The United Nations classifies Benin as one of the least developed countries (LDCs). As a result, in addition to the EU preferences described in the next section, the country benefits from duty-free, quota-free access for all or almost all of its products under the generalized system of preferences (GSP) schemes and LDC programs of many countries, including:

- Canada, through the Least Developed Country Tariff (LDCT), which since 2003 has granted duty-free, quota-free access to virtually all imports from LDCs, except certain supply-managed agricultural products (dairy, poultry and eggs);
- the United Kingdom, through its Developing Countries Trading Scheme (DCTS), in place since 19 June 2023, which grants LDCs duty-free access for all products except arms and ammunition;
- Japan (since 1971), Switzerland (since 1972) and Norway (since 1971), whose GSP schemes grant LDCs duty-free access for the vast majority of their products;
- Australia (since 2003) and New Zealand (since 2001), which grant duty-free, quota-free access to imports from LDCs;
- China, which has granted LDCs duty-free treatment since 2010, extended on 1 December 2024 to 100% of tariff lines for LDCs with which it has diplomatic relations;

- India (duty-free tariff preference scheme for LDCs since 2008), South Korea (since 2000) and Chile (since 2014); and
- Türkiye (GSP since 2002) and the Eurasian Economic Union (Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Russia), whose unified system of tariff preferences exempts certain products originating in LDCs from customs duties.

In the United States, the GSP program, in place since 1976, expired on 31 December 2020. Preferential access for eligible sub-Saharan African countries under the *African Growth and Opportunity Act* (AGOA), enacted in 2000, depends on annual eligibility reviews and on the Act's reauthorization by Congress.

b. Trade Relations with the European Union

Benin is a member of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS). The group's relations with the EU were governed successively by the Lomé Conventions (1975–2000), the fourth of which was signed in 1989, and then by the Cotonou Agreement, signed in Cotonou on 23 June 2000, which entered into force in 2003. It was succeeded by the Samoa Agreement, signed on 15 November 2023 and provisionally applied since 1 January 2024. The non-reciprocal trade preferences provided under this framework ended on 31 December 2007: since 1 January 2008, exports from these countries have entered the EU market under economic partnership agreements (EPAs) or the EU's generalized scheme of preferences (GSP).

As an LDC, Benin exports to the EU under the Everything But Arms (EBA) arrangement, in place since 2001, which grants duty-free, quota-free access for all products except arms and ammunition. Because each EU enlargement (notably in 2004, 2007 and 2013) extended the Union's trade regime to the new member states, these preferences apply in all 27 member states. The regional EPA between the EU and West Africa, whose negotiations were concluded in 2014, has not entered into force.

c. Regional and Subregional Agreements

i. Economic Community of West African States

Benin is a founding member of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), established by the Treaty of Lagos of 28 May 1975. The revised ECOWAS Treaty was signed in Cotonou on 24 July 1993. Under the ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Scheme (ETLS), goods originating in member states may in principle circulate free of customs duties within the community, and a common external tariff (CET) has applied to imports from outside the region since 1 January 2015. The withdrawal of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger from ECOWAS took effect in January 2025.

ii. West African Economic and Monetary Union

Benin is also a member of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), established by the Treaty of Dakar of 10 January 1994. Its eight member states (Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo) share a common currency, the CFA franc, and form a customs union with a common external tariff in force since 1 January 2000.

d. African Continental Free Trade Area

The *Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area* (AfCFTA), signed in Kigali on 21 March 2018, entered into force on 30 May 2019, and trading under the Agreement officially began on 1 January 2021. The Agreement provides for the gradual elimination of customs duties on 90% of tariff lines among state parties. Benin signed the Agreement on 7 July 2019.

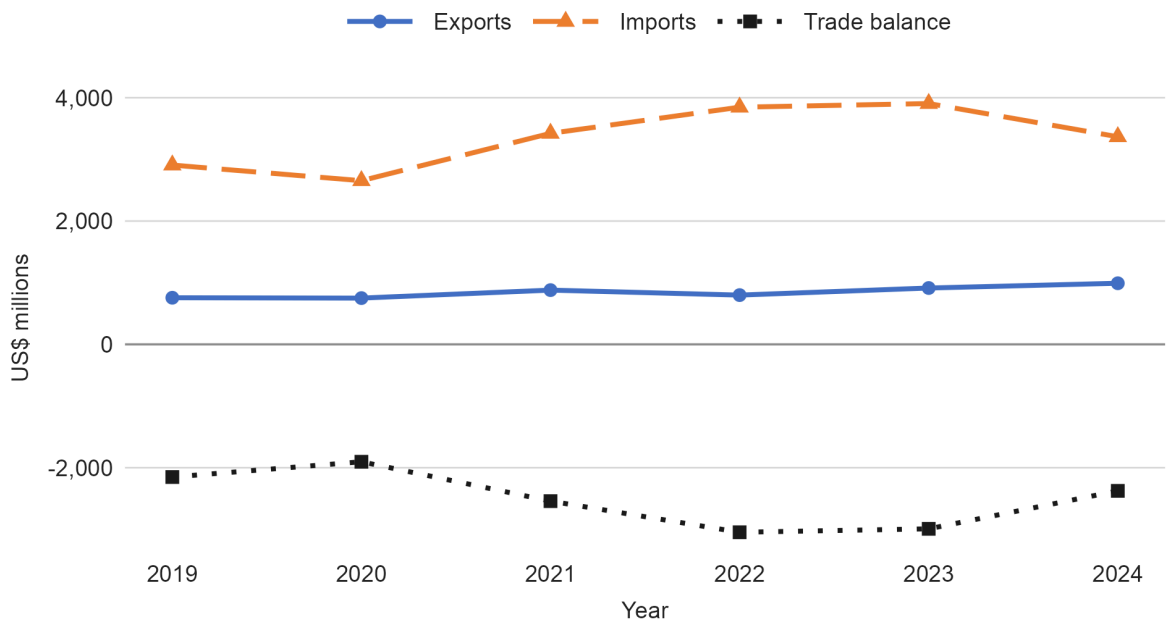
2. Merchandise Trade Between Benin and the Rest of the World

In 2024, Benin's merchandise trade with the rest of the world totalled US$4.4 billion. The highlights are as follows:

- Exports totalled US$990.8 million, up 8.5% from 2023.
- Imports totalled US$3.4 billion, down 13.8% from 2023.
- The trade deficit stood at US$2.4 billion, compared with US$3.0 billion in 2023.

Figure 1 shows trends in the country's exports, imports and trade balance from 2019 to 2024.

Figure 1 – Merchandise Trade of Benin, 2019–2024 (US$ millions)



Note: The trade balance is the difference between exports and imports; a negative value indicates a trade deficit.
Source: Figure prepared by Centre d'Analyse des Politiques Publiques et de Recherche (CAPPR) using data obtained from World Bank, "Raw Trade Data – Benin, HS 2017 Chapters, 2019–2024," World Integrated Trade Solution (WITS), Database, accessed 8 November 2026.

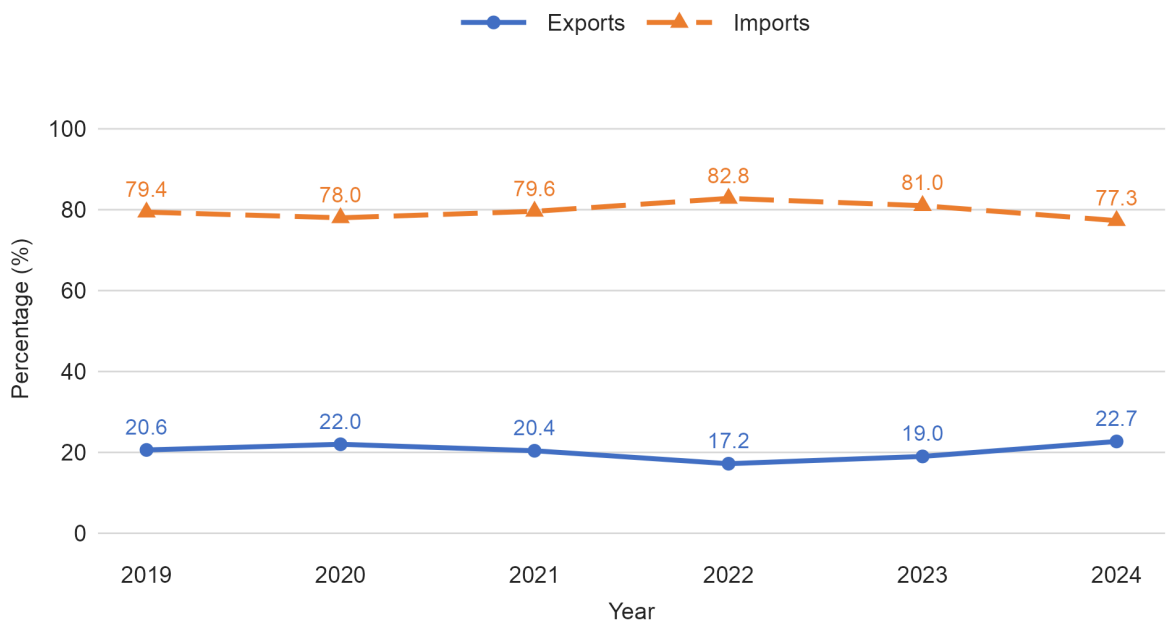
3. Shares of the Total Value of Benin's Trade

The highlights are as follows:

- In 2024, exports accounted for 22.7% of the total value of Benin's merchandise trade, up 3.7 percentage points from 2023 (19.0%).
- Imports accounted for 77.3%, down 3.7 percentage points from 2023 (81.0%).

Figure 2 shows how these shares changed from 2019 to 2024.

Figure 2 – Share of Exports and Imports in the Total Value of Benin's Merchandise Trade, 2019–2024 (%)



Note: The total value of trade is the sum of exports and imports.

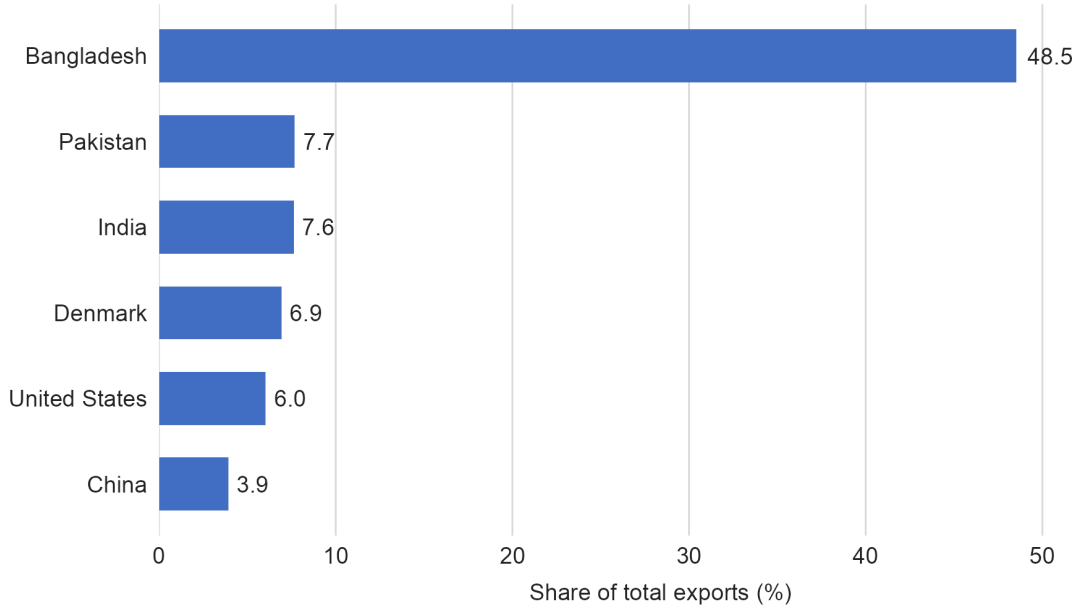
Source: Figure prepared by Centre d'Analyse des Politiques Publiques et de Recherche (CAPPR) using data obtained from World Bank, "Raw Trade Data – Benin, HS 2017 Chapters, 2019–2024," World Integrated Trade Solution (WITS), Database, accessed 8 November 2026.

4. Merchandise Export Destinations by Country

In 2024, the six main destinations of Benin's merchandise exports together received 80.7% of the country's total exports (Figure 3). These destinations were:

- Bangladesh: US$480.7 million (48.5% of total exports);
- Pakistan: US$76.2 million (7.7%);
- India: US$75.7 million (7.6%);
- Denmark: US$68.6 million (6.9%);
- the United States: US$59.8 million (6.0%); and
- China: US$38.7 million (3.9%).

Figure 3 – Six Main Destinations of Benin's Merchandise Exports, 2024 (% of total exports)



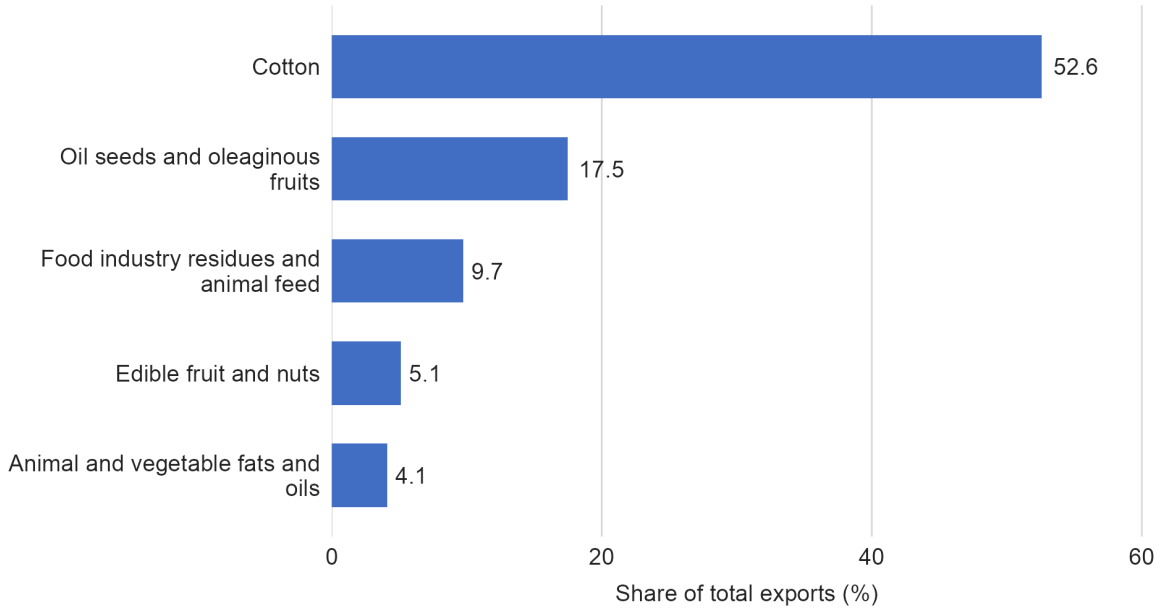
Note: Shares are calculated relative to the total value of Benin's exports.
Source: Figure prepared by Centre d'Analyse des Politiques Publiques et de Recherche (CAPPR) using data obtained from World Bank, "Raw Trade Data – Benin, HS 2017 Chapters, 2019–2024," World Integrated Trade Solution (WITS), Database, accessed 8 November 2026.

5. Highest-Value Exports by Product Category

Products are grouped here by chapter of the Harmonized System (HS), the international nomenclature that classifies goods into 97 broad categories. In 2024, the five chapters with the highest export value together accounted for 89.0% of Benin's total exports (Figure 4). These chapters were:

- cotton (chapter 52): US$521.0 million (52.6% of total exports);
- oil seeds and oleaginous fruits (chapter 12): US$173.0 million (17.5%);
- food industry residues and animal feed (chapter 23): US$96.3 million (9.7%);
- edible fruit and nuts (chapter 08): US$50.7 million (5.1%); and
- animal and vegetable fats and oils (chapter 15): US$40.6 million (4.1%).

Figure 4 – Highest-Value Exports of Benin by Harmonized System Chapter, 2024 (% of total exports)



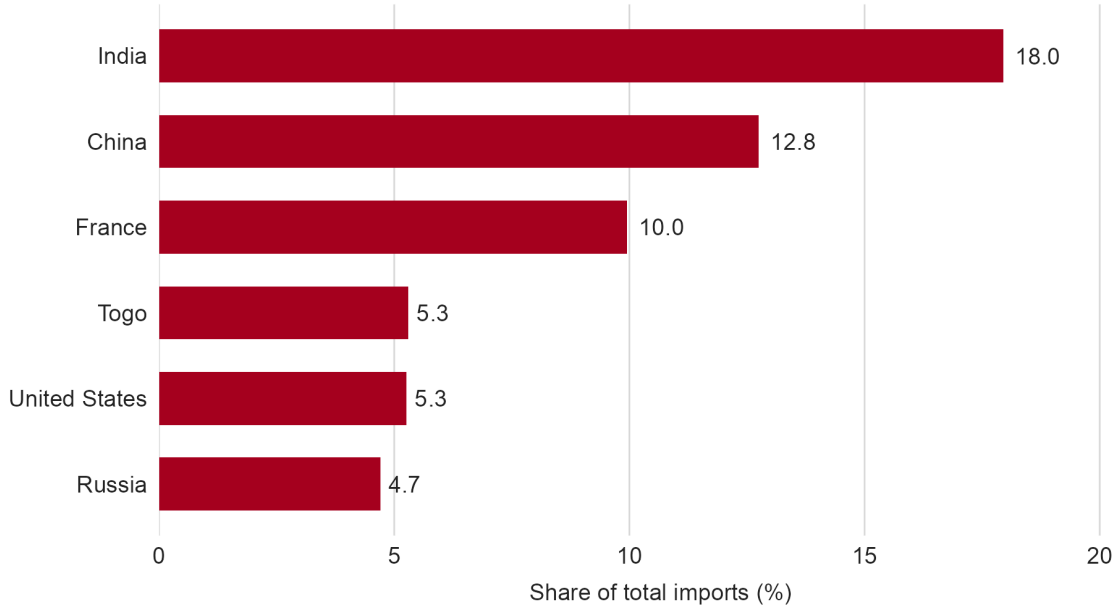
Note: Products are grouped by chapter of the Harmonized System (HS 2017); shares are calculated relative to the total value of Benin's exports.
Source: Figure prepared by Centre d'Analyse des Politiques Publiques et de Recherche (CAPPR) using data obtained from World Bank, "Raw Trade Data – Benin, HS 2017 Chapters, 2019–2024," World Integrated Trade Solution (WITS), Database, accessed 8 November 2026.

6. Sources of Merchandise Imports by Country

In 2024, Benin's six main suppliers together accounted for 55.9% of the country's merchandise imports (Figure 5). These partners were:

- India: US$604.4 million (18.0% of total imports);
- China: US$429.3 million (12.8%);
- France: US$335.1 million (10.0%);
- Togo: US$178.5 million (5.3%);
- the United States: US$177.2 million (5.3%); and
- Russia: US$158.3 million (4.7%).

Figure 5 – Six Main Sources of Benin's Merchandise Imports, 2024 (% of total imports)



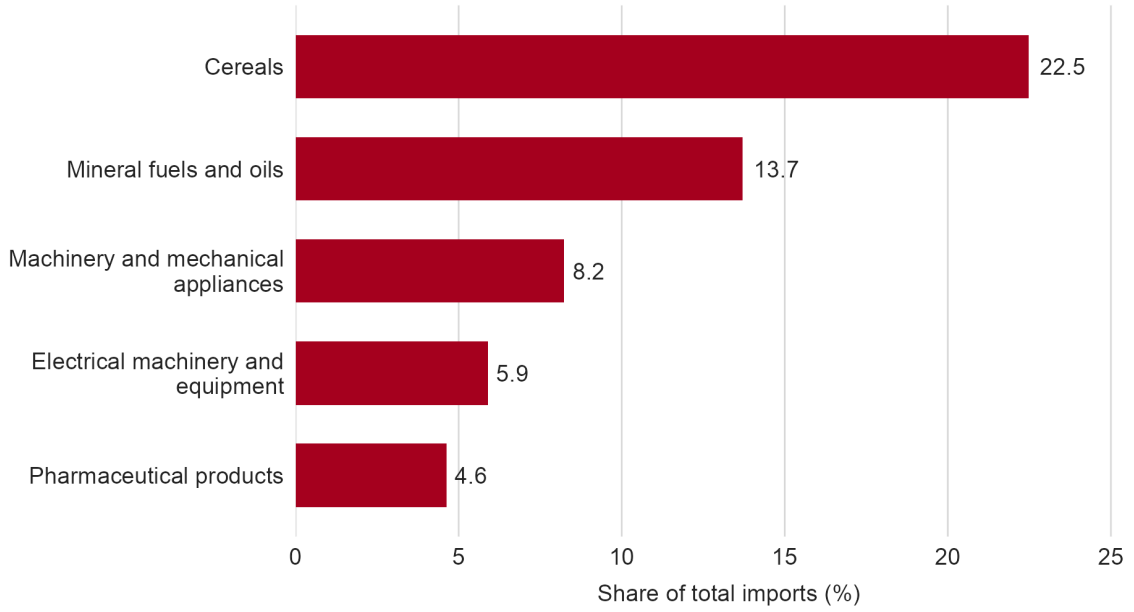
Note: Shares are calculated relative to the total value of Benin's imports.
Source: Figure prepared by Centre d'Analyse des Politiques Publiques et de Recherche (CAPPR) using data obtained from World Bank, "Raw Trade Data – Benin, HS 2017 Chapters, 2019–2024," World Integrated Trade Solution (WITS), Database, accessed 8 November 2026.

7. Highest-Value Imports by Product Category

In 2024, the five HS chapters with the highest import value together accounted for 54.9% of Benin's total imports (Figure 6). These chapters were:

- cereals (chapter 10): US$756.6 million (22.5% of total imports);
- mineral fuels and oils (chapter 27): US$461.2 million (13.7%);
- machinery and mechanical appliances (chapter 84): US$277.3 million (8.2%);
- electrical machinery and equipment (chapter 85): US$198.6 million (5.9%); and
- pharmaceutical products (chapter 30): US$155.9 million (4.6%).

Figure 6 – Highest-Value Imports of Benin by Harmonized System Chapter, 2024 (% of total imports)



Note: Products are grouped by chapter of the Harmonized System (HS 2017); shares are calculated relative to the total value of Benin's imports.
Source: Figure prepared by Centre d'Analyse des Politiques Publiques et de Recherche (CAPPR) using data obtained from World Bank, "Raw Trade Data – Benin, HS 2017 Chapters, 2019–2024," World Integrated Trade Solution (WITS), Database, accessed 8 November 2026.

Methodological Note

The data come from Benin's reports to the United Nations Comtrade database (UN Comtrade) and were extracted using the World Bank's World Integrated Trade Solution (WITS) on 8 November 2026. Values are in current U.S. dollars, and products are grouped by chapter (two-digit code) of the Harmonized System, 2017 version.

Shares are calculated relative to the value of the country's total trade with the world (the "World" total). The data reported by a country may differ from the corresponding data reported by its partners (mirror statistics) and do not cover informal cross-border trade.