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CAMEROON'S TRADE STATISTICS

AFRICAN COUNTRIES' TRADE STATISTICS SERIES



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ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

The Studies of the Centre d'Analyse des Politiques Publiques et de Recherche (CAPPR) are in-depth analyses that provide historical, economic, and statistical context, supported by up-to-date references and information. CAPPR often addresses issues before they become matters of public interest. The analyses are prepared objectively and impartially by the Research Department, reviewed by one or more external experts, and validated by CAPPR's Scientific Committee.

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This publication also exists in French.

Introduction

In 2023, the value of Cameroon's merchandise trade – the sum of its exports and imports – reached US$13.3 billion. Exports fell 11.7% to US$5.0 billion, while imports rose 4.7% to US$8.3 billion. As a result, the trade deficit widened to US$3.3 billion, from US$2.3 billion in 2022.

Exports accounted for 37.4% of the total value of trade in 2023, a decrease of 4.1 percentage points from 2022, while imports accounted for 62.6%.

In 2023, the Netherlands and France together received 35.6% of Cameroon's exports, and the three main exported product categories (mineral fuels and oils; cocoa and cocoa preparations; and wood and articles of wood) accounted for 81.1% of the total.

On the import side, China and India together supplied 30.5% of Cameroon's purchases in 2023, and the three main imported product categories (mineral fuels and oils; machinery and mechanical appliances; and cereals) accounted for 40.4% of the value of imports.

This document first summarizes Cameroon's main preferential trade agreements with the rest of the world. It then presents trends in the country's merchandise trade from 2019 to 2023, followed by the breakdown of its exports and imports by main partner country and main product category in 2023.

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

Like most African countries, Cameroon 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

As a developing country, Cameroon may benefit, subject to the eligibility criteria of each scheme and in addition to the EU arrangements described in the next section, from the generalized system of preferences (GSP) schemes of several developed and emerging economies, including:

- Canada, through the General Preferential Tariff (GPT), introduced in 1974;
- the United Kingdom, through its Developing Countries Trading Scheme (DCTS), in place since 19 June 2023;
- Japan (since 1971), Switzerland (since 1972) and Norway (since 1971);
- Australia and New Zealand; and
- Türkiye (since 2002) and the Eurasian Economic Union.

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

Cameroon 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 (Benin) 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).

Cameroon exports to the EU under the stepping-stone Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between the EU and Central Africa, provisionally applied since 4 August 2014, which provides preferential access to the EU market in exchange for a gradual and partial opening of the country's market to European products.

c. Regional and Subregional Agreements

i. Central African Economic and Monetary Community

Cameroon is a member of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC), established by the treaty signed in N'Djamena on 16 March 1994. Its six member states (Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon) share the CFA franc issued by the Bank of Central African States and apply a common external tariff.

ii. Economic Community of Central African States

Cameroon is also a member of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), established by the Treaty of Libreville of 18 October 1983. It brings together 11 member states and aims to create a free trade area and a customs union.

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. Cameroon is a signatory to the Agreement.

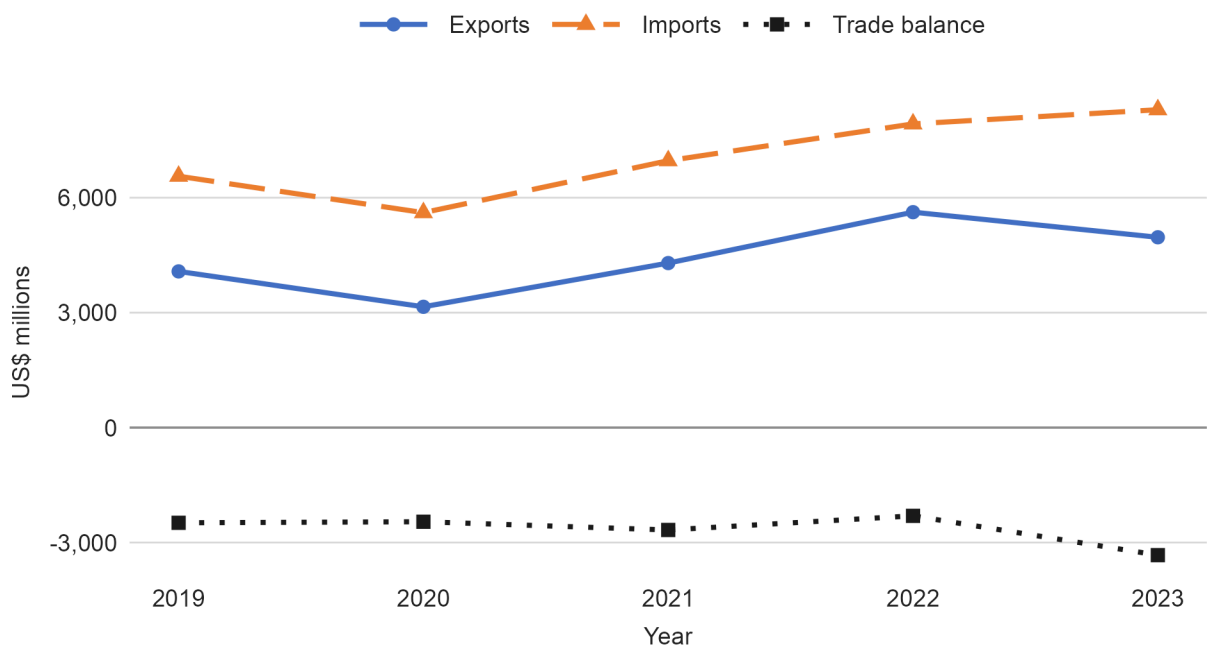
2. Merchandise Trade Between Cameroon and the Rest of the World

In 2023, Cameroon's merchandise trade with the rest of the world totalled US$13.3 billion. The highlights are as follows:

- Exports totalled US$5.0 billion, down 11.7% from 2022.
- Imports totalled US$8.3 billion, up 4.7% from 2022.
- The trade deficit stood at US$3.3 billion, compared with US$2.3 billion in 2022.

Figure 1 shows trends in the country's exports, imports and trade balance from 2019 to 2023.

Figure 1 – Merchandise Trade of Cameroon, 2019–2023 (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 – Cameroon, HS 2017 Chapters, 2019–2023," World Integrated Trade Solution (WITS), Database, accessed 8 November 2026.

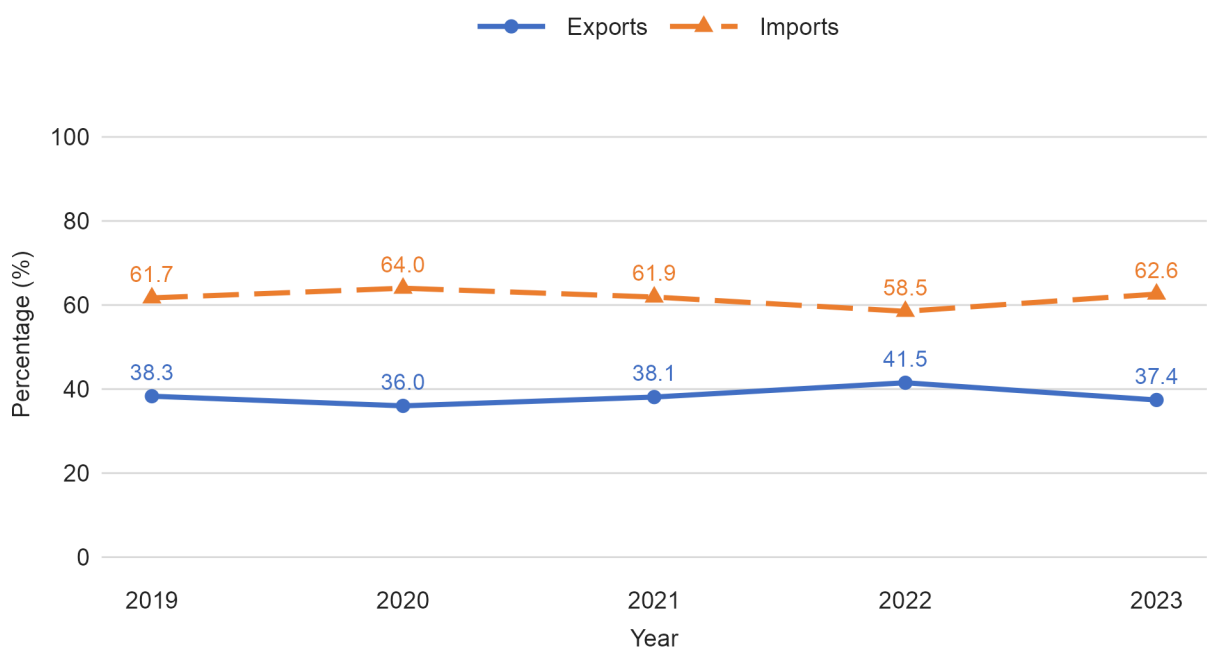
3. Shares of the Total Value of Cameroon's Trade

The highlights are as follows:

- In 2023, exports accounted for 37.4% of the total value of Cameroon's merchandise trade, down 4.1 percentage points from 2022 (41.5%).
- Imports accounted for 62.6%, up 4.1 percentage points from 2022 (58.5%).

Figure 2 shows how these shares changed from 2019 to 2023.

Figure 2 – Share of Exports and Imports in the Total Value of Cameroon's Merchandise Trade, 2019–2023 (%)



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

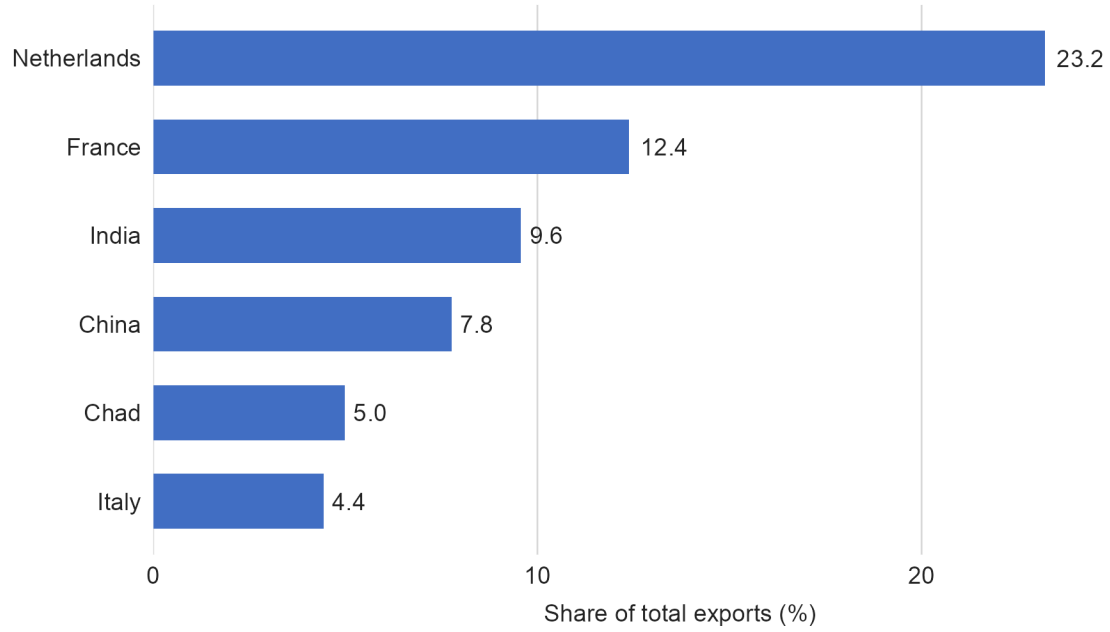
Source: Figure prepared by Centre d'Analyse des Politiques Publiques et de Recherche (CAPPR) using data obtained from World Bank, "Raw Trade Data – Cameroon, HS 2017 Chapters, 2019–2023," World Integrated Trade Solution (WITS), Database, accessed 8 November 2026.

4. Merchandise Export Destinations by Country

In 2023, the six main destinations of Cameroon's merchandise exports together received 62.3% of the country's total exports (Figure 3). These destinations were:

- the Netherlands: US$1.2 billion (23.2% of total exports);
- France: US$615.0 million (12.4%);
- India: US$475.5 million (9.6%);
- China: US$385.4 million (7.8%);
- Chad: US$247.9 million (5.0%); and
- Italy: US$220.3 million (4.4%).

Figure 3 – Six Main Destinations of Cameroon's Merchandise Exports, 2023 (% of total exports)



Note: Shares are calculated relative to the total value of Cameroon's exports. The ranking excludes unspecified or non-geographic partners, which accounted for less than 0.1% of the total.

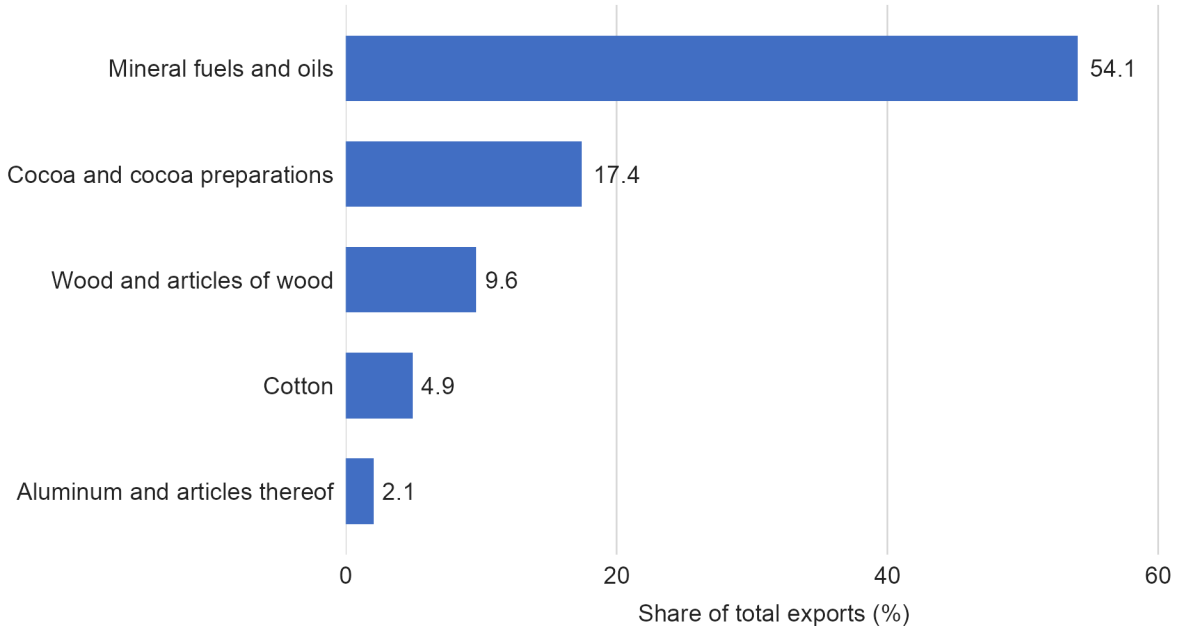
Source: Figure prepared by Centre d'Analyse des Politiques Publiques et de Recherche (CAPPR) using data obtained from World Bank, "Raw Trade Data – Cameroon, HS 2017 Chapters, 2019–2023," World Integrated Trade Solution (WITS), Database, accessed 8 November 2026.

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 2023, the five chapters with the highest export value together accounted for 88.1% of Cameroon's total exports (Figure 4). These chapters were:

- mineral fuels and oils (chapter 27): US$2.7 billion (54.1% of total exports);
- cocoa and cocoa preparations (chapter 18): US$864.6 million (17.4%);
- wood and articles of wood (chapter 44): US$479.2 million (9.6%);
- cotton (chapter 52): US$245.8 million (4.9%); and
- aluminum and articles thereof (chapter 76): US$102.7 million (2.1%).

Figure 4 – Highest-Value Exports of Cameroon by Harmonized System Chapter, 2023 (% of total exports)



Note: Products are grouped by chapter of the Harmonized System (HS 2017); shares are calculated relative to the total value of Cameroon's exports.

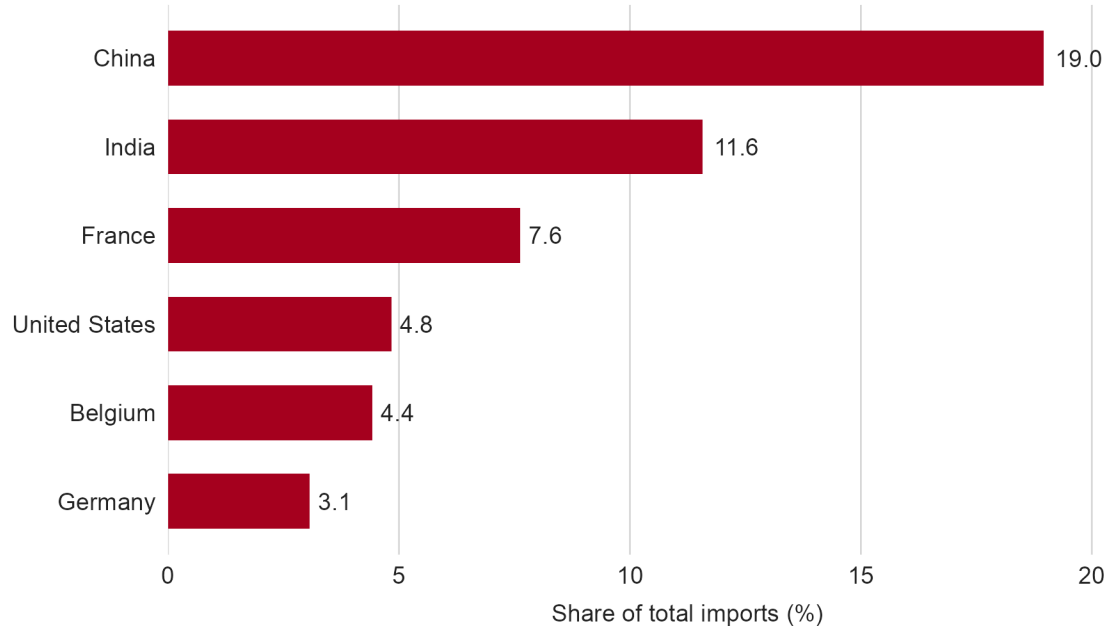
Source: Figure prepared by Centre d'Analyse des Politiques Publiques et de Recherche (CAPPR) using data obtained from World Bank, "Raw Trade Data – Cameroon, HS 2017 Chapters, 2019–2023," World Integrated Trade Solution (WITS), Database, accessed 8 November 2026.

6. Sources of Merchandise Imports by Country

In 2023, Cameroon's six main suppliers together accounted for 50.5% of the country's merchandise imports (Figure 5). These partners were:

- China: US$1.6 billion (19.0% of total imports);
- India: US$959.9 million (11.6%);
- France: US$632.4 million (7.6%);
- the United States: US$400.9 million (4.8%);
- Belgium: US$367.2 million (4.4%); and
- Germany: US$254.5 million (3.1%).

Figure 5 – Six Main Sources of Cameroon's Merchandise Imports, 2023 (% of total imports)



Note: Shares are calculated relative to the total value of Cameroon's imports. The ranking excludes unspecified or non-geographic partners, which accounted for 0.1% of the total.

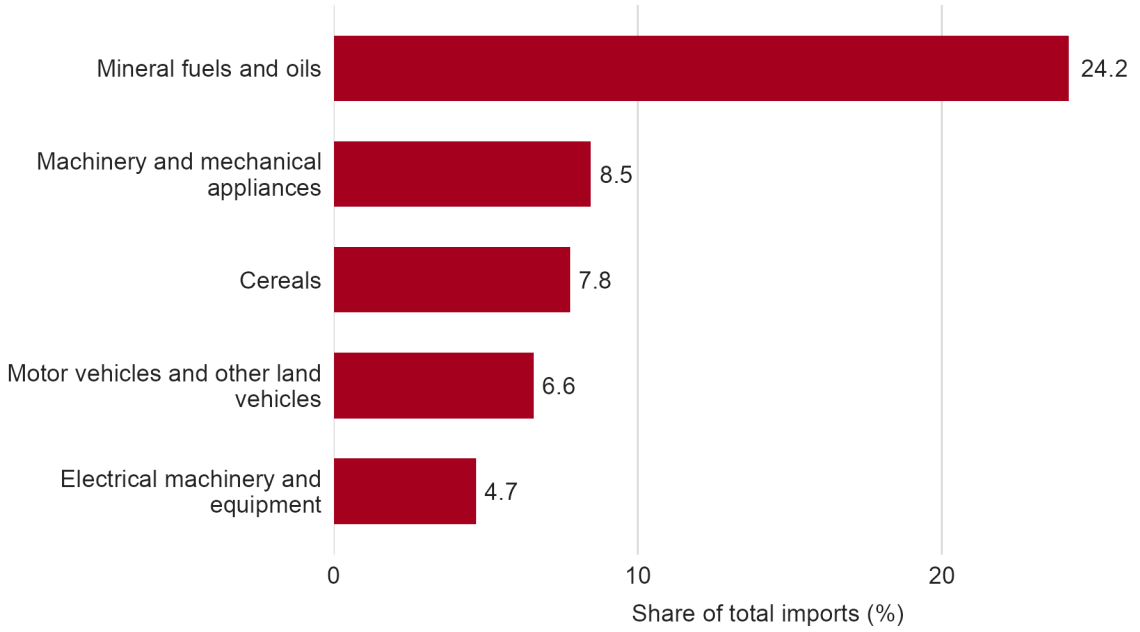
Source: Figure prepared by Centre d'Analyse des Politiques Publiques et de Recherche (CAPPR) using data obtained from World Bank, "Raw Trade Data – Cameroon, HS 2017 Chapters, 2019–2023," World Integrated Trade Solution (WITS), Database, accessed 8 November 2026.

7. Highest-Value Imports by Product Category

In 2023, the five HS chapters with the highest import value together accounted for 51.7% of Cameroon's total imports (Figure 6). These chapters were:

- mineral fuels and oils (chapter 27): US$2.0 billion (24.2% of total imports);
- machinery and mechanical appliances (chapter 84): US$701.7 million (8.5%);
- cereals (chapter 10): US$644.4 million (7.8%);
- motor vehicles and other land vehicles (chapter 87): US$545.8 million (6.6%); and
- electrical machinery and equipment (chapter 85): US$388.7 million (4.7%).

Figure 6 – Highest-Value Imports of Cameroon by Harmonized System Chapter, 2023 (% of total imports)



Note: Products are grouped by chapter of the Harmonized System (HS 2017); shares are calculated relative to the total value of Cameroon'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 – Cameroon, HS 2017 Chapters, 2019–2023," World Integrated Trade Solution (WITS), Database, accessed 8 November 2026.

Methodological Note

The data come from Cameroon'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.