The science of premium™
Over 50% of gifts given in China are food.

Affluent, internet-savvy consumers are happy to spend well over NZ$300 to send the right message.

Imported foods have huge appeal and consumers definitely want more food gifts from New Zealand.

GIFTING IS AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN CHINESE CULTURE AND THANKS TO A BOOMING ECONOMY AND RAPID SOCIAL CHANGE THE PRACTICE IS RISING IN FREQUENCY AND VALUE.

The convergence of key trends in diet, food safety and health & wellness, plus a thirst for foreign brands, means imported food is riding this wave, topping the list of most commonly purchased gifts.

During 2015 Plant & Food Research worked with Mintel to discover more about the drivers of this huge market. We looked for insight into the cultural background of gifting and hard data on what food gifts Chinese consumers want to buy and receive.

Focus groups in Shanghai and Beijing, plus a 2000-person online survey in four Tier 1 cities across China, revealed the value and frequency of food gifting. They also showed that New Zealand, with its established reputation for food quality and safety, could make a big impact – if we can package, brand and market our food exports to meet what could be the most valuable food niche in the world.
In Chinese culture, gifting acts as a key signal on the value of a relationship to both giver and receiver, helping to define the expectations each has for the outcome of that relationship.

**WHY GIFTING?**

**1. PRICE**

Gifting helps secure future needs

In Beijing Focus Group A, Liping, 32, and Beijing Focus Group B, Jie, 36, agreed a low price gift “will be quite embarrassing”.

**2. SCARCELY**

Gifting helps to secure future needs

Scarcity of New Zealand foods, many packaged as gifts for others, is a major point of attraction for gifting.

**3. RISK**

Gifting is seen as an ideal gift

Neatly wrapped presents of acclaimed New Zealand foods, many packaged as gifts for others, are a major point of attraction for gifting.

**4. USEFUL**

Gifting builds a relationship

Food is a gift, it has great practicality.

**5. BEAUTIFUL**

Gifting gives you an opportunity to have a yarn with your Chinese consumers said were important to them.

**INSIGHT**

food highly for taste, quality, packaging, design, expensiveness and scarcity. Ninety-nine percent of survey respondents said they like gifting internationally recognized food products. Seventy-eight percent of New Zealand foods, many packaged as gifts for others, is a major point of attraction for gifting.

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- **Price and quality matter when gifting in China** because they correlate directly with the perceived value of the relationship and its outcomes. While allowances are made for price and quality, there is a perceived expectation that the value of the gift needs to be proportionate to the respect, care or services offered and exchanged in the relationship. If the value of the gift fails to meet any perceived expectation, or if they do not feel it adequately represents the giver’s respect, care or services offered and exchanged in the relationship, the receiver may decline a gift if they do not feel it adequately represents the giver’s respect, care or services offered and exchanged in the relationship.

- **The frequency of gift giving is higher and higher over the years**, and the costs of gifts are also higher and higher over the years, and the dignity and respect offered by a gift. Seventy-four percent of survey respondents said gift buying was increasing in frequency and value of gifts was much higher.

- **This act of gifting is a way to signal a desire for** friendship underpinned relationships with employers, clients, doctors and teachers.

- **To better understand motivations for food gifting**, we explored the types of relationships Chinese consumers said were important to them. Our 2000 online survey participants described their relationships with parents, friends, colleagues, and an ex-social circle, where emotional links generated by kinship or friendship underpinned relationships with employers, clients, doctors and teachers.

- **Relationships require maintenance**. Gifting gives me an opportunity to have a yarn with you, to enhance our relationship.

**WHY GIFTING?**

In Chinese culture, gifting acts as a key signal on the value of a relationship to both giver and receiver, helping to define the expectations each has for the outcome of that relationship.
This brochure is an entrée. Our full report, CHINA: FOOD AS A GIFT, digs deeper and reveals more. We’re also adding to our knowledge on the Chinese consumer all the time, with an ongoing research effort by our own Consumer & Product Insights Group and the best partners in market and consumer research. If you’d like more detail and to access this or other Plant & Food Research-led studies on Asian consumers, contact us.

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