

China Bans Seafood from Japan

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- August 24, 2023, China announced it is banning imports of all seafood from Japan in response to Tokyo's decision to begin releasing radioactive waste water from the Fukushima nuclear plant.
- The [discharge](#) began at 1:00PM local time, according to state-owned electricity firm Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO). TEPCO stated that it expects to discharge only around 200 or 210 cubic meters of treated wastewater. From Friday, it plans to then release 456 cubic meters of treated wastewater over a 24-hour period and a total of 7,800 cubic meters over a 17-day period. TEPCO also stated that the operation would be suspended immediately and an investigation conducted if any abnormalities are detected in the discharge equipment or the dilution levels of the treated wastewater.
- Japan's devastating [2011 earthquake and tsunami](#) caused water within the Fukushima nuclear plant to be [contaminated](#) with highly radioactive material. The wastewater has been continually treated over the years to filter out harmful elements and will be heavily diluted with clean water to minimize concentrations of radioactive material when it is finally released.
- The ban was aimed at preventing "the risk of radioactive contamination of food safety caused by Japan's Fukushima nuclear contaminated water discharge," and to protect the health of Chinese consumers, according to a statement released by the Chinese customs department.
- In response to the release, Ministry of Commerce spokesperson Shu Jueting called it "extremely selfish and irresponsible" and said it would "cause damage and harm to the global marine environment that cannot be predicted."
- The total ban on Japanese seafood expands on previous regulations that had already halted imports from Fukushima and nine other regions in Japan. [Hong Kong](#) has also announced a similar ban on food imported from parts of Japan. Mainland China and Hong Kong represent Japan's top two biggest export markets for seafood, according to Japanese customs data.

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