

Western Cape Goods Trade Trends, 2025: Top 10 Export and Import Products

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1. KEY POINTS

This report aims to present a snapshot overview of Western Cape trade performance over the 2021–2025 period, highlighting the province's steady goods export growth, more volatile import cycle, and the reshuffle within the top export products as the latest 2025 trade data is released. The report also provides a concise, data-backed view of overall trade trends, the direction of the trade balance, and the products driving growth and concentration risks.

- **Steady goods export growth:** Goods exports rose consistently from ZAR160.9bn in 2021 to ZAR219.7bn in 2025, a 36.56% increase over five years, with year-on-year growth slowing but positive. Imports were larger and more volatile, peaking at ZAR337.9bn, while the trade deficit persisted throughout the period.
- **Top goods export products and shifts:** Goods exports are heavily concentrated in fresh fruit exports. Citrus fruit remained the largest export product in currency terms in 2025, at ZAR30.90bn equivalent to a 14.1% share of total export earnings. Apples, pears, and quinces were the second largest export category, valued at ZAR15.48bn and accounted for a 7.0% share of total export earnings, followed by grapes at ZAR14.67bn (with a 6.7% share). Petroleum oils (non-crude) valued at ZAR13.13bn placed fourth, down two positions from 2024 on account of a 24% y-o-y decline in export earnings.
- **Top import products and shifts:** The import structure remained concentrated in petroleum imports. The combined share of both crude and non-crude petroleum oils in 2025 was 41.4% of total import costs, with a total associated cost of ZAR139.93bn. A stronger growth was observed in electric generating equipment and mineral or chemical fertilisers, including petroleum oils. This shows sustained medium-term expansions as opposed to short-term spikes.
- **Trade balance and growth dynamics:** Despite export growth, the Western Cape remained a net importer of goods throughout the five-year period, as reflected by the (goods) trade deficit. Export growth rates slowed but remained positive, whereas import growth rates exhibited larger cyclical swings.

2. Western Cape Trade: Steady Export Growth, Volatile Imports

The Western Cape's trade profile over the past five years tells a clear story:

- **Exports** are on a steady upward trajectory, reaching a high of ZAR219.7bn in 2025, a 4.61% year-on-year (y-o-y) increase on the ZAR210.06bn earned in 2024, and some 36.56% greater than the ZAR160.9bn earned in 2021.
- **Imports** are larger and more volatile, swinging sharply in 2022, moderating through 2024, and rising again in 2025 to a cost of ZAR337.93bn, up from ZAR319.36bn incurred in 2024.

Exports grew consistently throughout the five-year period under review, albeit at a slowing growth rate, while imports showed larger cyclical swings.

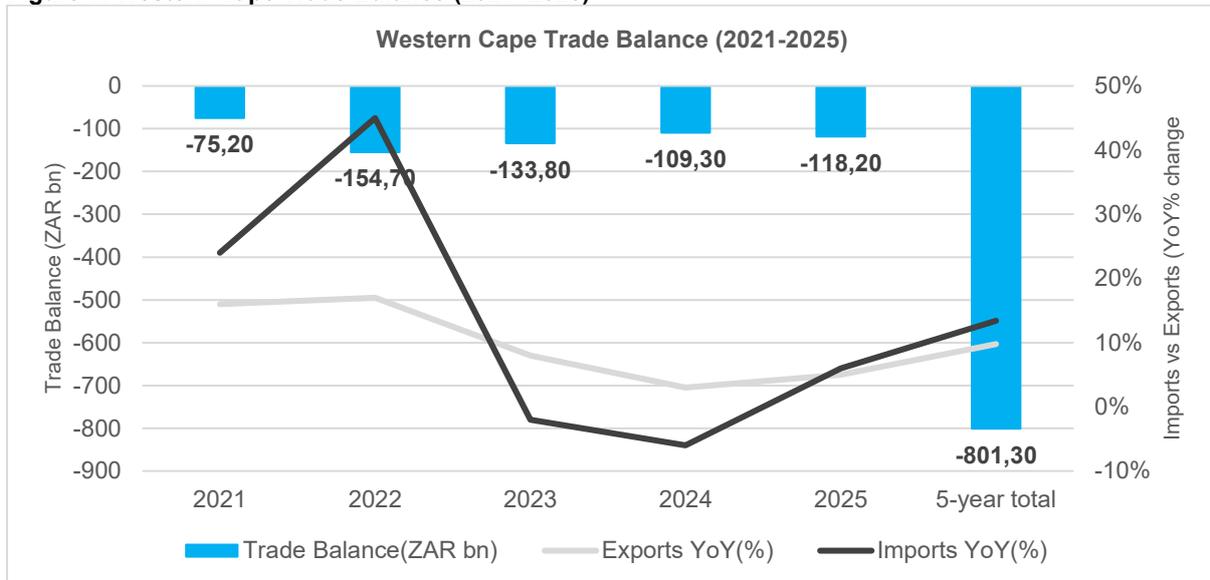
Table 1: Western Cape Total Goods Exports and Imports Values, 2021-2025

Year	Exports (ZAR)	Exports Growth (%), YoY	Imports (ZAR)	Imports Growth (%), YoY
2021	160,913,896,178	16%	236,145,822,670	24%
2022	188,708,245,718	17%	343,396,666,810	45%
2023	204,165,340,630	8%	338,008,432,073	-2%
2024	210,059,322,694	3%	319,364,371,120	-6%
2025	219,745,566,795	5%	337,926,233,597	6%
5-year total	773,533,049,321	10%	1,574,841,526,270	13%

Source: Quantec 2026

As a net importer, the province's global goods trade balance remained firmly in deficit throughout the five-year period under consideration.

Figure 1: Western Cape Trade Balance (2021–2025)



Source: Quantec 2026

3. Top Export Products: Concentration, Ranking Shifts and Growth Leaders 2024 vis-à-vis 2025

Goods exports are heavily concentrated in fresh fruit exports. Citrus fruit remained the largest export product in currency terms in 2025, at ZAR30.90bn equivalent to a 14.1% share of total export earnings. Apples, pears, and quinces were the second largest export category, valued at ZAR15.48bn and accounted for an 7.0% share of total export earnings, followed by grapes at ZAR14.67bn (with a 6.7% share). Petroleum oils (non-crude) valued at ZAR13.13bn placed fourth, down two positions from 2024 on account of a 24% y-o-y decline in export earnings. The dominance of agricultural products in the upper tier of the export basket suggests that a demand shock, disease outbreak, or trade restriction affecting fruit markets would have a disproportionate impact. Minerals and industrial goods were present but not dominant in 2025.

The rankings show that agricultural and seafood products are climbing in rank, while petroleum and mineral-based exports are slipping. Fish, frozen, excluding fish fillets and other fish meat (frozen) moved up (+4), fish fillets and other fish meat (frozen or chilled) moved up (+3), and apricots, cherries, and peaches moved up (+2). Petroleum oils (non-crude) dropped (-2), chromium ores and concentrates dropped (-2), and fruit juices dropped (-2).

In 2025, growth was concentrated in agriculture and food processing, while some industrial categories declined. A strong rebound was observed for fish excluding fish fillets and other fish meat (frozen) (with a 37% y-o-y growth), apricots, cherries, peaches (31%), fish fillets, and other fish meat (frozen or chilled) (32%) and citrus fruit (26%). This suggests favourable global demand or improved export competitiveness. Petroleum oils declined by 24%, chromium and parts for engines also declined, possibly indicating exposure to global industrial demand cycles, cyclical weakness, and/or global commodity slowdowns.

Table 2: Top 15 Export Products: Value + Growth Snapshot, 2021-2025

2025 Rank	Ranking 2024 vs 2025	Export Product	2025 Export Value (ZAR)	%Share Exports 2025	% Growth, y-o-y 2025	5-year Export Value Total (ZAR)	Avg. Growth (%), (2021-2025)
1	0	Citrus fruit, fresh or dried	30 895 193 588	14.1%	26%	118 360 179 247	11%
2	▲1	Apples, pears, and quinces, fresh	15 481 038 359	7.0%	11%	61 419 380 029	11%
3	▲1	Grapes, fresh or dried	14 674 234 414	6.7%	7%	58 705 000 885	14%
4	▼2	Petroleum oils and oils obtained from bituminous minerals, other than crude	13 126 405 098	6.0%	-24%	71 022 857 460	15%
5	0	Wine of fresh grapes	9 210 610 027	4.2%	-4%	49 470 472 714	0%
6	▲1	Other fruit, fresh	4 629 563 368	2.1%	11%	19 444 903 968	11%
7	▼1	Yachts and other vessels for pleasure or sports; rowing boats and canoes	4 263 944 306	1.9%	-4%	18 610 293 800	21%
8	▲2	Apricots, cherries, peaches (including nectarines), plums, and sloes, fresh	4 165 715 493	1.9%	31%	15 569 491 636	23%
9	▲3	Fish fillets and other fish, fresh, chilled, or frozen	3 583 762 511	1.6%	32%	12 924 774 652	13%
10	▼2	Chromium ores and concentrates	3 492 756 410	1.6%	-4%	11 043 952 901	47%
11	▼2	Fruit juices (including grape must) and vegetable juices	3 420 398 524	1.6%	-2%	15 131 412 447	9%
12	▲4	Fish, frozen, excluding fish fillets and other fish meat	2 559 160 676	1.2%	37%	10 008 519 808	5%
13	▲1	Beauty or make-up preparations and preparations for the care of the skin (other than medicaments)	2 499 957 706	1.1%	3%	11 398 917 273	4%
14	▲1	Parts for engines	2 344 108 023	1.1%	-3%	12 666 666 258	18%
15	▲2	Niobium, tantalum, vanadium or zirconium ores and concentrates	1 944 749 956	0.9%	6%	7 073 244 004	63%

Source: Quantec 2026

Figure 2 compares the overall value of Western Cape goods exports to its top 15 export products in 2025 with each product's cumulative exports over the past five years, alongside the average annual growth rate over that period. Citrus fruit continues to dominate exports, reaching a value of ZAR30.90bn in 2025 (with a 14.1% share of the total export basket) and accumulating a total export value of ZAR983.59bn over the past five years. Other key products with relatively high five-year export value totals included apples, pears and quinces, wine, grapes, and petroleum oils (non-crude). export products, including niobium, tantalum, vanadium, and zinc ores and concentrates; chromium ores and concentrates; and apricots, cherries, and peaches, were the engines of growth over the past five years. This suggests that high-value niche mineral products, luxury goods segments, and processed fruit expansion are medium-term growth contributors.

Figure 2: Western Cape Exports — Top 15 Export Products (2025 Value, 5-Year Import Total and Average Growth, 2021–2025)

	2025 Export Value (ZARbn)	5-year Export Value Total (ZARbn)	Avg. Growth (%), (2021-2025)
Citrus fruit	30.9	118.36	11.15%
Apples, pears and quinces	15.48	61.42	11.02%
Grapes	14.67	58.71	14.06%
Petroleum oils and oils obtained from bituminous minerals, other than crude	13.13	71.02	14.62%
Wine	9.21	49.47	0.12%
Other fruit, fresh	4.63	19.44	11.06%
Yachts and other vessels for pleasure or sports; rowing boats and canoes	4.26	18.61	20.54%
Apricots, cherries, peaches (including nectarines), plums and sloes	4.17	15.57	23.08%
Fish fillets and other fish meat, fresh, chilled or frozen	3.58	12.92	13.38%
Chromium ores and concentrates	3.49	11.04	46.63%
Fruit juices (including grape must) and vegetable juices	3.42	15.13	8.72%
Fish, frozen, excluding fish fillets and other fish meat	2.56	10.01	5.1%
Beauty or make-up preparations and preparations for the care of the skin (other than medicaments)	2.5	11.4	3.94%
Parts for engines	2.34	12.67	18.1%
Niobium, tantalum, vanadium or zirconium ores and concentrates	1.94	7.07	62.91%

Source: Quantec 2026

4. Western Cape Imports Top 10 Import Products: Concentration, Ranking Shifts and Growth Leaders 2024 vis-à-vis 2025

The import structure is concentrated in petroleum imports. The combined share of non-crude and crude petroleum oils was 41.41% of total imports in 2025. This indicates a heavy structural dependence on imported energy, posing significant exposure to risks of global oil price volatility and currency risk transmission through fuel imports. The secondary-tier products ranked 3–7 each accounted for approximately 1%–1.3% of imports. These include undenatured alcohol, footwear, telephone sets, mineral or chemical fertilisers, and electric generating sets. Following petroleum, import concentration drops sharply, which suggests a highly skewed import structure and limited diversification at the top.

Significant upward movers included automatic data processing machines (up by 11 positions); electric generating sets (5), waters (beverages) (6); t-shirts, singlets and other vests, knitted or crocheted (4); medicaments (2). Downward shifts were observed for other footwear (1), men's suits (2), and leather footwear (2). Declines are mainly in apparel and low-complexity consumer goods, indicating either domestic substitution, reduced demand, and/or changes in competitive sourcing.

Overall, the growth in imports was strong and broad-based in 2025, driven by electric generating sets which recorded a 57% y-o-y increase in associated import costs, automatic data processing machines (53% increase y-o-y), mineral/chemical fertilisers (29% y-o-y), and waters (beverages) (22% y-o-y) among others. Contractions were concentrated in low-value consumer footwear, including leather footwear which recorded a decline of 9% y-o-y in associated import costs), and rubber/plastic footwear (-4% y-o-y). This may reflect softening demand, local substitution, and/or cost pressures on households.

Table 3: Top 15 Import Products: Value + Growth Snapshot, 2021-2025

2025 Rank	Ranking 2024 vs 2025	Import Product	2025 Import Value (ZAR)	%Share of imports	% Growth, (y-o-y) 2025	5-year Import Value Total (ZAR)	Avg. Growth (%), (2021-2025)
1	0	Petroleum oils and oils obtained from bituminous minerals, other than crude	96 882 436 068	28.70%	6%	557 255 083 607	40%
2	0	Petroleum oils and oils obtained from bituminous minerals, crude	43 043 295 325	12.70%	17%	122 625 961 960	82%
3	▲1	Undenatured ethyl alcohol of	4 539 024 235	1.30%	11%	17 510 925 319	24%
4	▼1	Other footwear with outer soles and uppers of rubber or plastics	4 158 658 192	1.20%	-4%	17 830 882 999	14%
5	0	Telephone sets	4 058 910 341	1.20%	2%	18 538 019 055	15%
6	0	Mineral or chemical fertilisers	3 965 497 018	1.20%	29%	580 308708	114%
7	▲5	Electric generating sets and rotary converters	3 680 770 880	1.10%	57%	6 636 015 123	174%
8	▲2	Medicaments	3 039 557 002	0.90%	17%	12 362 783 410	8%
9	▼2	Men's or boys' suits, ensembles, jackets, blazers, trousers, bib and brace overalls, breeches and shorts (other than swimwear)	3 025 828 850	0.90%	7%	13 748 672 867	8%
10	▲11	Automatic data processing machines and units	2 805 405 595	0.80%	53%	9 738 827 854	20%
11	0	Women's or girls' suits, ensembles, jackets, blazers, dresses, skirts, divided skirts, trousers, bib and brace overalls, breeches, and shorts (other than swimwear)	2 802 003 868	0.80%	17%	11 603 509 103	11%
12	▲4	T-shirts, singlets and other vests, knitted or crocheted	2 511 289 882	0.70%	19%	10 606 985 453	10%
13	▲6	Waters, including mineral waters and aerated waters, containing added sugar or other sweetening matter or flavoured	2 399 240 626	0.70%	22%	7 998 747 102	29%
14	0	Electric instantaneous or storage water heaters and immersion heaters; electric space heating apparatus and soil heating apparatus	2 324 792 706	0.70%	8%	9 516 290 688	11%
15	▼2	Footwear with outer soles of rubber, plastics, leather or composition leather and uppers of textile materials	1 974 336 292	0.60%	-9%	11 249 820 278	4%

Source: Quantec 2026

Figure 3 distinguishes import concentration (2025 values and 5-year totals) with momentum (average 5-year growth). Petroleum oils (non-crude) dominate on scale, combined with stronger growth. There was also meaningful scale and growth in crude oil. also exhibiting stronger growth was electric generating sets and rotary convertors (with an AAGR of 173.93%); mineral or chemical fertilisers (101.13%); although coming off a low base/scale. These are not short-term spikes but show sustained medium-term expansions.

Figure 3: Western Cape Imports — Top 15 Import Products (2025 Value, 5-Year Import Total and Average Growth, 2021–2025)

	2025 Import Value (ZARbn)	5-year Import Value Total (ZARbn)	Avg. Growth (%), (2021-2025)
Petroleum oils and oils obtained from bituminous minerals, other than crude	96.88	557.26	40.03%
Petroleum oils and oils obtained from bituminous minerals, crude	43.04	122.63	82.47%
Undenatured ethyl alcohol	4.54	17.51	24.01%
Other footwear with outer soles and uppers of rubber or plastics	4.16	17.83	14.38%
Telephone sets	4.06	18.54	14.73%
Mineral or chemical fertilisers containing two or three of the fertilising elements nitrogen	3.97	12.58	113.79%
Electric generating sets and rotary convertors	3.68	6.64	173.93%
Medicaments	3.04	12.36	7.87%
Men's or boys' suits, ensembles, jackets, blazers, trousers, bib and brace overalls, breeches and shorts (other than swimwear)	3.03	13.75	8.03%
Automatic data processing machines and units	2.81	9.74	19.91%
Women's or girls' suits, ensembles, jackets, blazers, dresses, skirts, divided skirts, trousers, bib and brace overalls, breeches and shorts (other than swimwear)	2.8	11.6	10.72%
T-shirts, singlets and other vests, knitted or crocheted	2.51	10.61	9.76%
Waters, including mineral waters and aerated waters	2.4	8	29.01%
Electric instantaneous or storage water heaters and immersion heaters	2.32	9.52	11.04%
Footwear with outer soles of rubber, plastics, leather or composition leather and uppers of textile materials	1.97	11.25	3.92%

Source: Quantec 2026

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