

China Slaps 200% Import Tax on Australian Wine Amid Tensions

China added wine to the growing list of Australian goods barred from its markets, stepping up its trade war against Australia.

By [Al-Jazeera](#)

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China on Friday added wine to the growing list of Australian goods barred from its markets in a trade war against Australia over disputes including its support for an inquiry into the origin of the coronavirus.

The Ministry of Commerce imposed import taxes of up to 212.1 percent, effective Saturday, which Australia's trade minister said make Australian wine unsellable in China, his country's biggest export market.

China is increasingly using its populous market as leverage to extract political concessions and increase its strategic influence.

Earlier, China stopped or reduced imports of beef, coal, barley, seafood, sugar and timber from Australia after it supported calls for an inquiry into the origin of the coronavirus pandemic, which began in China in December.

China's ruling Communist Party is trying to deflect criticism of its handling of the outbreak, which plunged the global economy into its deepest slump since the 1930s, by arguing the virus came from abroad, despite little evidence to support that.

Meanwhile, Australia is working on a mutual defence treaty with Japan, which Chinese leaders see as a strategic rival, and has joined Washington and Southeast Asian governments in expressing concern about China's construction of military facilities on islands in the disputed South China Sea, a busy trade route.

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