

What is next for commodities?

UBS House View Briefcase

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Key message

Renewed tensions in the Middle East strengthen the case for broad commodity exposure as both a source of return and an inflation hedge. Energy can help buffer portfolios if shipping or production disruptions persist, industrial metals should stay supported by investment in AI and electrification. Agricultural commodities have upside potential given El Niño-related risks, while gold remains a useful strategic diversifier. We favor active management because commodity leadership is likely to rotate as geopolitical conditions, inventories, and demand expectations change.

01 Renewed tensions in the Middle East highlight the case for broad commodity exposure.

- Attacks from the Iran-aligned Houthis opened a new front in the US-Iran war, disrupting another vital waterway for global energy supplies.
- Brent crude oil has risen nearly 33% so far in July, with the latest data showing a decline in loading activity within the Persian Gulf, and an increase in the volume of stranded oil.
- Broad commodities have also recovered from their late June lows, based on the UBS CMCI Composite total return index (USD), with year-to-date gains of 24.5%.

02 But fundamentals are also supportive for commodities.

- AI infrastructure and electrification underpin the long-term outlook of industrial metals such as copper.
- Forecasts point to an 81% probability that the current El Niño episode develops into a "very strong" or "super" El Niño by the end of the year and a 97% chance that the conditions persist into next year.
- Gold should continue to be supported by central bank demand and reserve diversification despite more challenging near-term outlook.

03 So, we continue to favor commodities, with a focus on active management.

- Commodities have historically shown low correlations with equities and bonds, making them a useful portfolio diversifier.
- A diversified, regularly rebalanced exposure is the simplest way to capture most of the asset class's benefits, while selective tilts can add value when conviction is high.
- However, investors must be aware of unique risks such as price swings and costs associated with futures or physical holdings.

New this week

Brent crude oil hit USD 100/bbl last week for the first time in two months, as Houthi attacks in the Red Sea disrupted another vital waterway for global energy supplies.

One liner

Broad commodity exposure can enhance portfolio diversification, improve portfolios' inflation resilience, and provide access to structural demand trends.

Did you know?

- Investors can access commodities through diversified indices, exchange-traded funds (ETFs), exchange-traded commodities (ETCs), or structured investments.
- From January 1999 through May 2026, commodities showed a correlation of 0.44 with global equities and -0.04 with US bonds, supporting their role as a differentiated return source.
- For investors with substantial allocations and significant unrealized profits in gold, broadening commodity exposure to include copper, aluminum, and agricultural assets can help diversify sources of future return, in our view.

Investment view

Commodities will continue to play a prominent role in portfolios, in our view, offering diversification amid supply-demand imbalances, geopolitical risks, and the global energy transition. We like broad commodity exposure, with an active approach amid still elevated volatility.

Non-Traditional Assets

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