



PREMIER FRUITS HEADLINES

January proved very difficult in terms of produce due to global weather conditions. Spain and Italy suffered through storm Gloria with major flooding and after that freezing conditions reaching minus eight in growing regions.

Kenya more heavy rain has affected both quality and availability on all produce. Costa Rica, Panama, suffered heavy rain causing delays in packing operations.

UK persistent Rain, then minus temperature's, then high temperatures for this time of year. All of above will effect February to start with at least and this has proved difficult with **salads, Pineapples, Berries**, and will cause shortfalls on citrus season.



FOOD SERVICE

UK Rhubarb from Yorkshire triangle coming in with full flow.

UK Celeriac, Cavolo nero (black cabbage), Jerusalem artichokes, Golden and candy beetroots, Turnips and Variegated kales all fantastic quality and good value.

Italian bitter leaves Treviso, Tardivo, Castel franco from our growers in Italy will be available throughout February.

Blood oranges from Sicily is in season and very brix levels.

Cardoon, Cime di rapa, Grelot onions and Puntarella will be available this month.

Forage produce Three corned garlic, Sea beets, Sea purslane, Wild alexanders, and all readily available and very good quality.

Tarragon has proved very difficult in January with major shortages but will improve in February.

SPECIALITY FINE FOODS

February is often one of the coldest months, with very few animals grazing in fields. Hard cheese was made to feed people throughout winter, all hard cheese aged between sixteen and twenty-two months are at their best. **Montgomery Cheddar**, specially matured by Jamie Montgomery for us. Comte Reserve, grainy, still fruity, most sold cheese in winter in France. Beaufort, intense aromas of torrefaction, from the French Alps mountains. **Abundance**, rich Classic Alpine cheese. **Wykes** vintage cheddar, kept for a minimum of five hundred days. Let us not forget soft **Reblochon** to cook a **Tartiflette**, or Gruyere and **Emmenthal** for a friendly Cheese Fondue.



FRUITS

UK Bramley apples predicted to finish mid-February and have and will continue to be very expensive throughout February. Apples Royal gala will remain from Europe even though slowing down in volumes arriving quality is still very good.

Braeburn apples still arriving with good pressure levels although volume will now slow down. UK Coxes and Russet apples very limited supply available.

Granny smith apple even though less volumes available than last year available there is good quality fruit available. Red Delicious / Chief apples no issues and very good quality.

European **Golden delicious** apples Also arriving in very good condition and good value. Some very nice UK Jazz apples available.

Pink Lady apples still available from Europe but very small volumes arriving causing high market prices.

Pears European season has been difficult and is expected to continue that way with a lot less volume on **conference pears** arriving out of Europe. Packhams pears from South Africa will replace Italian **Williams** and **Comice pears** to start in February until South African Williams pears start late February.

Grapefruit star ruby and Marsh will be from Cyprus and Turkey with very good quality available.

Grapes red will be South African and quality has been good. **Galia** and **Cantaloupe** melon no issues expected with very good volumes available.

Grapes White will be more difficult as  South African season is ending and Indian season is not due to start until around second week of February.

Easy peelers Spanish and Moroccan clementine's moving varieties to the late hernandina, focusing to North African, we will be working Moroccan Nardocotts mainly, excellent quality and good availability, different seedless varieties available also available as Egyptian Murcott

Peaches and **Nectarines** from South Africa now come to end of season. Chilean fruit will start towards mid-February but is not the same in terms of quality or taste with normal lower brix levels.

Plums will switch over from early red varieties to black varieties and we do not expect any quality issues.

Lemons Primofiori from Spain will continue throughout February. We are seeing odd skin problems due to the weather in January already.

Oranges Navelina, Salustiana still available although will be changing over to Lane Late and Navel Late. Egyptian Valencia will start in February with good quality and availability.

Melons Water and **Yellow** making higher prices on market due lower volumes arriving of good quality fruit from South American countries.

VEGETABLES

Broccoli will remain difficult in February due to the lack of plantings in October. This will also cause issues later in the year as very little seeds were planted in January.

Butternut Squash from Portugal and Spain is facing the same issues with weather.

Cauliflowers will be arriving from France this month as English winter crop is ending and the quality deteriorates.

UK Brussels sprouts and Sprout stalks still very good quality.

UK January **king cabbages** will be available this month.

UK **Spring green** and **Savoy** cabbage will prove a bit more difficult due to UK weather.



UK Red cabbage, white cabbage good quality and great value.

Leeks are fantastic volumes and quality during this month.

Spanish onion with excellent quality and price very conservative for this time of year.

Sweet potato will rise in price as Egyptian crop is ending so it will be American crop moving forward.

UK Carrots good volumes still arriving.

UK Parsnips arriving in good quality.

UK Swede no issues expected.

Courgettes are difficult from Spain and not enough volume arriving from Morocco.

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EXOTICS

Asparagus Mexican will be starting as Peruvian season ends.

Limes bad weather in Mexico has kept the price high in January but Brazilian fruit will be starting in February providing much more availability.

Pineapples current bad weather in Costa Rica has made it difficult and it will be expensive during February.

Mangoes will be available from Brazil and Peru all very good fruit.

Pomegranate new season Indian in full flow and Peruvian crop will be available in February.

Chillies Padron pepper is plentiful with a choice of Moroccan and Spanish, both excellent quality. Red Chillies will be from Spain.

Strawberries should now be full flow from Spain but due to the weather, we are seeing fruit with white Shoulders and bruising. There is better fruit and we are doing everything to make sure we have this but it is a patient game with berries. Moroccan fruit is better in terms of colour but mainly selling to retailers.

Raspberries will be from Spain and we are not hearing of issues other than small fruit.

Blueberries very good fruit from South America available and good value.

Blackberries available from Mexico but again they are having a bad weather which has affected the crop.

Garlic from Spain, no issues now season is in full flow.

Ginger available from China and Brazil with no issues although we expect arrivals to slow down or stop from China towards late February.

Beans, Mangetout, Sugar snap, Tenderstem Broccoli has been a little difficult due to weather in Kenya. We will be receiving better quantities from Egypt, Guatemala, making it better in February.

SALADS

Iceberg, Cos, Gem as per information above with the weather situation in January this will be a difficult period both in terms of quality and availability.

Baby leaf salad from Italy coming through well despite so difficult growing conditions.

Cucumbers from Spain will remain difficult in February.

Aubergines like **cucumbers** have been effect by weather conditions and so it will be same issues.

Peppers not quite the same as above as we do have some product arriving from Morocco as well. Although not enough volume for the UK hence why prices are high. In general, we take twenty percent from Morocco and eighty percent from Spain.

Tomatoes all varieties arriving in very good condition from Morocco.

Chicory no issues expected.

Very good **Fennel** arriving daily from Italy.

Radicchio lettuce from Italy is fantastic quality and good value.

Spring onions will continue to arrive from Mexico and Egypt.



As fresh as it gets!

Continue



Rungis

February could mean the beginning of spring, given the new products that should arrive. Early white asparagus from Spain and France, the first of the green and if we are lucky there should be some green from the prestigious Pertuis grower. The menus should also be beginning to feature peas (and broad beans) too, which are in season in Spain, along with artichokes, in particular the large globe Calico, and the more purple Salambo. The Italians on the other hand, should be sending good broccoli during February and multi coloured chard. Last year saw a real shortage of coloured cauliflower but some purple did arrive from Italy about now.

The French are moving towards spring with (naked) cucumbers starting and one of our favourite growers of courgette starts his season with long thin green ones, closely followed by the yellow and then round varieties. Wild garlic leaves should begin to appear, depending on how cold it is. The UK ones appeared before the French ones last year, as the West Country remained warmer than North West France! Sea Kale is also around from February.

Chervil Root (or Skirret), the cluster of long thin fingers of roots that can be used much like salsify or parsnip, is one of the only new roots to appear. Beautiful, large round white onions come up from Italy now and the French are sending the bunched red grelot onions to market. Fresh, or wet, garlic starts to arrive from Egypt, often in a traditional basket.

The most exciting fruit-of-the-moment is the much-anticipated first Gariguet strawberry, which tends to start in the mid-West of France and move up to Brittany. The pointed shape and slight acidity has made this delicate soft-fruit a firm favourite with the French for a long time (and is now cultivated in the UK too). Most of the other new fruit comes from further afield. The South Africans have sent violet figs in the past with the best ones being grown from French seed. They are also sending one of the best eating plums – the Green-Red which has an unappealing green, mottled skin and a deep red flesh. Cara Cara oranges should arrive from Spain and for a touch of romance, why not try the Braeburn apples with the heat motif cleverly grown into the skin tones. Moscatel grape, both with and without seeds, continues to arrive from Chile, predominantly by air, and most notably in exotics are the longans on the branch and the large, round lychees from Australia.

Citrus continues to be very good with a full range of oranges for eating and juicing, from sweet to almost sour. Lemons with and without the pips, clementine's (still), and Bergamot from Tunisia.



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