



MARKET REPORT

From Field to Festive Feast!

DECEMBER UPDATE

Each month Dole provides an update on what is happening in the marketplace.

We explain which new lines we expect to see in the following month, the produce causing us concern and which lines are at their very best.

OVERVIEW

The festive period has crept up on us like an overexcited elf after one too many drams — suddenly, it's here and demanding attention.

As the industry shifts into Christmas mode, menus tend to slim down while indulgence goes up a notch.

There's still plenty to get excited about, though. The Spanish salad season is in full swing, bringing freshness to the plate just as our homegrown brassicas and roots come into their winter glory.

Whether you're leaning into the classics — think sprouts, parsnips, and potatoes — or hunting for something a little quirkier to catch the eye, December has it all on offer.

And for the forward-thinking chefs already planning for January and beyond, we'll take a peek at what's coming down the line.

After all, 'tis the season to be chilly — but at least the produce is looking rather cool.

VEGETABLES

Cauliflower has bowed out in fine form after a cracking season, handing the baton to imported product. Expect slightly smaller heads and firmer prices as we move through December.

For chefs seeking a twist, Romanesco makes a dazzling understudy — part cauliflower, part broccoli, and all culinary charisma.

Speaking of brassicas, broccoli has also made the trip south, now arriving from Spain with that trademark vibrant green hue and reliable crunch.



Closer to home, carrots continue to shine, joined by the charming Chantenay variety — short, sweet, and bursting with festive cheer (they're basically the vegetable equivalent of a Christmas carol).

And yes, it's that time of year again — sprouts take centre stage! We've got top-quality produce coming in, including both sprout tops and prepped options for the time-pressed kitchen. Whether you roast, shred or smuggle them under bacon, they're looking their seasonal best.

Meanwhile, onions, both red and white are excellent. Their balanced flavour profile makes them the unsung heroes of gravies, stews and just about any dish that deserves a little depth.

And for those already thinking beyond the tinsel, keep an eye out for early arrivals of Yorkshire forced rhubarb from mid-January — the perfect antidote to rich festive fare.

Because after a month of sprouts, it's nice to remember that not every stalk has to end in tears.

FRUIT

Nothing says festive cheer louder than the arrival of the glorious Mac Red apples — the true “baubles” of the fruit world. These Canadian beauties boast creamy white flesh and a sweet, balanced acidity, making them as versatile as they are delicious. Perfect for eating fresh, baking into tarts or simmering down into a glossy sauce that would make even Santa pause for a spoonful.

For those looking to dial up the indulgence, Medjool dates deliver in style. With their rich, caramel-like sweetness and subtle hints of vanilla, they're pure luxury — whether tucked into baking, paired with creamy cheese and walnuts in a salad or simply enjoyed straight from the punnet (chef's treat, of course).

Sharon fruit adds a refreshing twist to winter menus with its smooth, nectarine-like flesh and bright, honeyed notes. Meanwhile, Spanish clementines bring a burst of sunshine to the shortest days, their fragrance alone enough to make the kitchen feel warmer.



Fresh cranberries are also making their annual entrance — tart, tangy and ready to be transformed into that all-important sauce. A true festive classic that deserves its place at every table.

Looking ahead, January will welcome the zesty arrivals of marmalade and blood oranges — perfect for those chefs ready to preserve a little sunshine for the months ahead.

SALAD

Now that we're fully into the Spanish season, salads are very much in Iberian hands — and as always, the weather's the head chef.

Grower reports are looking positive for tomatoes and iceberg, all in good supply for now. However peppers and cucumber prices are trading high and would continue to for the next few weeks.

WHAT'S IN STORE

Cranberries
Blood oranges
Marmalade oranges
Spanish satsumas

AT ITS BEST

Scottish carrots
Scottish parsnips
Mac Red apples
Medjool dates
Cranberries
Sprouts
Clementines
Scottish onions



Celery is one to make the most of this month. Its clean, aromatic bite lifts soups, stocks and rustic sauces beautifully, proving once again that celery might just be the unsung hero of Christmas prep.

Our 500g bags of exotic mixed leaves, crispy salad, rocket and red chard are perfect partners for the busy festive kitchen — a ready-made touch of freshness to balance out the season's heavier dishes. Convenient, versatile and full of subtle flavour, they're the green room stars waiting to support the main act.

Because while the turkeys get all the limelight in December... it's the salads quietly leafing their mark behind the scenes.



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