



MARKET REPORT



From Spring Lift to Summer Shift!

MAY 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

After what has felt like a relentless run of winter challenges, May arrives with a welcome shift in mood – and, finally, a proper splash of green on the horizon. The season is turning with intent now, as Dutch lines gather momentum, UK homegrown produce steps forward and some standout arrivals from Spain begin to add colour, flavour and a touch of early summer confidence to the mix.

It has, however, been a volatile few months across the supply chain, and while there are clear signs of stability returning, a degree of caution remains.

Pricing may begin to ease as volumes improve, but underlying pressures – particularly ongoing disruption in the Middle East and its impact on fuel and logistics - mean the market is not entirely out of the woods just yet.

This is the true bridge between spring and summer – a month where menus can gradually develop, shaped by a growing range of vibrant, seasonal ingredients.

The UK salad season gets underway, bringing improved availability and freshness, while soft fruit have been arriving much-anticipated return, setting the tone for the months ahead.

Whether you're planning for the weeks ahead, building early summer menus, or simply looking to add a fresh twist to the plate, May offers something for every kitchen – with plenty of reasons for cautious optimism.

VEGETABLES



The wild garlic season is nearing its natural finale, with plants beginning to flower by mid-month – a sure sign that this spring favourite is about to bow out after a terrific run.



Asparagus continues to shine, still very much a star of the show, though the season will begin to taper off towards the end of May and into June. Alongside this, Jersey Royals will build in volume, joined by a wave of new-season potatoes.

Elsewhere, maincrop carrots are nearing the end of their season, with imported product from Spain, France and China to bridge the gap until new-crop arrivals begin in June.

Spanish broccoli is also coming to a close, with UK-grown product stepping in ahead of Scottish crops expected in early June.



For a true taste of early Summer, Italian peas begin to arrive, with UK-grown following later in the month. Also worth an early summer shout are UK spinach, spring (hispi) cabbage and beautifully tender Spanish artichokes – all in excellent form and ready to bring freshness and balance to evolving seasonal menus.

FRUIT



UK strawberries have been flowing through in good volumes and are wonderful. Looking ahead, the equally impressive raspberries are expected to follow in early June, weather permitting - one to keep firmly on the radar.

Further south, Spanish stone fruit is beginning to make its move, bringing a welcome wave of early summer indulgence.

Peaches will lead the charge, closely followed by nectarines, both offering improved flavour and that long-awaited sweetness missing from the winter months.

Adding to the mix, Spanish blueberries are now arriving and looking exceptional – outstanding size, flavour and overall quality, making them a standout option for both desserts and breakfast dishes. UK blueberries will be available from mid to end of June.

For a true taste of the season, keep an eye out for Spanish cherries starting to appear, with the possibility of early UK crops by month-end if conditions allow.

Meanwhile, Southern Hemisphere melons are making way for Spanish-grown fruit. Many purists will tell you this is when melons truly come into their own - sweeter, more consistent and finally worthy of centre stage.

Honeydew kicks things off, but it's the exceptional Piel de Sapo that really steals the show – a standout variety with remarkable depth of flavour.

SALAD

This is the month where tomatoes truly come into their own. Dutch crops are already arriving, bringing with them outstanding quality and, crucially, the consistency chefs rely on.

For those looking to elevate both colour and flavour, UK heritage varieties are a superb option - vibrant, characterful and made for standout summer plates.

The UK salad season is also just around the corner, with the first arrivals of wholehead lettuce expected by mid-month.

Iceberg, Lollo and Oakleaf will all begin to appear, offering a welcome injection of freshness and crunch as menus continue their shift towards lighter, brighter dishes.



AT ITS BEST

- UK Heritage Tomatoes
- UK Asparagus
- Wild Garlic
- Jersey Royals
- Dutch Tomatoes
- Spinach

As the Dutch season gathers momentum and yields improve, cucumber pricing should begin to ease slightly, bringing a bit of relief after recent pressure. Peppers, also now arriving from Holland, are showing their usual strengths - uniform in size, consistent in quality and ready to slot seamlessly into a wide range of dishes.

All in all, it's a month where salads start to regain their swagger – fresher, more reliable, and finally worthy of a starring role once again.



COMING SOON

- Spanish Stone Fruit
- Raspberries
- UK Broccoli
- UK Cherries



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