

## The Calm Before the Feast

### NOVEMBER 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

We've always had a soft spot for November — it's the month where produce gets a bit sturdier, flavours grow deeper and kitchens start to feel like they've got a purpose again. The festive season is creeping up like the smell of mince pies from a warming oven — impossible to ignore and slightly alarming in its enthusiasm.

November is the time to lay the groundwork for December's madness: stocking up, planning ahead and getting cosy with the ingredients that'll see us through the chill.

We'll be celebrating the UK's hardier heroes still standing strong in the fields, exploring the first wave of fresh salad crops from Spain and digging up a few unexpected gems that might just steal the show. And of course, we'll cast an eye towards Christmas and beyond.

### VEGETABLES

Cavolo Nero is strutting into November like it owns the place — and rightly so. This fashionable brassica is the culinary equivalent of a good winter coat: stylish, practical, and capable of elevating just about anything it touches. It's kind to the kitchen GP, endlessly versatile and brings an autumnal elegance to the plate.



Traditional orange pumpkins are making their exit (they've had their moment), but don't hang up your ladle just yet — the French grey varieties and colourful mixed squashes are stepping up to keep those hearty, roasted flavours alive.

Purple sprouting broccoli is another top performer this month — equally happy basking in a bit of butter after a gentle steam or mingling through a pasta dish.

Meanwhile, red cabbage deserves some pre-festive attention. It's got an earthy, peppery note with a whisper of sweetness — and it's just as happy in a braise as it is showing off in a slaw.



And then there are the sprouts — yes, they've arrived, and they're looking absolutely superb.

Don't wait for the Christmas jumpers to come out before giving them some love. Slice, sauté or glaze in butter and watch them steal the show (even from the turkey).

Broccoli will bow out early in the month, with Spanish supplies taking over as our local product draws to close. Finally, rainbow chard (advisable to pre-order) is quietly having its moment — vibrant, delicious and a brilliant way to bring colour to any autumn plate.

## FRUIT

November is the month to celebrate the humble pear — understated, elegant and as autumnal as a walk-through fallen leaves. The classic Conference variety is a real star: beautifully shaped, firm enough to hold its poise and equally at home poached in red wine or perched gracefully on a tart.



If it's a bit of sparkle you're after, European pomegranate has you covered. Half it, bash it and scatter those ruby-red jewels with abandon — they'll bring brightness, crunch and a touch of drama to anything from a winter salad to a slow-cooked lamb tagine.

Dutch strawberries are packing their bags, making way for Egyptian fruit. A word of warning — prices will tighten and quality might not quite live up to summer's sweetness, so plan your festive menus accordingly.



### WHAT'S IN STORE

Cranberries  
Blood oranges  
Marmalade oranges  
Spanish satsumas

Nothing says "the festive season is coming" quite like the arrival of Spanish easy peelers. Satsumas are first through the door, sweet and fragrant with just the right nip of acidity, followed closely by their cousin, the clementine, as December rolls in.

And for the chefs who like to think ahead — keep an eye out for blood oranges and Seville oranges towards the end of December. The former bring drama and depth; the latter, of course, herald marmalade season — the perfect excuse to call jam-making "menu development."

### SALAD

The big news this month is that the Spanish salad season has officially begun. Growers in and around Murcia, in the sun-soaked southeast of Spain, are now sending through fresh iceberg, tomatoes, peppers, and cucumbers — with the occasional batch of Moroccan tomatoes adding to the mix.

So far, quality has been good, though we'll be keeping a close eye on both grower updates and weather reports as the season progresses.



It's worth noting that the Spanish produce carries a slightly more rustic appearance than the neatly shaped Dutch crop — but don't let looks deceive you. The quality and flavour are every bit as strong, often with a little more character to show for it.

For those building more robust winter salads, Italian radicchio and Spanish cos are excellent choices. Their firmer leaves can handle richer dressings, hold their own alongside roasted vegetables, and bring just the right touch of bitterness — the kind that reminds you it's properly autumn.

### AT ITS BEST

Sprouts  
Red cabbage  
Purple sprouting broccoli  
French Pink Lady apples  
Pomegranates



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