

BEST IN SEASON MARKET REPORT

JANUARY 2026

Yes Chef
PEEL THE LOVE

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A FRESH START TO THE YEAR

All of us at YesChef would like to wish you a Happy, Healthy and Prosperous New Year. We hope you are feeling refreshed after the festive period and ready for another exciting year ahead. We have lots planned for 2026 and will continue to keep you updated month by month with what is best in season.

As winter really takes hold, January is the month for healthy, hearty and warming food. This report is packed with the best winter fruits and vegetables, alongside our recommendations for what will perform best on menus during the colder weeks ahead.

With the Christmas rush behind us, the markets begin to settle back into their usual rhythm. This brings a renewed focus on quality seasonal produce, particularly citrus fruits, Italian bitter leaves, UK root vegetables and the welcome return of English forced rhubarb.



MARKET HIGHLIGHTS

January is an excellent month for citrus fruits, winter roots and leafy greens. English forced rhubarb is a must use this month, alongside Seville oranges and the celebrated Calcot onions from Catalonia. Calcots are a true seasonal speciality, traditionally cooked over open flames and enjoyed with friends and family in outdoor feasts across Spain.

THIS MONTH'S NOTABLE DATES

1st January – New Years Day

7th January – Orthodox Christmas

25th January – Burns Night

EUROPEAN MARKET VISITS

This year we will once again be visiting key European markets to strengthen relationships with growers and source even more produce directly. Planned visits include Rungis in Paris, Milan in Italy and Mercabarna in Barcelona.

FRUIT LOGISTICA BERLIN

We will also be attending Fruit Logistica in Berlin in early February. This is one of the largest global produce events, bringing together suppliers from across the world. Last year the event welcomed over 91,000 attendees, and it remains a key opportunity for discovering new products and collaborations.



FRUITS

January fruit brings colour, acidity and freshness to winter cooking. Citrus fruits are at their best, cutting through richer dishes, while forced rhubarb and speciality fruits offer both vibrancy and versatility. This is the month to celebrate bold flavours and natural brightness.

FORCED ENGLISH RHUBARB

A true seasonal favourite, forced rhubarb is grown from two year old crowns in dark sheds, producing beautifully tender pink stems. Most UK rhubarb comes from the Yorkshire Triangle, an area around Bradford, Leeds and Wakefield which holds Protected Designation of Origin status. The delicate sweetness and sharpness make it ideal for both desserts and savoury dishes.

DID YOU KNOW: Forced rhubarb is traditionally grown by candlelight. In the Yorkshire Rhubarb Triangle, growers harvest it in dark sheds and use candlelight so they do not disturb the plants. Exposure to light would stop the stems stretching, so keeping it in darkness is what creates those beautifully tender, sweet pink stalks.

SEVILLE ORANGES

Also known as bitter or marmalade oranges, Seville oranges are only available for a short window each year. Their thick skins, pith and pips contain high levels of natural pectin, making them prized for marmalade. They are also used in cooking, drinks and essential oils, delivering an intense citrus flavour.

DID YOU KNOW: Seville oranges were originally brought to Europe by the Moors in the 10th century. They were prized not just for cooking, but also for their fragrant blossoms, which were used in perfumes and to flavour drinks long before marmalade became popular.

RED KIWIS

Originally known as the Chinese gooseberry, kiwi fruit is packed with vitamins C, K and E, fibre and antioxidants. Red kiwis stand out for their striking speckled red and golden flesh, combining the tang of kiwi with a subtle strawberry sweetness. They can be eaten raw, and even the skin is edible.



VEGETABLES

January vegetables are all about substance and nourishment. Root vegetables, brassicas and winter greens dominate the market, offering depth of flavour and versatility. These are ingredients built for slow cooking, roasting and robust winter dishes.

CALCOT ONIONS

Calcot onions are a celebrated speciality from Catalonia. They resemble a cross between a large spring onion and a young leek, with a long white edible stem and a mild, sweet flavour. Traditionally grilled over open flames and dipped in Romesco sauce, they are available from late winter into early spring.



DID YOU KNOW: Calcot onions are celebrated with their own festival called a “Calçotada” in Catalonia. Each winter, friends and families gather outdoors to grill calçots over open flames, eat them by hand, and dip them into Romesco sauce. It’s so important to Catalan culture that people often wear bibs to protect their clothes while eating them.

JANUARY KING CABBAGE

Introduced to Britain from Northern France during the Victorian era, January King cabbage is a hardy winter variety that thrives in extreme conditions. Its blue green leaves are tinged with purple and surround a crisp heart. The flavour is earthy and robust, making it excellent for braising, roasting or shredding into winter salads.



DID YOU KNOW: January King cabbage is one of the oldest named cabbage varieties still grown today, dating back to Victorian Britain. Its distinctive purple-tinged leaves were once prized by market gardeners because they could withstand harsh winters while still looking beautiful on market stalls.



VIOLET POTATOES

Violet potatoes are a gourmet variety with deep purple skin and flesh. They have a slightly nuttier flavour than standard potatoes and create striking dishes, particularly when mashed or roasted. Their colour remains vibrant when cooked, adding visual impact to winter menus.

NEWS FLASH!

DRY STORE DEPARTMENT

Our Dry Store Department continues to grow, and we are investing in a new mezzanine floor spanning the entire warehouse. This expansion will allow us to extend our product range even further. If there are any dry store products you would like us to source and keep in stock, please let us know.

FINAL WORD

January is about resetting, refocusing and embracing the best of winter produce. With citrus at its peak, roots in abundance and exciting speciality items arriving on the market, there is plenty of inspiration for the months ahead. We look forward to supporting your kitchens throughout 2026 and sharing another year of great produce with you.



