

# BEST IN SEASON MARKET REPORT

# FEBRUARY 2026

A close-up photograph of several ripe strawberries with green seeds, filling the frame. Overlaid on the image are several white, semi-transparent circles containing the text "ORDER NOW" and contact information for Yes Chef.

# Yes Chef

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## FEBRUARY MARKET REPORT 2026

### FRESH IDEAS, EARLY SIGNS OF SPRING, AND A MONTH FULL OF FLAVOUR

As we move through the heart of winter and start looking ahead to the promise of spring, February is the perfect time to refresh menus and find new inspiration in the market. The days are slowly getting lighter, the mornings feel a little brighter, and there's a subtle shift in what's appearing on the stands. The first early crops begin to land, bringing colour and freshness back to the season, and there's a real sense of change in the air.

This month naturally bridges the gap between winter comfort and spring freshness. Hearty roots, brassicas and warming dishes are still very much in their element, but alongside them come those first exciting hints of the new season. Early English greens, foraged leaves, vibrant European vegetables and the very first spring fruits start to make an appearance, offering chefs the chance to lighten dishes, introduce new flavours and add a bit of theatre to the plate.

It's a month of transition and opportunity. Whether you're leaning into comforting classics or beginning to brighten things up with fresher ingredients, there is plenty to work with. In this edition, we highlight the very best produce to use this month, alongside important market updates and key dates to help you plan ahead.

### SEASONAL UK HIGHLIGHTS

Weather permitting, we should start to see the first arrivals of new season English asparagus towards the end of the month. Prices will be high initially, but as volumes increase they should settle. We may also see the first wild garlic leaves, while stinging nettles are already available for those looking to add a foraged, seasonal twist to dishes.

There's even the possibility of Jersey Royal potatoes grown under glass making an early appearance. If all of these land as expected, February could turn out to be a fantastic month for British produce.

### SEASONAL EUROPE

From across Europe, we're enjoying early season Italian peas and broad beans, beautifully coloured purple, yellow and green cauliflowers, and some of the best winter tomatoes of the year. Artichokes are also right at their peak.

For fruit lovers, the first Gariguette strawberries from France make their much anticipated return.

### SHORTAGES AND PRICE INCREASES

We are currently seeing significant shortages, quality challenges and price increases on produce from Spain and Morocco due to extreme weather conditions. Torrential rain, flooding, landslides and port closures have severely impacted supply.

Items such as cos, iceberg, little gem, peppers, aubergines, cucumbers and tomatoes have been particularly affected. Open market prices have trebled or quadrupled in some cases.

We are doing everything possible to fulfil orders and will continue to keep you updated.



## FRUITS

February fruit brings a welcome lift to winter menus. Citrus remains bold and vibrant, while the first early berries start to hint at spring. These are fruits that add colour, aroma and brightness to desserts, drinks and lighter dishes.

### BLOOD MANDARINS

A rare citrus hybrid combining the sweetness of a mandarin with the rich colour of a blood orange. Easy to peel, incredibly juicy and perfectly balanced between sweet and tangy. Grown in Italy and available only for a short window, so enjoy them while they last.



**DID YOU KNOW:** Blood mandarins get their deep red flesh from natural pigments called anthocyanins, the same antioxidants found in blueberries and blackberries. What makes them special is that this colour only develops when the fruit experiences cold nights and warm days, which is why they're grown almost exclusively in southern Italy. Without that temperature drop, they stay orange inside.

### GARIGUETTE STRAWBERRIES

Often called the Queen of Strawberries in France, Gariguettes are one of the earliest spring varieties to market. Small, elongated and bright red, they're famous for their incredible aroma and beautifully balanced sweet and tart flavour. A real chef favourite and a true sign that spring is on the way.



**DID YOU KNOW:** Garigette strawberries are hand picked at dawn in France to protect their delicate flavour and aroma. Their soft skin and high natural sugar content mean they don't travel well, which is why they're rarely exported in large volumes. If you see them on the market, you're getting one of the freshest and most prized strawberries of the season.



## VEGETABLES

Vegetables are still firmly in their element this month. Think hearty, seasonal, and full of flavour. From artichokes and specialist tomatoes to colourful brassicas and early legumes, February's selection offers both substance and visual impact on the plate.

### ARTICHOKEs

The season is in full swing with excellent availability across multiple varieties, including Mammola, Spikey, Thema and Baby Violet artichokes. Perfect roasted, grilled or shaved raw into salads.



**DID YOU KNOW:** Artichokes are actually flower buds. If left unharvested, they bloom into large purple thistle-like flowers. The part we eat is the immature bud, picked before it opens, which is why the heart is so tender and packed with flavour.

### WINTER TOMATOES

Our winter specialist tomato range is exceptional right now, offering fantastic flavour and variety. Choose from Mammond, Crime, Zebra Green, Pineapple, Red and Yellow Datterino, Merinda, Camone, Blue Raf, Mount Rosa and Black Sun Vine. These tomatoes prove that great tomatoes aren't just for summer.



**DID YOU KNOW:** Camone tomatoes are grown in the coastal, saline soils of Sardinia, where the natural salt in the ground concentrates their sugars and flavour. This gives them their signature sweet and slightly savoury taste, often described as naturally seasoned straight from the vine.



### PURPLE, YELLOW AND GREEN CAULIFLOWERS

These colourful varieties continue to brighten up winter menus. Slightly sweeter and nuttier than traditional white cauliflower, they add both flavour and theatre to any dish.



#### VALENTINE'S DAY SPECIALS

Valentine's Day falls on a Saturday this year and is always one of the busiest days in the restaurant calendar.

Available to pre order:

- Heart shaped potato fondants
- Strawberries and raspberries in heart shaped punnets
- 'I Love You' stencilled apples from France

Please allow at least 24 hours' notice.

Happy Valentine's day



# NEWS FLASH!

## A NEW BUYERS WALK FOR A NEW MARKET

Last month we attended the official opening of the new Buyers Walk as part of the ongoing market redevelopment. After years of work, the improvements are really taking shape.

A commemorative clock has also been installed to honour our chairman and long time friend of YesChef, Gary Marshall, recognising 20 years of dedication and leadership.

## THIS MONTH'S NOTABLE DATES

14th February – Valentine's Day  
17th February – Shrove Tuesday (Pancake Day)  
17th February – Chinese Lunar New Year  
18th February – Ash Wednesday

## FINAL WORD

February is all about transition. Winter comfort meets early spring excitement, and the market starts to feel alive again. From the first English greens to vibrant European produce and early strawberries, there's plenty of inspiration to refresh menus and keep things seasonal.

Here's to a bright, flavour packed month ahead.



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