



BEST IN SEASON MARKET REPORT

OCTOBER 2026

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AUTUMN COLOURS, SEASONAL FAVOURITES AND HALLOWEEN MAGIC

October is one of the most exciting months in the fresh produce calendar. As the days grow shorter and the temperatures begin to fall, the markets take on a completely different character. Rich autumn colours, unusual shapes and an incredible variety of seasonal produce make this a fantastic time of year for chefs to get creative.

Pumpkins, squashes and decorative gourds are everywhere, bringing colour and character to both menus and displays. Wild mushrooms are in full swing, with an incredible selection of varieties available, while the arrival of fresh black and white truffles is just around the corner. From earthy roots and colourful brassicas to the first Italian winter vegetables, there is plenty to get excited about.

The fruit market is changing too. English apples and pears are at their best, with Russets, Cox's Orange Pippins, Conference and Comice all looking fantastic. Fresh chestnuts and walnuts are arriving from France, pomegranates are bursting with colour, and the first cranberries, crab apples and sloes are making their appearance. We also welcome the return of some wonderfully unusual European citrus varieties, bringing a fresh burst of fragrance and flavour to the autumn season.

October also marks an important seasonal changeover. British berries and salad crops are coming to an end, and we begin looking towards Europe and further afield for winter supplies. It is a month full of change, but with so much exceptional produce arriving, autumn certainly has plenty to offer.

SEASONAL SWITCH OVER

October marks the final stretch of the British berry and salad season before we begin switching to European and international growers for the winter months.

It is always a difficult transition after enjoying such fantastic British berries throughout the summer. The flavour, colour and freshness of homegrown strawberries, raspberries, blueberries and blackberries are hard to beat.

As the UK season finishes, we expect strawberries to begin arriving from the Netherlands, Belgium, Egypt and Morocco, while raspberries, blueberries and blackberries will increasingly come from Central and South America.

Our buyers will continue working closely with growers and suppliers to source the best quality and best eating fruit available throughout the winter season.

MARKET UPDATE | LARGE POTATOES

We have been warned by our growers that larger-sized potatoes are likely to be in particularly short supply this winter.

The extreme summer temperatures and lack of rainfall have affected growing conditions across the UK and much of Europe, resulting in reduced yields and smaller tuber sizes.

Our buyers will continue working hard to source the largest potatoes available, although size specifications may become increasingly difficult to guarantee.

For customers requiring consistently large baking potatoes, we recommend considering size 40 jacket potatoes. These are a more expensive option but offer a better chance of securing the size required. Please speak to the team if you have specific requirements so we can advise on availability.



FRUITS

October brings a wonderful change to the fruit market. The last of the summer stone fruits are disappearing, making way for crisp English apples, beautifully ripe pears, fragrant quince and some exciting autumn specialities. Fresh nuts, pomegranates, cranberries and unusual citrus varieties also begin arriving, offering chefs plenty of opportunities to introduce richer flavours, warming desserts and seasonal ingredients to their menus.

ENGLISH AND EUROPEAN PEARS

The English pear season is now in full swing, with Conference and Comice pears arriving in excellent condition from British orchards. Conference pears offer a beautifully sweet flavour with a slightly firmer texture, while Comice pears are known for their exceptional juiciness and rich, buttery flesh. Comice will continue to improve as the month progresses.

We also have fantastic Williams pears from Europe and beautiful red-blushed Forelle pears from South Africa. Whether poached, roasted, baked into desserts or paired with blue cheese and walnuts, pears are one of the most versatile fruits of the autumn season.



DID YOU KNOW: Unlike most fruits, pears are one of the few that ripen best after being picked. They are harvested while still firm and develop their beautiful sweetness, fragrance and buttery texture as they ripen off the tree. This is especially true of English Conference and Comice pears.

RUSSET APPLES

Russets are one of the most distinctive and traditional English apple varieties, instantly recognisable by their rough, golden-brown skin and wonderfully aromatic flavour. Their texture is crisp yet slightly dry, with a beautiful balance of sweetness, gentle sharpness and a characteristic nutty finish. They are fantastic eaten fresh, paired with British cheeses or used in autumn salads and desserts.

The season generally runs from late September through to early February, making them a real highlight of the colder months. Russets account for only a small proportion of commercially grown British apples, making them a particularly special seasonal favourite.



DID YOU KNOW: The distinctive rough, golden-brown skin of a Russet apple is caused by a natural process called russetting, where the apple develops a cork-like protective layer. Despite their weathered appearance, Russets are prized for their deliciously sweet, nutty flavour, often compared to hazelnuts.

KAKI FRUIT

The arrival of Italian Cachi, also known as Kaki, is always a sure sign that the festive season is getting closer. These beautiful bright orange fruits are wonderfully sweet when fully ripe. Traditional soft varieties develop a delicate, almost translucent skin and a rich, jelly-like flesh that is best enjoyed with a spoon.

Other varieties include Spanish persimmons and Sharon fruit from Israel, which can often be eaten while still firm. Their natural sweetness makes them fantastic in desserts, fruit salads and seasonal dishes, bringing a welcome burst of colour to the colder months.



EUROPEAN CITRUS | THE WEIRD
AND WONDERFUL RETURNS

October also welcomes the beginning of the European speciality citrus season, bringing some of the most unusual and exciting fruits of the year back to the market. Miyagawa mandarins, satsumas, clementines, bergamot, green yuzu, finger limes and Buddha's hands are all beginning to appear.

These incredible fruits offer much more than visual appeal. From the aromatic zest of bergamot and yuzu to the delicate citrus pearls of finger limes, they are fantastic for adding fragrance, acidity and something a little different to both sweet and savoury dishes.



VEGETABLES

October is when the vegetable market really begins to embrace autumn. The last of the summer crops make way for hearty roots, colourful brassicas, pumpkins, squashes and some of the most exciting speciality vegetables of the year. British Brussels sprouts are making their welcome return, alongside Brussels tops, sprouts on the stem and kalettes. French heritage carrots, coloured beetroots, radishes and unusual roots are also looking fantastic.

Italian winter vegetables are beginning to arrive, and we look forward to the return of the much-loved Italian bitter leaves as temperatures begin to cool. It is the perfect time to introduce richer flavours, warming dishes and plenty of seasonal colour to menus.



IN SEASON

FRUIT

English apples
English pears
European pears
Custard apples
Kaki fruit
Pomegranates
Chestnuts
Walnuts
Cranberries
Rowanberries
Sloes
Crab apples
Quince
European speciality citrus

VEGETABLES

Brussels sprouts
Sprouts on the stem
Brussels tops
Kalettes
Piccolo parsnips
Mixed Chantenay carrots
Celeriac
Leeks
Fenland celery
Coloured beetroots
Heritage carrots
Coloured radishes
Chervil root
Parsley root
Crosnes
Pumpkins
Decorative gourds
Winter squashes
Wild mushrooms

END OF SEASON

As autumn settles in, we begin saying goodbye to the final summer favourites. October is the last opportunity to enjoy several seasonal lines before they disappear until next year.

British berries
British summer salads
Plums
Greengages
Peaches
Nectarines
Solliès figs

Availability will vary as the season draws to a close, so please speak to the team if you would like to make the most of the final arrivals.

HALLOWEEN | DON'T FORGET YOUR PUMPKINS!

Halloween is just around the corner, and carving pumpkins are always one of our most popular seasonal lines.

Please remember to pre-order your Halloween carving pumpkins as early as possible. We sell out every year!

Alongside traditional carving pumpkins, we have a fantastic selection of decorative gourds and unusual squashes available. With their incredible colours, shapes and textures, they are perfect for creating eye-catching autumn displays in restaurants, cafés and dining spaces.



RETRO HALLOWEEN TREATS

Why not bring a little nostalgia to your Halloween celebrations this year? We have a fantastic selection of retro autumn treats available to pre-order, including:

- Traditional toffee apples
- Milk chocolate apples with sprinkles
- White chocolate apples with sprinkles
- Chocolate orange apples

Perfect for Halloween displays, themed counters, seasonal events or simply as a sweet treat. Please pre-order to secure availability.



A LITTLE MARKET UPDATE

The recent warm weather has brought some unexpected challenges for British leafy salads, with increased fly and aphid activity affecting crops across the industry.

Our growers and suppliers are working hard to manage the situation, and with the seasonal switch to imported salads now underway, we're expecting quality to improve.

As always, our team is keeping a close eye on the market to bring you the best fresh produce available. Fresh produce is seasonal, and sometimes nature likes to keep us on our toes!

FINAL WORD

October is a month full of character. The markets are bursting with autumn colours, British orchards are delivering fantastic apples and pears, and the return of pumpkins, squashes, wild mushrooms and winter vegetables brings a whole new season of inspiration.

From the nutty sweetness of Russet apples and beautifully ripe Comice pears to fragrant citrus, fresh chestnuts and colourful heritage roots, there is so much to celebrate.

It is also the perfect time to bring a little seasonal theatre into your dining spaces. Whether that means a colourful pumpkin display, a warming autumn menu or a nostalgic Halloween treat, the produce is certainly there to make it happen.

Here's to embracing everything autumn has to offer and making the most of another fantastic month of seasonal cooking.



