



PremierFruits
Food Service Provider

Headlines

First and foremost, from everyone here at The Menu Partners, we would like to wish all of our customers and suppliers as well as their families and friends a happy New Year.

We are confident that the year ahead will be filled with happiness, good health and success for all.

The New Year will bring the small challenge of Brexit, and whilst we could elaborate further in this report, by now you will have received information from our dedicated team about the steps we have taken to ensure that the UK's departure from the European Union will be as smooth as possible for all those involved with The Menu Partners.

If you have not yet received our Brexit information pack, please do not hesitate to get in contact with our team and we will be more than happy to assist you in any way possible with all things Brexit.

We have created a non-EU menu, which goes into great detail regarding products which are available outside of the single market and therefore are not susceptible to the impacts of Brexit: this has been created by our specialist procurement team and our in-house Executive Chefs.

Whilst we have been challenged by the COVID-19 pandemic and are facing disruptions due to Brexit, we are confident that our high levels of quality and service which you have become accustomed to over the years will remain long into the future.



Food Service

There exists uncertainty regarding the supply of herbs due to the fact that they are imported from Spain and Italy, and therefore face issues concerning the Brexit fallout: we have taken the necessary steps to find suppliers in Kenya and Israel to mitigate any risk.

UK Brussel sprout stalks will continue to be very popular throughout January.

Jerusalem artichokes continue to be of excellent quality and value.

Habanero and bird eye chillies continue to arrive in great quality.

We have UK lion's mane, oyster and shiitake mushrooms on offer as well as some wonderful mixed wild mushrooms.

Padron peppers are still readily available and proving hugely popular.

Beautiful formosa papaya arriving from Brazil this month and beyond.

Quince from Turkey are hugely popular year on year.

Passion fruit which arrives from Colombia, is arriving in great quality.

For something a little different, we recommend Pomelo which is in good supply and quality.

In regards to Cheese, the UK is producing some amazing Cheddar, Red Leicester, Blue Stilton, Cornish Yarg, Barkswell, Oxford Blue, Laverstoke Mozzarella, Bath Blue, Blacktic Blue and Cornish Blue – all of incredible quality produced right here in the UK.

Fruit

Peaches, nectarines and plums are arriving from South Africa in great quality. Melons are all very good quality and value, arriving from South America. Apples from Europe are arriving in great quality and we expect there to be no issues with stock holdings here in the UK during the early parts of the New Year.

Oranges will arrive from Egypt in the New Year and availability is great. Kiwifruit arriving with no issue and in good supply.

Lemons are very good, arriving from Spain with superb quality and great value. Pears; very good conference from Belgium and the UK.

Ruby grapefruit arriving in good quality from turkey; great value. Marsh grapefruit is still difficult to find, with the best available from Israel. Easy peelers are available from Morocco in good quality.

Grapes, in terms of quality, there should be no issues on all varieties as we shift from Brazilian and Peruvian supply to South African – quality is fantastic as ever. Bananas, arriving with no issues – demand is high in retail.



Exotics

Ginger is very difficult to get hold of due to major shortages arriving in the UK, therefore making it more expensive. Asparagus good availability from both Mexico and Peru.

Limes are one of many fruits arriving from Brazil in great quality. Pineapples from Costa Rica arrive weekly with excellent flavour.

Tenderstem broccoli demand has been high throughout December, it seems to be the most popular vegetable at the moment.

Mango another fruit from Brazil arriving in great quality. Pomegranates from Turkey in full flow now with plenty of availability.

Red chillies are proving difficult; with limited supply from both Spain and Holland. Green chillies, not as difficult with plenty of availability.

Strawberries will arrive mainly from Egypt; great quality and good value. Raspberries arriving from Spain with great quality, however with the tiered system we could witness lower demand than usual. Blueberries great quality from South America. Blackberries from Belgium now in season.

Garlic from Spain is very expensive at the moment - so we have switched to Chinese variety. Figs from Brazil and Peru; although figs arriving from Brazil are more expensive and higher quality.

Beans, mangetout and sugarsnaps are arriving often and are of great quality.



Vegetables

Broccoli is available from Spain at this time of year and it continues to be of great quality and readily available.

Brussel sprouts will continue to be very popular throughout January and are great value. Cauliflowers were fantastic throughout December and if the weather is as good in January, we expect much the same.

Courgettes from Spain and Morocco – Spanish is higher quality but the Moroccan will be more accessible in the New Year due to Brexit.

Leeks from Belgium are tremendous but are also available right here in the UK.

UK cabbage is great right now and the perfect time to have it on the menu – great value and quality can be found in spring, red, white, primo, savoy cabbage as well as in kale and cavolo nero.

Potatoes grown here in the UK are of excellent quality and value, the same can be said for all varieties of carrots.

Butternut squash is arriving from Portugal and Spain, we will be able to hold high stock levels of this for months to come.

Sweet potatoes from Egypt are still plentiful.

UK golden, candy and raw beetroot is of amazing quality and consistently good value.

Spanish onions are available but UK onions including red varieties are much better value.

Sprouting broccoli will be in limited supply throughout January.

UK parsnips are at their best at this time of year, the same is true for UK swede and turnip.

Salad

This category is more difficult to predict due to the nature of the produce and the Brexit situation.

Delays at ports will heavily impact this category as products have shorter shelf lives and with the new tiered lockdown system it is proving troublesome to accurately predict how much and how often to place orders for delivery.

Tomatoes from Morocco should not be a problem and have been arriving in great quality.

Capsicums have been superb and arrive from both Morocco and Spain.

The fantastic quality of iceberg, cos and gem lettuce is expected to be persist throughout January and beyond.

Cucumbers have proved troublesome but we expect that due to the tiered system, that demand will level out to be more consistent with supply.

Aubergines are not too dissimilar, and are available from Spain.

Celery proves troublesome from December onwards, due to the UK season coming to an end and supply therefore arriving from Spain – the difference this year could be a lack of demand in January leading to excess supply.

Lollo rosso, oakleaf and curley lettuce all arriving in very good quality from Spain.

Baby leaf lettuce has arrived in fantastic quality from our supplier in Italy and although volume is lower than what was received last year, they are still managing to deliver three days a week.



Rungis

January tends to be the month of new regimes and what better way to start the year than with fresh produce? Even though temperatures are normally hovering around zero, there are parts of Europe that are producing great tomatoes. The Spanish lead the way with varieties like black roma and the ribbed monterosa, while the Belgians have the slightly green seeded, tasty gusto.

If it's colour that you want, how about the bunched mixed colour carrots that become available again, with product arriving from Spain. There are also various cabbages with the French growing their version of January King called pontois, which has lovely dark red leaves on the outside, and red robin. Cavelo nero and other leafy varieties like kale are also around. Spanish artichokes are more plentiful with the large calico and the colourful small bunches of purple ones too. All the roots are still around for you to enjoy, the various beetroots, coloured carrots, parsnips and parsley root. There are great potatoes to be had too with armandine and galante particularly good because of their set skins.

The fruit is all about the start of the much-anticipated seasons! Blood oranges are ordered in December each year but the true varieties don't get going until mid-January. The best-known blood is the Spanish sanguinelli but the Italians and French have their own too which covers the whole range from speckled flesh like tarocco to semi-bloods like moro and then to the full red. The sour Seville orange starts its short season with the untreated, heavily pipped fruit being ideal for marmalade and sauces. Clementine's are in abundance, (don't think they are just for Christmas), as we move from fina to the orri variety. Both are fantastic eaters, for different reasons, and both should also be available with or without the leaves. Oranges are also really good in January. The salustiana variety is grown mostly for juice due to its thin skin and almost indistinguishable segments and is at its peak in January and the Portuguese and Spanish fight over the best eating (or table) oranges. Navel and newhall varieties were great last year and both should be available again with or without leaves.

European apples and pears offer a wide selection of colour and taste. Goldrush, the golden speckled apple with a sweet / sour taste is a personal favourite and the Italian have good Abate now, often with a pretty red blush. Passe crassanne should be good too in January. Fruit from further afield includes all the stone fruit that was around in December; peach, nectarine, apricot, cherry and orange flesh melons that are flown in from the Dominican Republic and Guadeloupe. Mangoes are plentiful from Peru and Chile sends the first of the Moscatel Rosada grape. This can be an expensive replacement for the French muscat but prices drop after a while when the sea-freight arrives.





Premier Fruits Wholesale

D36 49
New Covent Garden Market
Nine Elms Lane
Battersea
London
SW8 5JJ
Telephone 0207 720 9012
info@premierfruits.com
www.Premierfruits.com

The Menu Partners Limited

Food Exchange
New Covent Garden Market
Nine Elms Lane
Battersea
London
SW8 5EL
Telephone 0207 720 7755
info@the-menu.com
www.the-menu.com

**The Menu Partners Limited
(Prepared division)**

A70-A72
New Covent Garden Market
Nine Elms Lane
Battersea London
SW8 5EE
Telephone 0207 720 0020
info@the-menu.com
www.the-menu.com

The Menu Partners Limited

The Shed
Unit 2 Charbridge Lane
Bicester
OX26 4SS
Telephone 01869226666
info@the-menu.com
www.the-menu.com

The Menu Partners Limited

Brighton Fruit & Vegetable Market
Hollingbury
Brighton
BN1 8AP
Telephone 01273 559970
info@the-menu.com
www.the-menu.com



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