

OLIVER KAY



CROP REPORT

Winter 2023

Whilst the days are shorter and the nights are colder, the winter season has lots of great British produce to celebrate – including our favourite root veg that steals the show at Christmas.

There have been plenty of challenges with growing conditions but, as always, thanks to our great range of suppliers close to home and further afield, we do our best to ensure you have all the fresh ingredients you need.

Find out what to choose or lose from your menus over the coming winter months as Lee Callon, our expert buyer with over 20 years' experience of fresh produce, gives you the lowdown on what's happening in the world of fresh produce.

We are committed to minimising the impact of any shortages on our customers, and our dedicated team continue to source the best quality products from our long-term supply partners. Should you have any questions, please contact our team who will be happy to help.

Orders can be placed over the phone during working hours, or online via our website or app – 24 hours a day – 7 days a week to suit your needs!

As always, we thank you for your continued support in choosing us as your fresh produce supplier.



Contact our team 01204 385463
or order online at www.oliverkayproduce.co.uk or via the Oliver Kay app

UK GROWING CONDITIONS

Extreme and unseasonal weather conditions across the continent have caused issues with this year's harvest and growing conditions across Northern Europe have been fairly unstable. The volatility of the weather has played havoc with crop production resulting in flushes and slowing.

2023 is on track to be the hottest year on record, currently 1.43°C above the pre-industrial average ([Guardian, 2023](#)). A soggy summer due to a number of Atlantic storms affected many UK crops, with leafy salads and broccoli supply shifted from the UK to Spain two weeks early as waterlogged soil damaged produce.

In **September**, for the first time since records began, there was a run of seven consecutive days recording 30°C or higher within the UK. This caused a lot of fruit crops to ripen early and forced us to move hard salad supply, such as tomatoes and peppers, from the Netherlands into Spain earlier than anticipated. The intense heat around the Mediterranean and North Africa resulted in many winter crops such as tomato and pepper plants having to be replanted as they didn't survive the scorching temperature.

Despite flooding in September, Spain has again experienced its driest summer for over 10 years, flash flooding doing nothing to elevate the reservoir levels and drowning some of the produce. As such, winter Mediterranean crops are currently around 2 weeks late and Moroccan supply is 4 weeks late.

The [World Meteorological Organization](#) said the current El Niño weather pattern, a naturally occurring phenomenon of fluctuating ocean and atmospheric temperatures, was expected to last until at least April 2024 making it likely that next year will be even hotter.

We continue working with our long-term supply partners to ensure continuous supply to your business and we are experienced in anticipating changes in the market to adapt and avoid disruption.

CHALLENGES & LOOKING AHEAD

Challenges

- Display gourds and mixed squash are ending earlier than last year due to weather conditions
- Tenderstem broccoli, avocado, small apples and large orange all in short supply
- Although salad growers have re-planted, we expect to see shortages in wholesale supply in the run-up to Christmas
- Maris Piper has a lot of issues this season, the dry matters are too high and as it's a late variety it was less than ideal lifting conditions during the rains causing a lot of bruising. We are planning to move to Elland variety for the next few months and the product code will remain unchanged

Looking Ahead

- Strawberries will soon be arriving from the Mediterranean which will be much better quality than Dutch and the last of the UK varieties
- Early South African peach and nectarine will be available from December but will be expensive until the season develops
- British cabbage is at its best and is available from Lancashire and Lincolnshire throughout winter
- Loose British Brussel sprouts are now in stock with prep sprouts available in December



As Veganuary ends, plants can remain centre stage (or plate!) playing a bigger role within vegetarian and plant based diets. Superfood salads, curries, and stews rich in local and seasonal vegetables can complement your menu all year round and have a positive impact on the nutritional profile of dishes.

DID YOU KNOW?.....

For seasonal recipe ideas from our development chefs, along with customer dish ideas and provide inspiration on how to use the latest seasonal produce, [click here](#).


WHAT'S IN SEASON


At Oliver Kay, we work with trusted growers sourcing the very best seasonal produce from our range of local and international suppliers. The below guide will advise on product availability over the winter months, but due to the nature of fresh produce there are many external factors that impact supply. Please check availability with our team or by using the online ordering before listing a product on your menu.

KEY: UK SEASONAL BEST 

VEGETABLES

Broccoli (Spain) - UK crops finished early due to weather conditions and switched to Spanish supply from October. There is a tight supply throughout winter months and tenderstem broccoli is in very limited supply. The UK tenderstem supply is almost finished and we are supplementing Kenyan to maintain supply for our customers until Spanish produce becomes available in the coming weeks

 **Cabbage (UK)** - UK red and white cabbages are very good quality. Green & Savoy cabbage from Lincolnshire is a good size and excellent quality. Spring cabbage and kale from Lancashire is planned throughout winter


 **Carrot (UK)** - Quality is excellent and crop is good but wet conditions have made harvesting challenging

Cauliflower (UK & France) - Heads are a good size and UK supply will continue through November with French sourcing to protect supply through winter

Celery (Spain) - New season Spanish celery is now available

Maris Piper (UK) - Had a lot of issues this season. We are planning to move to Elland variety for the next few months due to Piper crop challenges. Elland is a very similar potato to Piper but isn't having the same challenges on availability or quality. The product code will remain unchanged

Onion (UK & Netherlands) - Concerns remain over water damage to both UK and Dutch crops during wet weather and quality will be monitored


 **Parsnip (UK)** - Like carrots, the quality is excellent and crop is good, but wet conditions have made harvesting challenging

Potatoes (UK) - Weather conditions have made growing very mixed. Smaller and mid-size jackets are in short supply versus normal seasons, with many large tubers available. It is unlikely that the 10 to 15% in the ground will be salvageable, and we are looking at imports as a contingency for early Spring. We have already switched maris Piper to Elland due to quality and availability issues

Spring Onion (Egyptian) - New season Egyptian spring onion now available

Sprouts (UK) - Loose British Brussel sprouts are now in stock and prep sprouts are available through December

Salad Leaves (Spanish) - Although salad growers have re-planted, we expect to see shortages in supply in the wholesale markets up to Christmas

 **Swede (UK)** - Quality remains good but heavy rains in the east of Scotland have caused some harvesting delays



No Christmas dinner is complete without the freshest seasonal veg. Save yourself time by ordering ready prepped produce, including carrots, parsnips, and potatoes, as well as other chopped, diced and sliced veg, salad mixes and mixed fruit.



We can supply all your fresh ingredients! Order online at www.oliverkayproduce.co.uk or via the Oliver Kay app!



www.oliverkayproduce.co.uk

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FRUIT

🍏 Apple (UK & Asia) - UK Braeburn now available. Kentish Large Red Apple Gala and Cox in good condition and should meet demand well into 2024. Small apple shortages this winter due to late rains in Poland increasing the apple size and losses in France and Serbia due to the heat. We have secured our supply for the winter period with Jajuan from Asia as a contingency

Avocado (Spain & Mexico) - Unpredictable weather patterns along with the absence of fruit from Israel is affecting availability

Blackberries (Mexico) - Tupi variety is of good quality. Guatemalan civil unrest is putting more pressure on Mexican supply resulting in overall low availability

Blueberries (Peru) - Excellent flavour

Grapes Green (Brazilian and South African) - No quality or supply issues expected across all varieties. South African until end of February, then Indian Thompson variety

Grapes Red (Greek, Brazil & South) - New season Brazilian variety quality and availability very good. Brazilian and RSA Flame and Crimson to run until April

Large Orange (Spain) - Has been in short supply as we move from Southern Hemisphere to European varieties with normal volumes due to stabilise with the arrival of Spanish oranges over winter

Peach & Nectarine (South Africa) - Early South African peach and nectarine should start in December although early arrivals are invariably woody and expensive until the season develops

Pomegranate (Spain) - In season

Raspberries (Portugal) - UK varieties have now ended, with supply being imported from Portugal. Quality and availability both good

Red Currants (Holland) - No issues with Rovada quality or availability, but prices remain high

Strawberries (UK & Mediterranean) - UK crops have now ended and Dutch Glass house crops are being supplied, indoor does not have the same flavour profile as outdoor grown and very expensive, also they are in very short supply with many retail shelves empty. We are awaiting the late December arrival of outdoor Mediterranean strawberries

Tomato (France, Spain & Morocco) - The round and beef tomato move from Dutch into Moroccan should complete by mid-November. UK Heritage Tomato has already moved to Spanish supply for the winter

EXOTICS

Asparagus Large (Peru) - Peruvian quality is good with contingency supply available through Mexico

Avocado (Spain & Mexico) - Unpredictable weather patterns along with the absence of fruit from Israel is affecting availability

Baby Corn (Thailand) - Growing conditions are ok, but reaching monsoon season later this year

Baby Vegetables (South Africa) - South African varieties to maintain supply through winter months

Beans (Kenya & Morocco) - Currently supplied from Kenya. We are sourcing from Morocco through the winter which is a new origin for us, and have Rwandan supply as a contingency. No quality report issues to date

Butternut (Portugal) - Mainly Portuguese supply for the next few months, with Spain as a backup. Quality is good

Chillies (Morocco) - Spanish supply will be moving into Moroccan through November taking us through winter with quality good

Figs (Brazil) - Peruvian varieties finished in November with Brazilian supply taking us through winter

Garlic & Ginger (Brazil, Spain & China) - Availability of Brazilian ginger is good. A mix of Spanish and Chinese garlic with good quality

Limes (Brazil) - Mainly Brazilian with Mexican supply as a contingency but not expected to utilise. Quality is good

Mango (Brazil & Peru) - Brazilian Tommy Atkins are good with Peruvian Keitt alongside

Shallots (France) - French Banana shallot quality is very good, no problems expected

Sugar Snaps & Mangetout (Kenya & Egypt) - Kenyan supply with Egyptian to follow which will take us through most of winter - quality good

Sweet Potatoes (Egypt) - Main supply Egyptian through winter and quality is very good

FIND OUT

what produce is in season locally and overseas all year round to help choose produce when it is available and at its best *here*.

Lee's Top Picks

- Egyptian spring onions
- Sprouts
- Spanish Pomegranates
- Brazilian Melon
- British Cabbage
- Spring Greens & Kale from Lancashire
- UK Large Red Apple - Kentish Gala and Cox



HERE TO HELP

With preparations underway for the new year, the team at Oliver Kay are here to support you every step of the way, with insights and tips to maximise your menu.



SEASONAL MENU INSPIRATION:

Creamy Sprout & Nduja Bake

Here's a simple & quick winter recipe idea.

Find this recipe and many more on our website oliverkayproduce.co.uk



Ingredients:

480g Blanched sprouts - leftovers
6ml Olive oil
100g Finely diced onions
80g Nduja
300ml Cream Sauce
40g Mixed Grated Cheese

Method:

Slice the sprouts in half and set to one side.
Heat a pan and add the oil, onion and nduja and cook down until golden brown.
Mix with the sprouts and cream sauce and then place into a baking tray, top with grated cheese and bake until golden.

For enquiries or more information about any of the products mentioned in the Crop Report, or to place an order, please contact our team who will be happy to help:

Call the office on 01204 38546

or order online at oliverkayproduce.co.uk

or via the Oliver Kay app

