

OLIVER KAY



CROP REPORT

Winter 2024

The new year is upon us, bringing with it a burst of new seasonal fresh produce. 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.

To navigate your menus for the coming months, Lee Callon, our expert buyer with over 20 years of experience in fresh produce, will provide insights into what to choose or avoid in the world of fresh produce.

Our dedicated team continues to source the highest quality products from our long-term supply partners with a focus on consistency, sustainable practices and security of supply. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to our team, who are always ready 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.

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

GROWING CONDITIONS

The UK season finished much as it started... wet... but not as wet as Spain. The Mediterranean had a bad start to the winter season - floods in Spain made the headlines, where sadly people lost their lives in and around Valencia.

Although the high volume of rain affected some crops, it was the 2-3 weeks of overcast weather that gave us the biggest challenge. Thankfully, the situation is now much improved and crops are recovering, with the temperatures this week in Murcia reaching highs of 22°C in the day and overnight lows of 10°C. We appreciate the resilience of all our suppliers during such difficult times, and we thank you for your continued commitment and support.

CHALLENGES & LOOKING AHEAD

Challenges

- Shipping has been the main challenge through October and November - Atlantic storms have resulted in vessels arriving at UK ports out of sequence. This, combined with increased arrivals due to Christmas, has meant that some ships are missing the UK altogether and offloading in The Netherlands. The challenge this creates is then having to use feeder vessels to get stock back to the UK, taking 2-3 days longer. The transition from Mediterranean **avocado** supply to southern hemisphere sources for summer was challenging, but we are now seeing a return to more stable supply.
- Peppers seem to have suffered the most from the overcast Spanish weather. Only as we move into December are we seeing an improvement.
- Cauliflower - Frosts in the UK have resulted in a drop in quality, which results in moving to French supply slightly earlier than normal.



What's In Season

- UK loose and prepack sprouts.
- French Chestnuts but finishing soon.
- Yorkshire forced outdoor Rhubarb will be seen just before Christmas.
- Lancashire spring greens and kales still going well.
- UK carrot and parsnip.
- UK potato.
- Scottish Swede.

Ending Soon

- Mixed squash will finish in the new year.
- Another few weeks of Chinese cabbages before we move to Spain in early 2025.
- We will have sprouts available in the new year on request, however we will stop stocking them due to low demand.
- We've had our last arrival of Cranberries and French Chestnuts.

Finished

- English Heirloom tomato - moved to French supply for winter.
- UK salads - moved to Spanish and Italian supply.
- Peach and nectarine - we will miss airfreight from southern hemisphere, as they don't eat them and they are expensive.



FIND OUT MORE.....

about the passionate growers and producers who bring you the freshest, UK-grown produce on *our interactive map*

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) - Now fully Spanish supply, we had a few harvesting challenges when the bad weather hit but quality and availability is now very good.


Carrot (UK) - Now we are in main season crop, both availability and quality is good but the larger end of the crop seems to be limited. All crops are now covered with straw to protect them against the extreme winter weather.


Cauliflower (UK & France) - Moving from UK to French supply following the recent frosts. French will take us through the winter period and UK will start again late spring/summer.


 **Onion (UK)** - Yellow & red onions - compared to the past few years onion supply this season is good. Late rains in the UK and the Netherlands causes some growers challenges however we are viewing this year's as normal... whatever that is anymore!


 **Parsnip (UK)** - Availability is good this year, and since temperatures have been fairly mild, hopefully we will not see the quality issues echoed from last season.

 **Potato (UK)** - Dry weather conditions in late October has meant that lifting is complete and crop has been put into stores. However, there are already some concerns from growers about how the crop will hold up in storage. This combined with the shortfall in the 2023/24 crop, late planting due to a wet spring and the lack of seed available for planting the 2024/25 crop, could mean that we have another challenging end to the season. Some growers are already predicting the need to use imported crop to help bolster the UK crop and see us through. Ultimately it is a bit too early to tell when and how much imported crop will be needed.

 **Red and White Cabbage (UK)** - Quality this year is very good. White is in plentiful supply, while reds availability is lower and doesn't store as well as it has higher sugars, so a contingency crop is being grown in Spain for May & June to ensure availability and quality.

 **Savoy Cabbage (UK)** - Savoy is very good quality. Frost does not affect savoy the same as cauliflower and it's expected to take us through winter with no problems.

 **Spring Cabbage & Kale (UK)** - Similar to savoy, kale is particularly hardy and both are expected to take us through into the new year. Imports should only be required if we see very heavy frost for a prolonged period.

 **Swede (UK)** - Overall, dare I say, a normal crop this year - quality is very good. The east of Scotland hasn't seen any extremes this year and hopefully this will continue into 2025.

Tenderstem Broccoli (Portugal & Spain) - Mainly Portuguese and Spanish for winter.



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.*



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SALADS

Aubergine (Spain) - Very good with no concerns.

Cherry tomato (Spain / Morocco) - Production has been okay, a slow start has reduced availability in the market, but the quality is good.

Courgette (Spain) - Very good with no concerns.

Cucumber (Spain) - Supply and quality are good. There are some grower concerns about mildew when overcast, but nothing has been seen.

Leaf - Baby Leaf (UK / Italy & Spain) - Supply is a mix of UK glasshouse and Italian & Spanish supply, quality is very good without any problems expected.

Leaf - Fancy Leaf (Spain) - Quality is very good despite the rains in Spain, conditions are much improved and availability is good.

Leaf - Cos, Gem and Iceberg (Spain) - Some rib staining was seen in November due to rain but quality is now much improved and availability is good.

Peppers/Capsicum (Spain) - Production now stabilises following overcast weather in Spain. This weather has given us a few challenges through November. Green has been prone to orange flashing which happens when fruit stay on the plants too long. With red, we have seen an increase in soft spots but much this is much improved into December.

Round tomatoes (Morocco / Canaries) - Mainly Morocco, with Canarian as a contingency. Production volumes are now good, quality and shelf-life much improved as season gets underway and expected to continue improving.

BERRIES

Blackberries (Mexico / Guatemala) - No supply or quality issues being seen.

Blueberries (Chile & South Africa) - Sea freight from Chile is the favoured supply, while a small volume from Morocco is also expected. Overall no issues expected.

Grapes - Green (Peru) - Quality has been good but still challenging due to delays docking.

Grapes - Red (Peru) - Grape has been challenging. Quality has been average and availability low due to shipping. Loose red has been substituted with green for about a week due to delayed vessels but supply is expected to restart.

Raspberries (Morocco & Spain) - Recent supply has been lower due to the poor conditions in the Mediterranean.

Strawberries (Egypt & Morocco) - There are normal concerns with transport but supply looks to be ok.



EXOTICS

Asparagus Large (Peru) - Quality is very good. Civil unrest has calmed down - supply and quality is good.

Baby Corn (India & Thailand) - Quality is good.

Baby Vegetables (UK & South Africa) - Last of UK Rainbow & orange carrot. South African supply will take us through our winter (their summer) - quality is good.

Beans (Morocco & Egypt) - Current supply is Moroccan and Egyptian and quality is very good. Rwanda is in the background as a backup.

Butternut (Portugal) - Mainly Portuguese supply with Spanish backup. Quality is good - was harvested before rains.

Chillies (Morocco) - Mainly Moroccan supply, with some Spanish as a backup - quality is very good.

Figs (Brazil) - Quality is very good and will take us through until summer.

Garlic & Ginger (Spain & China) - Garlic from Spain has been affected by poor weather supply; will be Chinese for the time being - quality is good.

Ginger (Brazil) - Availability of Brazilian ginger is good and the quality is superb.

Limes (Brazil) - Quality is good, however the supply has been very challenging due shipping having been under pressure for the past few months.

Mango (Brazil) - Tommy Atkins are good.

Shallots (France) - New season have been okay. While late rains have reduced supply, it is now much improved.

Sweet Potatoes (Egypt) - Quality is very good.

Sugar Snaps & Mangetout (Egypt) - Mangetout - overall quality is good. Sugar snap moving from Kenya to Egypt in the New Year - crop reports are good.

Lee's Top Picks

- Yorkshire Rhubarb
- French Chestnuts
- UK Parsnips
- UK Carrots

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*.

SEASONAL MENU INSPIRATION:

Yorkshire Forced Rhubarb And Galangal Crumble, Cashew Crumble & Cardamom Custard

Here's a seasonal recipe idea.

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

Compote

Ingredients:

- 250g Yorkshire forced rhubarb, cut into 2cm pieces
- 50g caster sugar
- 50g grated fresh galangal

Crumble top

Ingredients:

- 100g plain flour
- 50g diced and chilled vegan butter substitute
- 65g soft dark brown sugar
- 50g cashews, blitzed into small crumbs
- Pinch of salt

Cardamom custard

Ingredients:

- 225ml oat milk
- 1tbsp caster sugar
- 1 vanilla pod
- 2tbsp cornflour
- 4 cardamom pods

Method:

- Start by making the crumble, rub the flour and vegan butter between your fingers and thumbs until it forms a breadcrumb like consistency, then add the sugar and make sure you rub out any lumps, then add the cashews.
- In a bowl mix the rhubarb, galangal and sugar then empty into an oven proof dish (3 separate dishes if you want individual crumbles)
- Cover with the crumble mix and bake in a preheated oven set to 180 degrees for around 35-40 minutes or until the crumble top is golden brown.
- Whilst the crumble is baking heat up 180 ml of the oat milk, the sugar, cardamom pods and vanilla essence in a medium saucepan.
- In a separate bowl mix the cornflour and remaining oat milk until all lumps have disappeared.
- Add this to the saucepan, bring to the boil and whisk continuously, bring it down to a simmer after 30 seconds and stir occasionally whilst the cornflour thickens and cooks out.
- After 5-10 minutes strain off the cardamom pods and serve with the crumble.

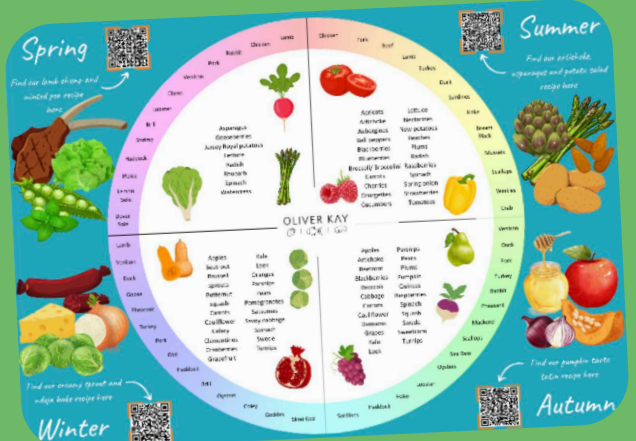
Yorkshire Forced Rhubarb And Galangal Crumble, Cashew Crumble & Cardamom Custard



BRITISH SEASONALITY CHART

Our commitment is not just to deliver the finest fruits and vegetables, but also to guide chefs through the journey of flavours and textures that result in extraordinary dishes.

[Click here to view our British Seasonality Wheel](#)



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