

NATURE'S CHOICE

L O N D O N S F I N E S T

AUGUST MARKET REPORT



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This summer has proved exceptionally challenging for growers across the UK. Prolonged periods of high temperatures, very limited rainfall and increasing pressure on water supplies have created difficult growing conditions across many regions. The UK is currently experiencing its fifth heatwave of the summer, while exceptionally dry conditions have placed significant pressure on British agriculture.

For fresh produce, the effects are increasingly being seen in availability, sizing, appearance, shelf life and price. Some crops have developed much faster than growers would normally expect, shortening harvest windows and creating gaps in supply. Others are struggling to achieve normal yields or specification because of heat stress and insufficient moisture. Despite these challenges, there remains a fantastic range of British produce available, and our buying team continues to work closely with growers and suppliers to secure the best possible quality and value.

MARKET INSIGHT

Broccoli

British broccoli has been particularly affected by the sustained heat. Warm conditions accelerated crop development earlier in the summer, bringing some crops forward considerably faster than anticipated. Supply has subsequently tightened, with UK availability now significantly reduced and imported Dutch and Spanish product being used where necessary to bridge gaps. The conditions can also affect head size, colour, firmness and overall shelf life.

Cauliflower

Like broccoli, British cauliflower has struggled under the extreme conditions. High temperatures can cause uneven development and affect both quality and consistency. UK availability remains limited in areas, with the market having to work harder to maintain normal specifications. Where appropriate, alternative origins may be required to maintain supply. Supply is expected to remain challenging until growing conditions become more favourable.

Potatoes

Potato crops are highly dependent on adequate water during development and the dry weather is affecting yields and sizing, resulting in greater variation in size and reduced yields. Wholesale potato prices have already experienced substantial upward pressure this summer.

Lettuce & Leafy Salads

Heat remains a key concern across the salad crops which have had a particularly difficult summer. Lettuce, spinach, baby leaf and other delicate leaves can deteriorate quickly during prolonged periods of high temperature, affecting yield, shelf life and cosmetic appearance. Iceberg lettuce in particular has experienced sharp wholesale price inflation as domestic availability has tightened.

Tomatoes

Tomatoes remain a key summer line, but very high temperatures can place the plants under considerable stress. Excessive heat can interfere with flowering and fruit set, while continued dry conditions increase dependence on irrigation. The wider tomato market has also experienced significant price inflation during the current UK drought. The quality remains good where crops have been successfully managed, although the market remains sensitive.

Cucumbers

Cucumber plants can also become stressed during periods of excessive heat which can result in greater variation in shape, specification and yield. Our customers may therefore notice more natural variation than during a typical British summer. Our focus remains on sourcing for eating quality and freshness rather than purely cosmetic uniformity.

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SEASONAL HIGHLIGHTS

While conditions have been difficult, August remains one of the most exciting months of the British produce calendar.

There are some fantastic ingredients available for summer menus.

Courgettes

British courgettes remain readily available, although some growing areas have experienced heat damage during the summer. Alongside traditional green courgettes, speak to the team about availability of more unusual varieties and baby courgettes.

Heritage Tomatoes

Summer continues to provide some beautiful tomato varieties. Heritage tomatoes bring fantastic colour, texture and flavour to menus and require very little intervention when the quality is this good.

Perfect with:

- British herbs
- Burrata
- Stone fruit
- Olive oil
- Fresh cheeses
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Stone Fruit

Peaches, nectarines and plums remain excellent seasonal choices through late summer.

As we move towards September, European stone-fruit seasons will gradually begin to wind down, so now is the time to make the most of them.

British Berries

British berries remain an excellent option through August. Strawberries, raspberries and other soft fruits continue to feature strongly, although prolonged heat can shorten shelf life, so careful handling remains particularly important.

LOOKING AHEAD TO SEPTEMBER

As Summer begins to give way to Autumn, September brings an exciting shift in seasonal produce. British apples and pears will return alongside an increasing variety of squash, while wild and speciality mushrooms begin to take centre stage. Fresh figs also remain a beautiful late-summer option, bridging the seasons perfectly. With many summer favourites still available, September offers chefs the best of both worlds and plenty of inspiration as menus begin their transition into Autumn.

OUR APPROACH

At Nature's Choice, we understand how important consistency is to our customers. Where British produce meets the quality and specification required, we will continue to support our UK growers wherever and whenever possible.

However, the conditions this summer are exceptional, there may therefore be occasions where alternative origins, sizes or specifications provide the best combination of quality, availability and value.

Please speak to our sales team if you would like recommendations for seasonal alternatives, menu planning or specialist produce.

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