



MARKET REPORT – APRIL 2017

So, Brexit is finally signed and sealed, and with the vast majority of summer vegetable crops grown here in the UK, there are understandable fears about the cost of labour and general seasonal workforce decline, not to mention increased import costs.



Sandwiched between Brexit-led pressures for summer and a catastrophic winter growing season peppered by cold and rainy weather on the continent, is the sanctuary of spring – and luckily, increased stability is expected as we move into the longer days of these naturally warmer months.



Asparagus is the word for April, though it's still early days for the British-grown variety so expect prices to be a little higher. Alternatively, perhaps try white or purple continental varieties and add a splash of colour to your dishes.

Tomatoes, Cauliflower and **Rhubarb** (forced and outdoor, with forced tailing off throughout the month), those British springtime staples, are doing well this month, and **Jersey Royals** add an element of enduring tradition to salads. Other **Potato** varieties are suffering from poor crops this season, so expect prices to be at a premium.



On the salad front, be warned – the market will continue to waver until our home-grown season really starts to take off from May. In the meantime, **Lettuce** and **Peppers** in particular will remain more scarce, with **Cucumbers, Chillies, Celery** and **Aubergines** not too far behind. **Avocados** will be slightly harder to get hold of, though varieties from Spain and Israel are currently available so you won't have to miss out if guacamole is your signature dish.

Jerusalem Artichokes continue as a great value seasonal buy, and other April recommendations include **Curly Kale, Cabbage, Leeks, Carrots** and **Celeriac**. UK **Onion** supplies are running low, so expect prices to be slightly higher, and the weak pound will affect the price of imported **Peas** and **Beans**.

Fruit-wise, **Clementines** are still available but in our opinion, are not at their absolute best at this time of year, with crops starting to arrive from Morocco rather than Spain. However, Spanish **Strawberries** and **Blueberries** are plentifully available at a great price now, with UK berry crops predicted to suffer from a lack of available labour to harvest the fruit later in the year.

South Africa is importing grapes and stone fruit including **Nectarines** and **Peaches**, though these are really at their juicy best in summertime. **Apples** are also widely available, while on the exotic front there is likely to be a shortage of **Mangoes** later this Spring due to fluctuating overseas weather conditions.

So, it's clearly a tumultuous time in the marketplace, but there is still great value produce to be had and if there's one thing you can rely on, it's Chef's Choice's ability to supply the very best. In the meantime, wishing you a very Happy Easter, and see you next month.

