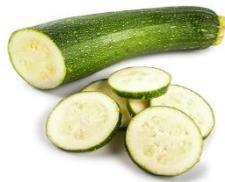




## MARKET REPORT – JANUARY 2017



Happy New Year! I wish I could say the year has started out as happily on the salad vegetable front, but unfortunately, I'd be lying. Exceptionally challenging market conditions mean that menu planning may well need to be approached slightly more carefully than usual.



Luckily, here at Chef's Choice we always keep a sharp eye on any changes in prices and conditions to ensure we continue supplying the very best quality produce, and that's one thing you can rely upon throughout the most turbulent of periods.



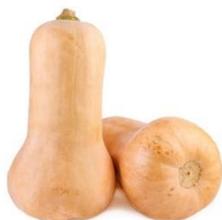
Last month, we reported a rise in prices for **Aubergines** and **Courgettes** and this is sadly still the case. These vegetables are in such short supply that many growers have had to cancel their contracts...and the list doesn't stop there, with **Lettuce**, **Rocket**, **Celery** and **Cucumber** all being added and **Peppers** and **Tomatoes** also touching the danger zone. **Iceberg Lettuce** is at a particularly high premium, but if you want salads to remain on the menu, could be substituted for Italian varieties such as **Lollo Rosso** or **Batavia**. **Radicchio** and other assorted chicories are still available despite the adverse weather in Italy at the moment. **Broad Beans** are particularly well-suited to the Italian climate right now, so expect quite a few batches to arrive.



It may indeed be value-wise to switch to **root vegetables** in your remaining winter menu planning. **Butternut Squash** is looking particularly good, along with **Jerusalem Artichokes**. Or for something to get people talking, **Purple flowering Sprouts**, an interesting mix of Kale and Brussels Sprouts, could be a good option – particularly as they don't need any preparation. **Broccoli** and **Cauliflower** are also at reasonable prices for the time of year, while **January King Cabbage** is a good buy and very tasty. **Mushrooms** deserve a hearty mention, with most varieties in abundance.



Be quick when ordering prime **English Apples** and **Conference Pears**, as supplies are beginning to reduce. **Berries** remain expensive, with **Spanish Strawberries** probably the best value (and tasting) at the moment. And the future is definitely bright, with **Orange**, with **Blood** and **Seville Oranges** in full season. Order the latter quickly however, as they won't be around for too long.



**Forced English Rhubarb**, packed with goodness and whose growing conditions are unaffected by the weather, is particularly pink and lovely at the moment, and for those with more exotic tastes, **Lychees**, **Kiwis** and **Kumquats** are wonderful. Plenty of **Grapes** and stone fruits including **Peaches** and **Nectarines** are also arriving from South Africa.



We hope that's given you a few ideas – and don't forget, we're always on hand to answer any specific questions you might have. Until next time.