

Market Menu – February

As Valentines inevitably fills your restaurants this month there are lots of nice things about to make your romancing couples forget the cheesiness of the day! **Pomegranates** are always good quality this time of year and are always a nice garnish or feature for your plates. Another fruit that is also In its prime and are worth considering for your menus are **Passion Fruits** as well.



Spanish Onions may begin to develop problems with brown rot inside the onion. This is not easy to spot. The bulb may feel firm on the outside but be rotten and unusable a few layers down. Smaller **English Onions** resist the rot rather better and, in my opinion, keep their flavour better in storage.

Shallots will remain sound, although some will inevitably start sprouting.

Purple Sprouting Broccoli can be in short supply due to the hard frosts, but being a winter crop it should last for a good few months yet and prices should drop if the weather plays ball. The dark leaves are delicious and tender enough to eat on their own, which is just as well, as there are often no sprouts (flower buds) to be found at the beginning of the season. Don't forget about **Curly Kale** which is at its best and supplies are improving each year.



In fruit, **Spanish Strawberries** are one of the few highlights. They trickle in at first, but by mid-month are likely to flood the market. The fruit has a pleasant taste and can be surprisingly sweet for the time of year, although the tops can be quite pale.

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If by February you are rather sick of **Brassiccas, Courgettes** are usually in fairly good supply although prices are already unstable and rising so use them sparingly.

A product that is becoming more and more popular on menus are **Baby Violet Artichokes**. Not only are they versatile, they can give you something a little different for a side dish.



Savoy Cabbages are almost guaranteed to be good and **Spring Greens** will look fresher and tender.

The Rolls Royce of Rhubarb **Yorkshire Forced Rhubarb** is replaced by the outdoor unblanched crop at some point during the month.



Bramley Apples remain a good choice in February. **English Cox's** can become soft.

Salad crops are still at the mercy of the weather and so far the prices do reflect that. **Lettuces** such as Iceberg can be in very short supply and therefore very expensive. **Radicchio** can be a little variable and the price may shoot up if the Italian crop doesn't hold up well in storage. While the fairly underused **Yellow Chicory** remain great value for money. **Red Chicory** is also great quality but commands a slightly higher price than the yellow.

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If you are looking for a nice Valentines Day garnish why not try **Edible Orchids** or **Violas** for your plates, Violas are my personal favourites. If you want a nice mix of edible flowers order the premium mixed edible flowers. Please note that we don't stock these lines but can be pre ordered.



Potatoes are still of good quality and the pricing should be stable

If you are looking for something a bit different as a side dish why not try **Eryngii Mushrooms** (AKA King Oyster Mushrooms). They are good value for money and have a resemblance to more expensive Cepe Mushrooms.



Clementine's and **Satsuma's** have started to be turn a bit scruffy. We will be replaced by a variety call **Nardicots** which are a sweet easy peeling orange that is part of the mandarin family.

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The Cape Grape (South Africa) season started early this year. Supplies of **Red and Black Seedless** may be short.

Cape Peaches, Nectarines, and Plums are likely to remain in good supply.

Figs will also be a decent choice for you Valentines Menu's as they are in the top 10 in the aphrodisiac foods list.

Mange tout, Sugar snaps and Extra Fine Beans are likely to be plentiful too.



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