



2025 PRODUCE SEASON

★ EXPERT INSIGHTS ★

Staying on top of seasonal trends is vital to prepare you for cyclical market shifts. Whether you are shipping fresh fruits and vegetables or looking for capacity during produce season, it pays to work with experienced shipping partners and industry experts. Learn more about what to expect from the 2025 produce season below.

WHAT IS PRODUCE SEASON?

Produce season is a period from **late spring through the beginning of summer** where a large volume of fruits and vegetables are transported. Produce season peaks between April and July as seasonal produce and fruit are harvested and prepared for shipping.

Fresh products need to be moved to grocery stores and vendors, starting in the southern states as temperatures increase and then spreading throughout the country. These shipments are time-sensitive due to the limited shelf life of harvest freight.

Temperature-controlled trucks are in high demand during this time of year, impacting capacity and shipping rates.

PRODUCE SEASON BY THE STATE

Each region has its peak and most common fruit or vegetable being shipped. Knowing when the areas near you will be at their peak volume is essential. **Southern states like Florida kick off the produce season, so keeping up to date on their market conditions can be a good indicator of when volume will begin to increase in your area.**



The Florida produce season peaks between mid-April and July. Although Florida's signature crop is citrus the state is ideal for growing a variety of crops. In addition to Valencia oranges and grapefruit Florida is a leader in nursery products, sugarcane, bell peppers, and watermelon. The warm humid climate kicks off harvest season quickly and makes Florida a predictor for the rest of the country.



Texas is another state whose warm weather contributes to earlier increases in produce volumes. Although the **main crops** grown in Texas are cotton, corn, rice, and wheat, the warm climate allows many vegetable and citrus varieties to be grown year-round.

In addition to local harvests, Texas is also a hotspot for imported produce from Mexico such as Hass avocados. Produce shipping peaks from April to July and the mix of imported and local produce requires a substantial amount of capacity and planning to move these goods effectively.

HOTSPOTS FOR PRODUCE SEASON

The two biggest areas for fresh, in-season fruits and vegetable products in the United States are the Yuma Valley in Arizona and the San Joaquin Valley in California.



California sees its peak from May to August, overlapping with the table grape season, which runs from May to January, and the beginning of the wine grape harvest from late summer through the winter months. Other notable crops include tomatoes, carrots, and strawberries.



Arizona is also a large contributor to produce season. Major crops like lettuce, lemons, melons, and grains are grown in the Yuma Valley. About 90% of the leafy greens in the United States are grown here, and over 1000 trucks per day load vegetables out of Yuma, Arizona, during the produce season.



IMPORTANT DATES TO KNOW

One of the most important dates leading up to the start of produce season is the **Vidalia Onion “pack date.”** These onions are a Georgia staple and state vegetable and are only available for a short time each year. The pack date signals the beginning of the produce shipping season for many other growers and is typically in mid-April. The Vidalia Onion Committee determines the date based on the weather each year. No onions sold before the pack date can be called a Vidalia. Throughout the season, somewhere around 200 million pounds of onions will be distributed across the country.

Prior to the pack date signal from Georgia, **a preliminary sign that produce season is about to begin is the Plant City Strawberry Festival in Florida.** The festival celebrates the end of the winter strawberry season, an important contributor to the state’s economy. Florida is an important producer of strawberries over the winter season which lasts from November through March when many other states are unable to grow them. Over 215.73 million pounds of strawberries, which equates roughly to 5,000 refrigerated trucks are shipped out of Florida during this time, tightening capacity in the area in the weeks ahead of peak harvests in other areas.

WHAT MAKES PRODUCE SEASON DIFFERENT?

When shipping produce, speed and temperature control are vital to keeping crops fresh in transit. Prioritizing an efficient supply chain is essential to preserving the shelf life of seasonal fruits and vegetables. Chad Thomas, England Logistics’ Senior Director of Logistics Services, prepares for the peak of the season by

“communicating with our shipping community well in advance of their harvest to make sure we’re aligned on understanding their needs. Listening to how their expectations may have shifted if they’ve taken on more distributors or more clients to retail their products, and what is necessary to be able to fulfill those needs.”

Being ready to move these sensitive products is something that changes each year which is why communication and active relationships with shipping partners are so important to this season.

WHAT TO EXPECT IN PRODUCE SEASON 2025

The market for fresh produce in the United States was valued at 62.52 billion in 2021 and is expected to grow at an annual rate of 5% from 2022 to 2030. As the demand for fresh produce continues to rise consumer trends are shifting towards **affordable and organic** options prioritizing versatile fruits like bananas and nutritionally rich vegetables. These trends may be influenced by the application of tariffs during the harvest season which could impact the price of some of these in-demand products.

Although there may be economic factors influencing consumers this season the weather has prepared key areas for a strong harvest. The tail end of the El Niño cycle was present in 2024 and continues into the beginning months of 2025 which is marked by milder winters and increased precipitation in key areas. Weather conditions may shift to become less favorable later in the year but the current lingering effects of El Niño have created a positive growing cycle for this produce season.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR PRODUCE SEASON

Whether you are shipping seasonal produce or another refrigerated product, **it will be difficult to secure capacity during produce season** if plans are not made well in advance. Working with a 3PL that has access to an extensive network of carriers can help you to be prepared to move your freight. 3PLs like England Logistics prepare for the produce season by working with both shippers and carriers. Chad Thomas explains,

“ I would tip my hat to our carrier providers and to our network of capacity, the scope and depth of the providers that we utilize, and their individual preparedness for being able to handle this unique seasonal surge activity when it comes around.”

Access to reliable capacity and industry experts who are prepared to help you quickly get your loads to their destinations can make a big difference throughout the season. Even if you can get the trucks you need, rates will likely be higher during this time. Making plans before the shipping rush can help you avoid some of the spikes in rates that will come at the season's peak.

Another thing to watch for if you are preparing to ship nonproduce loads is the peak time for crops in your target areas. Each region will have its own spike as the seasonal fruits and vegetables in the area are harvested. Depending on the region, this will happen at different times, so it is important to know when you will likely experience disruptions and competition for trucks.

Planning is vital to shipping your loads during the produce season. Awareness of hotspots and regional harvest timelines can help prevent issues securing trucks. Working with a 3PL that has access to an extensive network of carriers can help you make a plan to move your freight.



The England Logistics Full Truckload division offers services for companies of all sizes. Dedicated team members are available day and night to offer solutions and assistance with all logistical needs. Regardless of the transportation mode, our market and seasonal specialists provide flexible shipping solutions and are committed to helping every step of the way.