

## Overview

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Lettuce, romaine and leaf items are steady and are still a good buy. Carrots are improving, lemons are short in supply, and tomatoes are still very **EXTREME**.

## Market Alert

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- Avocados – **ESCALATED**
- Cauliflower – **ESCALATED**
- Lemons – **EXTREME**
- Mushrooms – **ESCALATED**
- Potatoes – **ESCALATED**
- Snow and Sugar Snap Peas – **ESCALATED**
- Tomatoes (Cherries, Grapes, Romas, Rounds) – **EXTREME**

## Watch List

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**Oranges** are going to start getting very short as we do expect to see prices rise.

## Alternatives to ESCALATED and EXTREME Items

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As tomatoes and potatoes continue to struggle in the market, we are looking to these steady items that are equally delicious and can be used as substitutes for certain dishes. Make any sandwich or classic burger Hawaiian style with a pineapple instead of tomatoes, and upgrade your potato usage this holiday season by mixing in sweet potatoes and yams.

## Good Buys

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Twinkle twinkle little starfruit, how we wonder what you are! Starfruit, otherwise known as Carambola, is a magical fruit that produces beautiful star-shapes when sliced. A surprising fact to some about this good buy is that the whole fruit, aside from the seeds, is entirely edible! It's sweet tart flavors are balanced beautifully with its firm, grape-like texture.

When searching for the perfect starfruit, be sure to select firm to the touch picks that are a vibrant, bright yellow with slightly browned edges. Large green patches indicate that it's not quite ripe yet.

Use this merry and bright produce to bring some sunshine to the cold, winter season! Garnish starfruit in holiday drinks and fruit salads, or test out your culinary skills in this super simple roasted Star Fruit Chips recipe.

## [Star Fruit Chips](#)

### Ingredients

- 2 firm-ripe yellow star fruit (sometimes called carambola; 1/2 lb total)
- 2 cups sugar
- 2 cups water

### Directions

1. Slice star fruit crosswise with slicer into 1/16-inch-thick slices.
2. Bring sugar and water to a boil in a 2-quart heavy saucepan, stirring until sugar is dissolved. Add star fruit, then remove from heat and let stand, uncovered, 15 minutes. Pour star fruit into a sieve set over a bowl and drain 15 minutes. Reserve syrup for quince apple strudels.
3. Put oven rack in middle position and preheat oven to 200°F. Put liner on a large (17- by 11-inch) baking sheet, then arrange star-fruit slices in 1 layer on liner (discard extra along with any broken slices). Bake until dry, 1 to 1 1/4 hours. Immediately transfer chips to a rack to cool.

## Weather

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**SOUTHEAST:** The forecast calls for a mix of rain and sun over the next week with a return to normal temps beginning this weekend.

Thu 12/14	Fri 12/15	Sat 12/16	Sun 12/17	Mon 12/18	Tue 12/19	Wed 12/20
72°   56°	78°   62°	80°   69°	82°   70°	82°   68°	83°   68°	82°   70°
						
Clear	Clear	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy

**HERMOSILLO:** Cooler temperatures will prevail and lots of sunshine.

Thu 12/14	Fri 12/15	Sat 12/16	Sun 12/17	Mon 12/18	Tue 12/19	Wed 12/20
79°   50°	80°   51°	76°   53°	73°   50°	75°   50°	77°   52°	78°   52°
						
Clear						

**CULIACAN:** A mix of showers are expected for this week. This will slow tomato production down further affecting an already short market.

Thu 12/14	Fri 12/15	Sat 12/16	Sun 12/17	Mon 12/18	Tue 12/19	Wed 12/20
75°   57°	79°   54°	77°   50°	82°   52°	81°   55°	86°   53°	90°   56°
						
Chance of Rain	Chance of a Thunderstorm	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Chance of Rain	Clear	Partly Cloudy

**YUMA:** The forecast calls for a mix of clouds and sunshine through next week with highs in the 70's and 50's at night.

Thu 12/14	Fri 12/15	Sat 12/16	Sun 12/17	Mon 12/18	Tue 12/19	Wed 12/20
77°   52°	76°   50°	71°   51°	68°   45°	69°   45°	71°   48°	73°   50°
						
Partly Cloudy	Clear	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Clear	Clear	Clear

## Transportation – EXTREME

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Trucks are extremely tight and rates have increased by more that 25 percent this week. A lot of this is due to Christmas Tree Pulls out of the Northwest. We expect very short logistics options through mid-December.

## Fruits & Vegetables

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**Avocados: ESCALATED** We are seeing ongoing issues with the supply of avocados crossing the border from Mexico. These issues are the result of continued closures of several packing sheds in the region. These closures are the result of a politically-driven decision made by the board of elected growers in Mexico. Due to the nature of the root cause of these closures, domestic marketing companies have no control over supply and no way to influence the re-opening of these facilities. As a

result, we are anticipating a steady increase in FOB prices at the border over the next several weeks, despite the Minister of Agriculture for Mexico stepping in to attempt to resolve these political issues. We don't have any hard information about a timetable for negotiation or resolution of these issues and have been apprised of rumors of organized shutdowns occurring this weekend, which will further tighten supply. As always, we value your business and will do all we can to find suggested alternatives for you, and of course, will keep you informed as this situation develops. We will also see a short California supply as several major wild fires are affecting growing districts in Fallbrook and Ventura. Several buildings and groves have been destroyed.



**Bananas:** Demand remains firm and quality is good, but we are seeing short supplies across the country and expect a shortage to continue through 2018 due to virus impacts.

**Grapes:** Quality is good on the storage Reds. Scarlet Royals and Crimson are the varieties that are available and remaining in California. We are seeing greens arriving out of Peru- Sugraone variety.

**Kiwi:** California crops are now in full swing with ample supply available and showing excellent quality. This new crop will extend all the way through to February.

### **Berries**

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**Blueberries:** Blueberry availability is steady, prices are high and quality is good.

**Blackberries:** Blackberries are average in volume. Quality is good and prices are high.

**Raspberries:** Volume is steady, quality is good, and prices are high.

**Strawberry-** The market is getting very active, with much higher prices. Quality is good.

### **California / Arizona Citrus**

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The California navel market is steady with most of the crop heavy fancy and peaking 88/72/113. Domestic clementine's and tangerines have started. Domestic cara caras will begin packing next week and blood oranges will start the following week.

**Navels/Valencia's: Watch List** California orange supplies during Quarter 1 will carry a larger than normal size structure, making 88S/113S/138S increasingly difficult. Shippers are expecting a 30% reduction in 113S and a 50% reduction in 138S versus this time last year. Expect higher prices overall with fruit expected to peak 72/56.

It is too early to assess the fire damage to the Ventura lemon growing region, but D3 crop is 25% lighter than estimated, making supplies on smaller fruit tight.

**Lemons: EXTREME** On December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017, a fire started just northeast of Santa Paula, CA. Due to high winds, the fire moved primarily westward toward Ventura burning over 31,000 acres by this morning and is 0% contained at this point. The city of Ventura currently has structural fires in the downtown area. The fire line has stayed just north of our growers' offices and packing houses. However, due to power outages and extreme smoke, and for the safety of our growers, we will be unable to load product until further notice. We are working to find other resources and will keep you up to date as soon as we have more information.

**Limes:** Limes are available.

**Grapefruit:** Texas grapefruit is available. Florida Star Ruby/Red is available. California Star Ruby are available.

#### **Specialties:**

- California satsumas are available for a little while longer.
- Few import Blood Oranges are out there, and domestic will start the second week of December.
- New Zealand Meyers are available.
- Sunburst Tangerines are available out of FL.
- Halos and Cuties (mandarins) have started.
- Pummelos are available.
- Mexican Tangerines are available out of TX.

#### **California Lettuce**

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**Butter:** Prices are stable. Quality is good.

**Green and Red Leaf:** Quality is good. Prices are good.

**Iceberg Lettuce:** Supplies have been up this week. Prices are good. Quality is average as we are seeing bottom rot and weak tip.

**Romaine:** Supply and pricing is good. Quality is overall fair, but improving. We are seeing heavy rib and some twisting.

**Romaine Hearts:** Supplies are good and prices have improved. Quality has improved. Most issues with quality can be peeled off.

#### **Eastern and Western Vegetables**

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**Green Bell Pepper:** Supplies are very limited out of the east with Georgia now being done for the season. We do expect to see improvement in this market over the next couple of weeks. Out of the west, supplies are improving out of Nogales. Desert crops are now done until the spring.

**Red Bell Pepper:** Now shipping primarily through Nogales. The desert is winding down fast and supplies are lighter this week. We expect markets to remain firm another week at the very least. FOB prices are higher again this week.

**Yellow Pepper:** Supplies are unchanged loading through Nogales. FOB prices are mostly unchanged.

**Mini Sweet Pepper:** Supplies are tighter as heat has affected supplies in the west and crops in the east have been damaged by Irma. Markets are expected to remain firm for the remainder of the month.

**Eggplant:** Supplies are improving in the east with Florida production ramping up and will continue to improve as new fields will break late next week. There are good supplies in the west loading in Coachella and Nogales. Markets are down across the country.

**English Cucumber:** There are excellent supplies crossing through Nogales and McAllen.

**Cucumbers:** Georgia is now done for the season and good supplies are available out of Florida. Markets are mostly unchanged and are plentiful out of Nogales and McAllen. Pole cucumber quality out of the shade houses in Mexico are gorgeous, showing dark green fruit with very little blemish or defect. We do anticipate this market firming up later this week.

**Green Beans:** Supplies are firming up crossing through Noagles and loading out of Florida. We anticipate a firm market through Christmas.

**Zucchini and Yellow Squash:** Supplies have firmed up crossing through Nogales as well as South Florida. We are seeing this as a result of transitions to newer blocks in all growing areas. There is a mix of quality and sizing expected through Christmas. FOB prices will remain firm.

## Herbs

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**Basil:** Fresh basil continues to be short for at least the next 24 hours. The Santa Ana warm winds that hit the growing region of Southern Baja/Mexico has caused some quality issues to the leaves. We will not ship the basil if it is poor quality. We have sourced fresh basil from another unaffected growing region and supplies will be arriving tomorrow (Friday) for weekend shipping. If quality is sound, we should be able to fill all orders. Thank you for your patience and understanding as we go through this weather-related quality issue.

HERB	SUPPLIES	QUALITY	COUNTRY OF ORIGIN
Arugula	Good	Good	USA
Basil	Good	Good	USA/MEXICO
Opal Basil	Good	Good	USA/MEXICO
Thai Basil	Good	Good	USA/MEXICO
Bay Leaves	Good	Good	COLUMBIA
Chervil	Good	Good	USA
Chives	Good	Good	USA/MEXICO
Cilantro	Good	Good	USA
Dill	Good	Good	USA/MEXICO
Episode	Good	Good	MEXICO
Lemongrass	Good	Good	USA
Marjoram	Good	Good	USA
Mint	Good	Good	USA
Oregano	Good	Good	USA

Italian Parsley	Good	Good	USA
Rosemary	Limited	Good	USA
Sage	Good	Good	USA/MEXICO
Savory	Good	Good	USA
Sorrel	Good	Good	USA
Tarragon	Good	Good	MEXICO
Thyme	Good	Good	USA
Lemon Thyme	Good	Good	USA
Lavender	Good	Good	USA
Lime Leaves	Good	Good	USA
Hora Santa	Good	Good	USA

## **Melons**

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**Cantaloupe:** There is good volume right now on 9/12s with the larger sizing fetching a premium and 15's are very short. Import quality has been strong with firm fruit and good internal quality as brix levels have been mostly in the 11-15% range.

**Honeydew:** Supplies have been plentiful from Mexico, we are also seeing offshore availability ramp up. 5-6 is the peak size. Smaller fruit (8/9s) will remain very limited. Brix levels are 11-16% range.

**Watermelon:** This market has spiked upward quickly. The market remains very active on all sizes crossing through Nogales and McAllen. We expect the market will remain active for the rest of the calendar year.

## **Mixed Vegetables**

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**Artichokes:** Steady market with higher prices. Quality is good.

**Arugula:** Supplies are low for baby and wild. Quality is average. Prices are rising.

**Asparagus:** Good supply, prices are back to normal and quality is good.

**Bok Choy:** Quality is good and we are seeing some higher quotes on WGA cartons.

**Broccoli / Broccoli Florets:** Supplies are good, showing good quality and prices.

**Brussels Sprouts:** Very high prices and tighter supplies remain but are leveling out. Quality is improving. We expect improvement in about 2 to 3 weeks.

**Carrots:** Due to the heat and rain, we are seeing some quality issues and a shortage on jumbo supplies as well as tables and cellos. This market is improving, but prices are still higher.

**Cauliflower: ESCALATED** Though quality is looking good, prices on cauliflower are high. Cool nights have slowed the growth, and supplies industry wide are very short.

**Celery:** Market is steady. We are seeing good quality and steady supplies.

**Corn:** Sweet corn supplies are improving out of Florida as new crop production begins.

**Cilantro:** Quality and prices are good with steady supply.

**Fennel:** Supplies for the week will be good and quality is good.

**Garlic: EXTREME** We have now fully transitioned from common storage garlic to cold storage product. Fortunately to date, our recoveries are faring relatively fine through the cracking/peeling process. Concerning the future/2018 crop, we are 85% completed with our planting season. Provided the weather (and that Mother Nature cooperates), we should finish planting within the next two weeks. In the coming months, we'll hope for cold enough weather and decent rainfall (similar to last year) to help facilitate the growth of the bulbs.

**Ginger:** Chinese ginger supplies are steady. Quality is good.

**Green Cabbage:** Supply is good on both coasts, quality is good.

**Green Onions: Iced** Prices are good, quality is good.

**JICAMA:** Prices are firming up and inventories are lighter. We are seeing some quality and shelf life issues in storage product.

**Kale (Green):** Demand is steady and quality has improved. Supplies are steady.

**Mache:** Availability is adequate.

**Mushrooms: ESCALATED** Mushroom growers have suffered damage in the South and Southeast, as well as Puerto Rico. Hurricane Harvey and Irma have resulted in a tightening market, and the American Mushroom Institute said it expects supply to be affected for several months.

**Napa:** Supplies are normal. Quality is good.

**Parsley (Curly, Italian):** Prices are stable and quality has improved. Steady supply.

**Radishes:** Quality is good and supply is slowing down. Expect to see stronger markets through the summer.

**Red Cabbage:** Quality and sizing have been great with good color. Market is stable.

**Snow and Sugar Snap Peas: ESCALATED** Snow and sugar snap peas are in high demand and markets are extremely tight.

**Spinach (Bunched):** Supply is good and quality is just fair due to the ice and heat.

**Spinach (Baby):** Baby and clipped spinach supplies are good, showing average quality.

**Spring Mix:** Supplies are good and quality has improved.

**Onions:**

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All indications are showing that supplies are significantly shorter than previous seasons. It is likely that we will see pricing remain elevated as demand exceeds supplies. Sizing is peaking mostly on mediums and jumbos with fewer big onions, but size overall has become better. Transportation in this region has been the largest factor keeping pricing where it is as trucks have been extremely tight. This is forcing heavier movement from regions outside of the northwest which has forced that area to keep pricing where it is at.

**Potatoes:**

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**ESCALATED** Potato demand in the state is moderate with steady pricing. The unknown at this time is the price of the freight to get product delivered. All the shippers in the state are dealing with a severe shortage of rail cars and at times, inaccurate information. This has caused some operational issues for the shipping community and the receivers on the other end. We can expect this transportation issue to hinder the shipping community well into next year.

**TOMATO WEATHER UPDATE – EAST WEST AND MEXICO**

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**EXTREME** Ruskin/ Palmetto region will be severely short as we are just not seeing plants come on as estimated, in addition to ongoing gaps in production. We are witnessing the situation we have all been aware was coming for some time now. On September 10, 2017, Hurricane Irma devastated several growing districts throughout Florida with winds over 100 miles per hour and catastrophic flooding. This weather event is currently impacting harvest of all vegetable items in the Ruskin/ Palmetto region resulting in extreme yield deficits coming from the fields. In addition to this event in the east, we are seeing major issues with Roma tomato, Grape tomatoes and Round tomatoes out of Central Mexico as cold nights have literally stopped production. We do not anticipate seeing any relief until the week of Christmas.

**TOMATOES- EAST**

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- **Rounds: EXTREME** The Ruskin/Palmetto region is still seeing shortfalls, as well as a demand exceeds supply condition. We do not anticipate any relief until the week of Christmas as we expect Immokalee to finally begin production. For product that is available, quality is good and FOB prices are up and very unstable this week.
- **Romas: EXTREME** We are still seeing lighter than normal supply and expect similar conditions for Rounds. We do not expect to see any relief until the week of Christmas. FOB prices are up and very unstable this week.
- **Grapes: EXTREME** Ruskin/Palmetto are seeing major supply shortfalls; however, supplies are improving. Please note though that we are still seeing a demand exceeds supply condition. For product that is available, quality is good and FOB prices have INCREASED. We expect no significant relief until at least the middle of December.
- **Cherries: EXTREME** Ruskin/Palmetto are seeing major supply shortfalls. For product that is available, quality is good.

**TOMATOES- WEST AND MEXICO**

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- **Rounds: EXTREME** Vine-ripe production is at an all-time low crossing through Otay and McAllen. We are seeing demand exceed supply conditions on all Mexican production this week. All of this is a result of cold

weather in Central Mexico that has literally stopped production. FOB prices are up and very unstable this week.

- **Romas: EXTREME** We are seeing a demand exceeds supply condition through Otay and McAllen, and we do not expect relief until we see product availability in Nogales late next week. FOB's are up and very unstable this week.
- **Grapes: EXTREME** Crossings have improved slightly, but we continue to see all-time lows this week due to bloom drop and supply gaps in all Baja districts. Grape tomato FOB prices have double since last week due to the increased demand from the east.
- **Cherries: EXTREME** We are seeing a demand exceeds supply condition this week and we expect no relief until another two weeks from now.

## **APPLES & PEARS**

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**Apples: PROMOTIONAL VOLUME AVAILABLE ON FOOD SERVICE/SMALL SIZED FRUIT!** New crop now available we are seeing the pressure on the market decrease and shortages diminish. Excellent quality available on all varieties; however, we are seeing less production of Golden Delicious as the trees are being pulled and replaced with more favorable varieties. Please make note that volume orders on food service grade apples must be pre-booked to ensure they are not packed with PLU stickers.

**Pears:** Still good availability on Golds out of California while we see good supply available on Bartlett and D'Anjou out of the Pacific Northwest.