



General Produce

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SOUP PROJECT

A **slow** and **simmering** pot of soup is such a warm welcome on wintry days.

Soups are **budget-friendly** while packing in the flavors of endless ingredient possibilities.

Who wouldn't enjoy a break to the rising **weekly food costs**? Every wallet needs a **soup day**.

Getting high marks on satisfaction, soups actually taste better when prepared the day ahead of serving. Allow the flavors to meld overnight in the fridge. Once heated through, a rich, deeper taste will be evident.

Scour the pantry and veggie drawer for what to star in the soup pot. Every small piece of **ginger root**, **celery** or **onion** has the ability to shape the dish.

Try the remnants in the freezer for the tidbits just waiting to make a **meal contribution**. Summer **peas**, **corn** and **beans** put away in the freezer are just right for a soup occasion. So too are those glistening jars of **tomatoes** done up at the end of last season.

Potatoes of all varieties make a hearty soup starter. Combined with **leeks**, **onions**, **shallots**, or **garlic**, winter is a forgotten kitchen obstacle. **Kale** plays into this conversation. Adding **sausage** or another protein like **crab** or **shrimp** is a departure from the vegetarian glance.

A **well-seasoned** soup is paramount to enjoyment. Don't be afraid of **salt** and **pepper**. Vegetables are especially greedy when it comes to seasoning.



Broths and **stocks** require some level of **tasting** to adjust accordingly. Specialty **spices** and **herbs** elevate bland foundations.

Olive oil and **lemon zest** are two viable additions that can make a difference in unique ways.

Never underestimate the power of a single **bay leaf**. The character imposed on the soup may be subtle, but substantial.

Fool around with **cinnamon**, **turmeric**, **star anise**, and **cloves**. Lean in with **coconut milk**. Explore **Asian**, **Mediterranean**, and **Indian** cuisines. World-over, there's a soup to be tried.

When time permits, say over a two-day **winter weekend**, make it a **soup project**. Those who find **poetry in the kitchen** know how the process of creating something wonderful is as good as it gets.

Chopping, simmering, stirring. The **rhythm** and **aromatics** are hypnotic. The quiet meditation of soup-making fuels relaxation and mindfulness. There is nourishment in the preparation.

A **soup course** or **main bowl** determines what else gets served. A hunk of rustic bread, scattering of croutons, or even warmed tortillas seem right depending on the style and soup direction.

A **grilled cheese sandwich** with a cup of **tomato soup** is a classic pairing, comforting to every generation. A more elaborate **Taiwanese French Onion Beef Noodle Soup** speaks to another crowd. Choose a soup that talks your language.





Apples & Pears: We continue to have good supplies of most varieties and sizes. As some of the cheapest winter deals start to clean up, the overall market is slightly higher. Ask for promotional opportunities to drive the basket ring.

Bartlett pears are winding down in Washington but are still available. **Anjou** are running large and smaller foodservice sizes are becoming scarce. The market is steady and there is a good supply of **Bosc pears**.

Berries: With better weather and no rain ahead, **strawberry** production will increase. As a result of the major nationwide freeze, demand for strawberries has decreased significantly. We expect this short-term surplus quantity to be corrected mid-to-late next week. Due to rain events in *California*, production estimates have been low. This week's warmer temperatures will help dry out fields and improve quality. In Southern California, more rain is forecast for late next week. Over the next few weeks, Florida expects volume to increase after recent rain interruptions.

Blueberries are coming in from *Central Mexico*, *Chile*, and *Baja*. The quality has remained steady. Over the next few weeks, *Mexico* will ramp up production. Available in both pints and 12/6 oz packs, numbers are steadily increasing. Look for this trend to continue into late February.

Transfer delays of **raspberries** and **blackberries** have resulted in lower volumes. Warmer weather will fuel better supplies in the next few weeks.



Citrus: *California Navel Oranges* are currently peaking on 72s and larger; 88/113/138st are incredibly scarce and

will be this way through the navel season. Fruit will continue to size up as the season progresses due to low fruit sets and rain events. Staying flexible with size and grade throughout this extremely tight Navel season will be a benefit.

Lime markets are steady to slightly higher. Crossings through *Texas* are lighter than prior weeks, however prices are holding firm for now. The quality of the fruit is good; the fruit is peaking on large sizes 110/150s. As we approach the Superbowl weekend, demand is expected to increase.

Steady production on **lemons**, **mandarins**, **grapefruit** and **tangelos**. Keep citrus on the menu for continued consumer interest. **Blood** and **Cara Cara oranges** and **Meyer lemons** are the highlight on specialty citrus; good for foodservice, bartending and retail sales.

Grapes: The grape supply continues to shrink. There are no vessels arriving on the west coast this week, and existing inventory is very low. *Chile* is just getting started, while *Peru* is winding down. Volume on the east coast is tight, but much better than on the west coast. For the next three weeks, this market will remain high and tight. We will strive to continue with some specialty product (**Cotton Candy**) as varieties are available on vessels.



Seasonals: *California grown organic kiwi* (20 lb. / #783) are now back in stock.

Cantaloupe volumes have been lowered due to weather delays in *Guatemala* and *Honduras*.

Cantaloupes are peaking at 9s and Jumbo 9s. With a higher shell color, both external and internal quality characteristics remain good to excellent. **Honeydew melons** are expected to remain steady for the remainder of the month; volumes still down from weather delays as cantaloupe markets. Prices have doubled. *Guatemalan* sizes will peak on 5s and 6s. Quality has been fair with some spotting and discoloration but it is expected to improve as more product becomes available. There are limited *Mexican honeydews* available.

Watermelon supplies from *Mexico* are only meeting demand on the west coast. *Northern Mexico's* rains have affected fruit supply, and fruit is slowly becoming available in *Southern Mexico*. Within the next two weeks, additional inventory will be available.

Tomatoes: *Volatility* is the key word for the tomato market. Limited volume out of *Mexico* and weather in *Florida* has created an extremely strong market. The production is down significantly on both coasts, with a few shippers declaring AOG on contracts. The overall yields are down, with some growers reporting yields of 30 to 50 percent below normal, due to these very high prices. Warmer temperatures are forecast in Sinaloa which will help bring on more fruit and color. Weather will continue to determine if we will see a supply improvement. Prices are escalated on all varieties and pack styles.



Floral: Keep **fresh-cut flowers**, **bouquets**, **blooming** and **potted green plants** in focus for all the upcoming holidays. **Lucky bamboo** and **money tree plants** are ideal for Lunar New year celebrations.

Contact our floral team to see what is new and available each week @:
gpflo-
ral@generalproduce.com

Asparagus: All eyes are on *Caborca, Sonora* for asparagus. There has been some recent rain in this region, and soon we will have near-perfect asparagus growing weather. Throughout mid-late February and early March, asparagus will have plenty of promotional opportunities. *Peruvian* grass is winding down quickly. Prices will be falling steadily.

Broccoli, Cauliflower & Celery: Last week's frigid morning lows and rain have slowed **broccoli** supplies. Supplies will be tighter. It is hoped that the warmer weather mid-week will spur growth. There is a slight improvement in **cauliflower** supplies. Going into the weekend, expect the market to come off slightly. **Celery** demand is moderate to light. *Yuma* harvests continue to be light, and a few suppliers continue to transfer from *Oxnard/Santa Maria*. Most shippers continue to offer above-average quality.

Lettuces: Cold and wet weather *Yuma* this week is expected to result in stronger markets for suppliers. Epidermal blisters and peels will be the biggest problem. The outer leaves will show this, but once peeled, the quality will be fine. Due to no production in *California*, expect stronger markets.



Mixed Vegetables: Growers in the *Southwestern* growing regions are struggling to increase production in the muddy conditions. These regions received over an inch of rain earlier this week limiting harvest crews' access to many fields. These desert fields do not handle rain well and can take days to dry out following significant precipitation.

Harvesting in these muddy conditions is a challenge as harvest crews do their best to keep mud out of the box and off of the cartons.

Dry weather and warming temperatures are forecast beginning today into mid next week allowing for better harvesting conditions towards the end of the week. Be prepared for pro rates and loading delays for the near term as growers work through current obstacles and shortages of fresh veg products.

Onions & Potatoes: **Onion** pricing continues to rise due to sustained export demand. Industry-wide, white **onion** supply is especially scarce. Expect elevated markets on all colors through May. *Northwest* storages are diminishing; smaller packing sheds could end their season by March. Contracts are escalated; suppliers are watching averages. Early *Mexican-grown* onions, usually destined for the United States, are receiving a premium for export in Europe. Their onion volume is late and also down by forty percent due to cold weather and water shortages in the fall. *Texas-grown* onions are expected to be available in mid-March. *California* is on track with **new crop**

onions becoming available in April. *New Mexico* is on track with new crop onions becoming available in June.

NEW Potatoes in stock: **Tasteful Selection**
Item # 7573 – 12/24oz **Ruby Sensation** (Red)
Item # 17569 – 12/24oz **Sunburst Blend** (Red/White)
Item #13794 – 12/24oz **Sunrise Medley** (Red/White/



EASY TACO SOUP

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 pound lean ground beef
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 1 tablespoon chili powder
- 1 tablespoon ground cumin
- 1 tablespoon garlic powder
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt
- 2 10-ounce cans Mexican flavor diced tomatoes with green chiles
- 1 15-ounce can black beans , rinsed and drained
- 1 15-ounce can chili beans, with juice
- 1 cup frozen corn kernels
- 4 cups water



Shredded cheese, tortilla chips, avocado, cilantro, chopped onion, sour cream, and lime for serving

METHOD: In a large stock pot over medium heat, cook the ground beef, breaking into smaller chunks, until no longer pink. Add the onion and cook until it softens, about 3 minutes, then stir in the tomato paste, chile powder, cumin, garlic powder, and kosher salt, and cook for 2 more minutes, stirring often. Stir in the tomatoes, black beans, chili beans, and corn. Add the water and bring to a boil, then reduce to a rolling simmer. Cook for 20-25 minutes, stirring occasionally. If you like a thicker soup, cook it longer. Garnish with your favorite taco toppings and serve.

SERVES 6

Recipe courtesy of **FoodieCrush**



Enjoy this week's update



MARKET REPORT

For updated prices and availability contact

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