
Christophene (cho cho)



Market requirements

Varieties: Also known as cho cho, chow chow, chayote, vegetable pear

Size: 12-16 cm long

Shape: Pear shape, smooth skin

Colour: Pale green

Ripeness: Firm, not sprouting

Taste &

Texture: Crisp and juicy

Getting to market

Harvesting, Handling and Storage

Christophene can be cropped twice a year and should be picked when slightly immature. The time can be gauged as just before the seed enlarges and begins to protrude from the apex of the fruit. Christophene should be cooled after harvest and stored and transported at 8-10°C, with a relative humidity of 85-90%. At temperatures of 13°C and over, they can begin to germinate. However, in optimum storage conditions, shelf life can be extended for up to one month.

Packaging

Christophene are usually packed in 9/10 kg cartons with dividers and counts of 24-32, individually wrapped. No international

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standards are in force for quality of christophene but it is advisable that packaging be labelled by:

- origin
- as christophene
- weight
- date of packing

Handling information can also be displayed, giving temperature guidance, fragile and side-up symbols.

Branding and Promotion

There has been no generic promotion of christophene, nor supermarket in-store promotion. Since the christophene is a vegetable new to the UK market, the organisation of such a promotion could help market prospects.

Import Regulations

Christophene come under the tariff heading 0709 90 90 covering “other vegetables” not elsewhere categorised. Tariffs are as follows:

Full tariff:	16%
GSP countries:	9% (1 Jan-31 Mar) Full tariff for other periods
ACP countries:	Free

In order to receive preferential tariff treatment, produce must be accompanied by the appropriate forms: EUR 1 for ACP countries or Form A for GSP countries or least developed developing countries (LDDC). No other import regulations apply. Certain hygiene standards must be met and all fresh produce entering the EEC must be accompanied by the original of a phytosanitary certificate (see Appendix 1).

When to sell

Timing

Costa Rica is the major supplier of christophene to the UK market and can supply year-round. Brazil sometimes exports during March-June and other occasional suppliers are some of the Caribbean countries, China and India. Despite Costa Rica's ability to supply all year round, there are sometimes

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shortfalls in January to March.

Prices are quoted for Costa Rica on the wholesale market and have averaged 85 pence per kg during 1989/90, remaining relatively steady over the year.

Market Trends

Total imports are estimated at around 600 tons per annum, and are primarily traded through outlets serving ethnic populations. They have shown slow growth in the market over the last decade and are not generally known by the consuming public. They require preparation prior to cooking, which does not endear them to consumers even if they are willing to try new vegetables. However, the catering trade uses christophenes, which will give them increasing exposure, and they could grow in popularity as a vegetable for use in stir-fry cooking. Thus, although immediate prospects are considered by the trade to be limited to ethnic outlets, they could be a candidate for future growth.