

Entering the European market for fresh melons

There are many opportunities to export melons to Europe, especially outside the European season. To succeed, you need to follow strict rules on food safety, quality and sustainability. Retailers often ask for GLOBALG.A.P. and social certification. Spain is your main competitor, but it is also a possible trade partner. This factsheet shows how to enter the European market and which buyers to target.

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1. What requirements and certifications must melons meet to be allowed on the European market?

Melons have to meet the general legal and quality requirements for fresh fruit and vegetables. You can find these in the general [buyer requirements for fresh fruits and vegetables](#). For detailed information per country, use [Access2Markets' My Trade Assistant](#). You can use this tool to find an overview of the requirements for melons per country.

What are mandatory requirements?

Mandatory requirements focus on food safety and quality. These include legal rules, such as limits on contaminants and pesticides. They also cover quality standards, packaging and labelling rules. Products must comply with these requirements to be sold on the European market.

Control of pesticide residues

The European Union limits how much pesticide residue is allowed on food and feed of plant origin. These limits are called maximum residue levels (MRLs). They are set by [Regulation \(EC\) No 396/2005](#). MRLs make sure that pesticide use stays within safe and legal levels.

It is important to know and follow these limits. If your melons exceed MRLs, they will be removed from the European market. Use the [EU Pesticides Database](#) to check the allowed pesticide levels for melons. Search using product code 080719, which applies to melons (excluding watermelons). This gives you an overview of relevant MRLs.

Products that do not meet EU food laws are flagged in the [Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed \(RASFF\)](#). This system helps EU authorities act fast when food safety risks are found.

RASFF recorded ten alerts for melons between January 2020 and May 2025. Nine of these alerts were due to pesticide residues, and one was due to salmonella. Five of the residue cases involved excessive flonicamid. Other substances found were chlorpyrifos, prochloraz, chlorothalonil, ethoprophos and malathion.

Tips:

- Check the [EU Pesticides Database](#) and familiarise yourself with MRLs for your products;
- Follow Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) to avoid exceeding established MRLs.

Control of contaminants

Melons may contain contaminants, such as heavy metals like cadmium and lead, or perchlorate. The EU has set legal limits for them in food products because contaminants can lower food quality and harm health.

The maximum levels of contaminants are laid down in [Commission Regulation \(EU\) 2023/915](#):

- Lead: 0.1 mg/kg;
- Cadmium: 0.05 mg/kg;
- Perchlorate: 0.1 mg/kg.

Tip:

Check the [Code of Practice for the Prevention and Reduction of Lead Contamination in Foods](#) from the Codex Alimentarius to learn more about how to avoid lead contamination.

Plant health and phytosanitary regulation

Under [Regulation \(EU\) 2019/2072](#), melons need a phytosanitary certificate to enter the European Union. This certificate is issued by the plant health authority in the exporting country. It confirms that the melons:

- Have been properly inspected;
- Are free from quarantine pests and meet the limits for regulated non-quarantine pests;
- Comply with the EU's plant health rules, as set out in Regulation (EU) 2019/2072.

Tip:

Contact the [National Plant Protection Organisation \(NPPO\)](#) in your country to get a phytosanitary certificate. Only the NPPO can issue this certificate.

Product quality requirements

The [Regulation \(EU\) 2023/2429](#) lays down the general quality standards melons need to comply with (Annex I, Part A). This regulation states that melons should also comply with the [UNECE Standard for Melons](#).

Figure 1: UNECE Standard for Melons



Source: Elaborated by [Globally Cool](#) based on [UNECE Standard for Melons](#)

Melons are split into two classes: Class I and Class II. The retail and catering sector in Europe mostly needs Class I. Class II can also be sold for the processing industry, as long as defects do not affect the flesh of the fruit in terms of texture and sweetness.

Packaging and labelling requirements

Standardised cardboard and plastic boxes are often used in the bulk fresh melon trade. The type and size of packaging depend on the buyer, market segment and melon variety. Galia and Cantaloupe melons are usually packed in 5, 6, 10, 12, 13 or 15 kg boxes. Canary Yellow and Piel de Sapo melons, which are oval-shaped, are commonly packed in 10 kg boxes with 4 to 12 melons inside.

All melons must be packed in new, clean and sturdy packaging that protects them during transport.

Figure 2: 5 kg box of melons in German retail



Source: [Globally Cool](#)

Melons sold on the European market need to follow EU food labelling rules. Incorrect labelling can lead to fines or product recalls. Labels must state all required details clearly. For a full overview of packaging and labelling rules, see our study on [buyer requirements for fresh fruit and vegetables](#).

Figure 3: Melon box labelling



Source: [Globally Cool](#)

As can be seen in the image above, the labelling of these melons includes:

- Name and address of the exporter;
- [GLN](#) (Global Location Number): A 13-digit number used to uniquely identify locations, including businesses, organisations and their various departments or facilities worldwide (this is optional);
- Name of the importer and address;
- Melon variety: Orange Candy;
- Origin: Spain;
- Content: 5 kg;
- Category: I;
- Caliber: 5 (900–1,200 g);
- Lot nr.: 2304;
- Barcode/EAN.

Tip:

Always check packaging needs and preferences with your European buyers.

What additional requirements and certifications do buyers often have?

Besides legal requirements, European buyers sometimes require stricter limits or ask for other standards. Additional standards include GLOBALG.A.P. certification and proof of good social and environmental practices.

Stricter MRL requirements

Some European retailers require pesticide limits that are stricter than what EU legislation requires. Lidl is the best example of this. It announced that, as of 2024, no single residue can be more than one-third of the legal limit. The total of all residues must be below 80% of the allowed maximum. Only five different residues are allowed per product, and none can pass 100% of the safe short-term intake (ARfD).

Certification

Food safety is a top priority in the European market. Many buyers require certification to prove good agricultural practices. [GLOBALG.A.P.](#) is a widely accepted standard. It is often a minimum requirement, especially for supermarket suppliers.

Some retailers ask for more. For example, [Albert Heijn](#) (the Netherlands) and [Delhaize](#) (Belgium) use a GLOBALG.A.P. add-on called [AH-DLL GROW](#). This system includes extra checks on hygiene, pesticide residues and contamination risks. If you want to supply these retailers, you need to meet their extra farm-level safety rules.

Sustainability compliance

European buyers, especially retailers, currently require social and environmental compliance. For retailers, this means you must implement at least one third-party certification scheme to demonstrate social and environmental sustainability.

Common recognised standards are:

- [GLOBALG.A.P. Risk Assessment on Social Practice](#) (GRASP): a GLOBALG.A.P. add-on for the evaluation of workers' wellbeing at the farm level;
- [Sedex/SMETA](#): a system and audit tool that lets firms share social and environmental reports.

Some supermarket chains have their own schemes, such as [Tesco's Nurture](#) (an add-on module to GLOBALG.A.P.).

Retailers will often only work with suppliers that can demonstrate full compliance in their audit reports.

Payment and delivery terms

Payment and delivery terms depend on the type of sale and the buyer. If the sale is part of a retail campaign, prices are usually agreed in advance. They can sometimes be agreed for a full year or season. Exporters may get a partial payment up front (e.g. 50%) when the goods are shipped (with the bill of lading). The rest is paid once the goods have arrived, been checked for quality and entered into the buyer's system.

If you sell on the spot market, prices are not fixed. They depend on the market at the point the melons arrive. Exporters often do not know the final price when shipping. Payments in advance are rare and depend on trust

with the importer. Importers may also reduce the final payment if any of the fruit is damaged.

Free on Board (FOB) is the most common delivery term for selling melons abroad, although many buyers prefer Cost, Insurance, Freight (CIF).

Tips:

Make sure you have GLOBALG.A.P. certification before approaching European buyers. This is a minimum requirement;

Focus on importers engaged in programmes with supermarkets for better payment conditions and more stability in your business;

Implement at least one social standard to be eligible for sourcing to supermarket chains. See the [SIFAV Basket of Standards](#) developed by the Sustainability Initiative of Fruit and Vegetables (SIFAV);

For more information related to payment and delivery terms, see our study on [organising your fresh fruit and vegetable exports to Europe](#).

Organic certification

The market for organic melons is very niche. It is mostly only applicable in the summer with European melons.

Organic-certified melons are still rare in mainstream retail, but they are sold in organic shops and retail chains. If you want to market organic melons, you need to comply with [Regulation \(EU\) 2018/848](#). It sets out the rules on organic production and labelling for organic products.

Tip:

Consider organic production carefully. The market for organic melons is still small. European producers dominate the market for organic melons during the summer months. However, there is room for organic melons outside Europe's main production window.

2. Through which channels can you get melons on the European market?

The market for melons is split into three main segments: food retail, food service and processors, which produce cut fruit. To reach any of these segments, your melons need to go through an importer. The importer may have contracts with retail chains, or sell your melons through the spot market to others in the supply chain.

How is the end-market segmented?

Fresh melons end up on the market through food retail, food service or the processing industry.

Figure 4: Market segments for fresh melons in Europe



Source: [Globally Cool](#)

Retail

The retail sector is a key market for fresh melons in Europe. Major retail groups in Europe include the [Schwarz Gruppe](#) ([Lidl](#) and [Kaufland](#)) and [ALDI](#) (both in Germany), [Ahold Delhaize](#) (Netherlands), [Carrefour](#) (France) and [Tesco](#) (United Kingdom).

Retailers want melons that look perfect, last long, and are sweet and juicy. Galia, Cantaloupe and Canary Yellow are all popular types. Some stores sell other types during certain seasons or as part of promotions. Many retailers buy melons all year round in Western and Northern Europe. This offers exporters steady business and better payment deals. The different retail types are described below.

- **Mainstream retail:** This segment includes large supermarket chains and premium retail formats, such as [EDEKA](#) in Germany and [Waitrose](#) in the United Kingdom. These buyers look for consistent quality, good taste and reliable shelf life. GLOBALG.A.P. certification is generally required, as is a sustainability label. While price is important, quality and branding are the main selection criteria. Special melon varieties are sold here, such as Charentais, Orange Candy, Dino Egg and Little Planet;
- **Discount retail:** Retailers like [ALDI](#) and [Lidl](#) belong to this category. They handle large volumes and focus on low prices. Supply contracts are usually fixed months in advance. To supply this channel, GLOBALG.A.P. certification and a social compliance standard are generally required. There is growing interest in organic produce, but only if pricing is still competitive. Discounters usually offer the most popular melon varieties. However, they may include other varieties if prices are good;
- **Independent retail:** Independent retail includes small food shops, street vendors and independent ethnic stores. They usually buy in small volumes and adapt their offer based on customer demand. Flexibility, freshness and taste are key. There are not many requirements in this segment, but the ones present are in line with legal requirements. Independent ethnic stores often offer niche varieties not often found in mainstream supermarkets. For example, in Germany, Turkish shops may sell Kırkağaç melons, a traditional variety from Türkiye;
- **High-end retail:** High-end retail refers to department stores with food sections. Some examples are [Galeria](#) and [KaDeWe](#) in Germany, and [El Corte Inglés](#) in Spain. They often sell very high-quality fruits and focus on size, appearance and availability, regardless of price. These retailers focus on exotic varieties. The volumes sold in this segment are very small in comparison to other retail channels;
- **Specialised retail:** This segment includes retail shops that only sell organic-certified food or food for ethnic populations. While most ethnic outlets are independent, some are chains, such as [Amazing Oriental](#). In the organic market, it is the other way around; most outlets are part of a group, like [Alnatura](#) in Germany and [Veritas](#) in Spain. Buyers in the organic segment require EU Organic certification and may prefer additional standards, such as [Demeter](#). Supply planning is strict and based on long-term commitments.

Food service

The food service sector supplies hotels, restaurants and catering businesses (HORECA). Demand for fresh melons in this segment peaks during the holiday season, summer months and at special events. HORECA buyers value ripeness, flavour and convenience. This segment buys whole and pre-cut melons.

Two types of companies mainly supply these buyers: cash-and-carry wholesalers, which are general suppliers, and specialised food service distributors. One example of a cash-and-carry store is [METRO](#) in Germany.

Food service distributors can be cash-and-carry wholesalers like [METRO](#), or they can have large storage facilities and a fleet of trucks to deliver all kinds of food daily. One large food service distributor in Europe is [Sysco Europe](#). It operates across multiple European countries, and has leading positions in the United Kingdom, Ireland and France.

Food processing

In the food industry, melons are primarily used to produce ready-to-eat convenience products such as sliced melon portions, fruit mixes and snack cups. These products are sold in supermarkets, vending machines and to the food service sector. Processors include [Sapros GmbH](#) in Germany and [Oliver Kay Produce](#) in the United Kingdom.

Processors in this segment focus on internal quality, especially sweetness, which is measured in Brix levels. The external appearance of the fruit is less important than taste, texture and safety in this segment. Processors often prefer uniform varieties that perform well during cutting. For this segment, bigger melons are preferred compared to retail.

Tips:

Serve multiple market segments to ensure you can sell all your produce. For larger volumes and better conditions, focus on retail. For larger fruits or those with external defects, target the food processing sector;

Target the food service sector if you offer premium-quality melons.

Through which channels do melons end up on the end-market?

Importers are the key partners for exporters selling melons in Europe. They import big volumes of melons and distribute them through the rest of the supply chain.

Figure 5: Market channels for fresh melons to Europe



Source: [Globally Cool](#)

The diagram above shows how fresh melons move from exporters to different buyers in Europe.

The importer is the main entry point. Their role is to handle customs clearance, ensure quality and distribute fruit further into the European market. Well-known importers include [OGL Foodtrade](#) (Germany), [Frankort & Koning](#) (the Netherlands) and Eosta (the Netherlands). Importers buy directly from exporters and then sell melons through several channels.

- Big food processing companies, such as [Köckerling](#) (Germany) and [Brakes](#) (United Kingdom), buy melons from importers to produce cut fruit, ready-to-eat trays or fruit mixes. These companies then supply products to mainstream retailers and the HORECA sector. Their role is to process fresh melons into convenient products for retail shelves or food service menus.
- Wholesalers and cash-and-carry stores, like [METRO](#) (Germany) and Makro ([Spain](#) and [Poland](#)), get their melons from importers. They supply both HORECA and independent retail. Their role is to offer flexible, smaller-volume purchases with quick delivery for buyers who do not need or cannot manage big quantities, like restaurants, catering companies and hotels.

Mainstream retailers (like supermarkets) also buy from importers directly. In some cases, they use fixed programmes where they agree on the volume, price and delivery schedule for the season in advance. This is often done to ensure supply during peak sales periods. In some cases, they also buy week by week, based on

current demand and market supply. Big retailers in Europe include [ALDI](#) (Germany), [Ahold Delhaize](#) (the Netherlands), [Carrefour](#) (France) and [Tesco](#) (United Kingdom).

Tip:

Target importers that have supply programmes with retailers. Supply programmes are good because they give exporters a fixed order and price before the season starts. This allows you to plan better, build long-term business relationships and grow year by year with a trusted buyer and steady sales.

What is the most interesting channel for you?

Importers are the key actors in getting melons into the European market.

Fresh fruit and vegetable importers

These are specialised companies engaged in the import of fresh produce into Europe. Importers usually have a specialisation. This may include a particular product assortment, preferred sourcing regions, target markets or customer segment. Many of these importers are based in the Netherlands. However, similar importers operate in all key European importing countries. Some examples are given below.

- [Triple F Fruit](#) (the Netherlands) – a relatively young company that has a strong assortment and product specialists;
- [Haluco](#) (the Netherlands) – broad product portfolio and strong international sourcing links;
- [OGL Food Trade](#) (Germany) – focuses on high-quality imports for wholesale and retail partners;
- [APM Fresh](#) (United Kingdom) – services retail and food service customers with a tailored product offer.

Importers will sell to the three segments described above: retail, HORECA and the processing industry.

Not all importers work with melons. Identifying the right importers is essential. If you grow niche melon varieties, you can target importers that specialise in exotic or rare fruit and vegetables. One such importer is [BUD Holland](#). It is known for its wide range of speciality produce.

Retailer-specific importer

Certain retail chains in Europe have created their own importing companies to make sourcing faster and cheaper. These importers buy fresh produce directly for supermarket groups, based on the needs of the category manager. Their goal is to secure the right product at the right time for a good price.

Specific importers include:

- [Eurogroup Deutschland GmbH](#) – sources for [REWE Group's](#) banners across Europe, including REWE, Billa and Penny;
- [EDEKA Fruchtkontor](#) – the dedicated sourcing arm for the EDEKA retail chain in Germany.

This is a good channel for exporters because it offers direct access to large supermarket chains and the chance to build long-term, stable business relationships.

Tips:

Look for importers that have melons in their portfolio;

Target retailer-specific importers. If they do not import, they may point you to the right importer to work with;

Attend trade fairs to connect with potential buyers. [Fruit Logistica](#) (Berlin, Germany) and [Fruit Attraction](#) (Madrid, Spain) are key events for fresh fruit and vegetable importers in Europe;

Read our [tips for finding buyers on the European fresh fruit and vegetables market](#).

3. What competition do you face on the European melon market?

Spain is the main producer and supplier of melons in Europe. However, large volumes of melons are imported from non-European countries to meet demand during Spain's off-season. The main competitor is Brazil. Other competitors are Morocco, Honduras and Costa Rica. These countries play a role between the Brazilian and European seasons. This is the best window for new suppliers.

Which countries are you competing with?

Melon demand in Europe peaks between May and September, when consumers buy more fresh fruit. Most melons in Europe come from Spain, Italy and France during the summer months. However, Europe depends on imports during the off-season (October–April). This offers opportunities for exporters that can supply consistent quality outside the European season.

Europe's main suppliers of melons are Spain, Brazil, Italy, Morocco, Honduras and Costa Rica. Spain is by far the main supplier during the peak season in summer, followed by Italy. In the off-season, especially between October and February, Brazil supplies most imports. Costa Rica and Honduras export during March and April, supplying the largest amount of melons between Brazil's and Spain's seasons.

Figure 6: Indicative supply calendar for melons for the European market, European countries compared to main non-European supplying countries (based on monthly export volumes in 2024)



Source: [Globally Cool](#), based on UN Comtrade monthly data for 2024–2025

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Europe: most melons are produced locally

Spain, Italy and France are the main producers and exporters of fresh melons in Europe. Together, they supplied over 410,000 tonnes of melons to other European countries in 2024, over 40% of total imports. These countries mostly export during the summer season when local production is high.

Spain: Europe's main producer and exporter

Spain is the largest melon supplier within Europe. In 2024, it exported 335,000 tonnes. This is about 59% of all European melon exports that year. Most of these exports went to France (89,000 tonnes), Germany (70,000), Portugal (47,000) and the United Kingdom (42,000). Spain is also developing into a hub. Between October and May, it imports melons from Brazil, Morocco and Senegal. It then sends them to other EU countries. This makes

Spain active nearly all year long.

Spain exports a wide variety of melons, including Piel de Sapo, Galia, Cantaloupe and Yellow melons. [Melones el Abuelo](#), for example, is a Spanish market leader in the premium segment. It focuses on Piel de Sapo and other niche varieties like Gaya (Sugar Baby Matisse) and Sugar Baby Gold Melon, a proprietary melon variety with a small size and sweet flesh.

Spain's strengths are its large production, strong logistics and short distance to EU markets. Its warm regions support a long season: it can start as early as February. Spain is well known for its reliable supply, especially of Piel de Sapo. This variety is also popular in Portugal and the Netherlands. The country promotes innovation and sustainability. It uses modern tools and precision agriculture. However, climate change is a growing risk. Droughts and heatwaves have reduced harvests in recent years. To adapt, some farmers now grow earlier and use better irrigation systems.

Spain is a key market and competitor for exporters from developing countries. There are opportunities to supply Spain directly in spring and autumn, or to work with Spanish importers that sell to the rest of Europe, especially outside the local season.

Italy: stable supplier with growing exports

Italy exported 49,000 tonnes of melons in 2024, making up around 9% of all European melon exports. This was a big increase from 30,000 tonnes in 2020. Its biggest markets were Germany (24,000 tonnes) and the Czech Republic, Switzerland and Austria. Most exports happen during the local harvest season (May to September). Italy imports melons to meet local demand outside this period.

One of Italy's main strengths is the high quality of its melons. Italy mainly exports Cantaloupe-type melons, which are known for their aroma. Italian farmers use careful growing methods. The fruit is often harvested at the right time for the best flavour. Many buyers in Central Europe prefer the taste and appearance of Italian melons, especially when they are sold as premium fruit in supermarkets.

France: moderate supplier with strong regional focus

France exported 26,000 tonnes of melons in 2024. This is about 5% of all European melon exports. Its main buyers are Belgium, Italy, Switzerland and Germany. French melons are mostly sold in nearby countries, thanks to their freshness and good reputation. Total export volume has remained stable over the last five years. France's main variety is the Charentais melon. It is popular in both the domestic and regional markets. France also imports melons during the off-season. This means its export role is seasonal and focused on the summer months.

Brazil: the main off-season supplier

Brazil is Europe's leading non-European supplier of fresh melons. In 2024, Brazil exported 244,000 tonnes of melons to Europe, the highest in the last five years. This accounted for 25% of total melon imports and 61% of imports from developing countries.

Exports have remained stable. They grew by 1.8% yearly from 2020 to 2024. Brazil's strength is counter-seasonal production. Harvesting takes place from August to March, which perfectly mirrors Europe's off-season.

Another of Brazil's strengths is its high and steady production. The country has large production areas with advanced farming techniques and access to shipping ports. Brazilian companies can ship large volumes with reliable quality, which helps buyers to plan supply and avoid problems. They also often get very good shipping rates, lowering total costs.

Brazil's main export countries for melons in Europe are the Netherlands (102,000 tonnes), Spain (71,000) and

the United Kingdom (61,000). Both the Netherlands and Spain are export hubs, re-exporting Brazilian melons in their off-seasons.

Morocco: important early-season supplier

Morocco is an important melon supplier to Europe. It is most important before the European season begins. In 2024, Morocco exported 41,000 tonnes of melons to Europe. This is about 4% of all European melon imports.

Between 2020 and 2024, Morocco's exports to Europe dropped from 51,000 to 41,000 tonnes. This is a yearly decline of 5.3%. The main reason for this was poor weather conditions. Recently, droughts and water shortages have caused problems. Some farmers have reduced their melon area or switched to crops that use less water. This is one reason why exports fell in 2024.

Most Moroccan melons are exported to France. France imported 32,000 tonnes in 2024, or 78% of Morocco's exports to Europe. Other buyers include Spain (7,000 tonnes), Switzerland and Belgium (1,000 tonnes each).

Morocco's main strength is its early harvest season, from March to May. This allows Moroccan growers to supply Europe before Spain, France and Italy start their harvest. The short distance to Europe helps keep shipping fast and products fresh. Moroccan exporters offer varieties like Charentais, Galia and Yellow melons.

Offering Charentais melons, a favourite of French consumers, has been a key success factor for Moroccan melon exporters in conquering the French market. The Moroccan company [Force Sud](#), for example, mainly sells Charentais melons to France.

Morocco has a good reputation, especially in France, where buyers are familiar with Moroccan melons. Many Moroccan growers work with large importers. For example, [Les Domaines Export](#) sells premium melons, like Green Charentais.

Honduras: steady winter supplier

Honduras exports melons to Europe mainly during the winter and early spring months. In 2024, it shipped around 37,000 tonnes to Europe, a drop from 47,000 tonnes in 2020. This means a yearly decline of 5.7% over five years. Most Honduran melons are Cantaloupe and Honeydew varieties.

The Netherlands is the largest buyer, importing 24,000 tonnes in 2024. This is equal to about 65% of Honduras' melon exports to Europe. The United Kingdom follows, receiving 12,000 tonnes in 2024.

Honduras' strength is its favourable season. It runs from January to April, when European production is not available and Brazil's production ends. The country has experience in melon farming. It works with large growers used to supplying international supermarkets. They have traditionally focused on the United States. This makes Honduras a reliable source during Europe's off-season.

However, the country faces challenges. Overall export volume to Europe has fallen, from 47,000 to 37,000 tonnes in five years. This may be due to stronger competition from Brazil and Morocco, as well as climate risks that can affect yield and timing.

Tips:

Find out if using different melon varieties can help you match the best timing for the European market;

Join other suppliers to offer good volumes and get good shipping rates;

Invest in water management and resistant varieties to reduce the impact of climate change on your

business.

Which companies are you competing with?

The melon market is dominated by big players with great economies of scale. Melon suppliers to the European market need to be very efficient in production and logistics to be competitive in terms of price. Below are a few examples of successful exporters to the European market.

Agrícola Famosa: Brazilian giant merged with Spanish market leader

[Agrícola Famosa](#) is Brazil's largest producer and exporter of melons and watermelons. The company operates over 30,000 hectares and employs more than 9,000 people during peak season.

Agrícola Famosa exports a significant amount of melons to Europe. It ships [about 200,000 tons annually](#). To ensure freshness and reliability, Agrícola Famosa has invested in a fleet of chartered ships. This allows rapid and controlled delivery to European customers even if there are logistical challenges.

In 2024, [Agrícola Famosa merged with el Abuelo](#), a leading Spanish melon and watermelon specialist. This merger created the largest supplier of melons and watermelons to Europe. The newly combined group now handles over 320,000 tons of fruit annually. It has operations in Brazil, Spain and Senegal. This ensures the year-round supply of melons to European clients. The company's UK-based subsidiary, [Melon&Co](#), helps its position in the British retail market by supplying major supermarkets with both whole and cut melons.

Agrolíbano: big Honduran melon specialist

[Agrolíbano](#) is a leading agricultural company based in Honduras. It specialises in the sustainable production and export of premium melons. With over 45 years of experience, Agrolíbano uses advanced agricultural techniques and modern packing facilities to ensure high product standards. It focuses on traceability and rigorous quality monitoring throughout its operations.

Agrolíbano produces over 80,000 tons of melons annually. This is equivalent to more than 51 million fruits. It exports to more than 35 countries worldwide, including major European destinations. Key melon varieties include Galia, Cantaloupe, Italian Cantaloupe, Yellow Honeydew, White Honeydew and the unique Mayan Ball, a type of Gaya melon. This means Agrolíbano caters to a wide range of market preferences.

Agrolíbano is dedicated to sustainable agriculture. It employs practices including crop rotation, pollinator management (with over 3,000 beehives) and innovative postharvest technologies, like [Xtend packaging](#), to maintain freshness during long shipments.

Melones del Sol: family company from Costa Rica

[Melones del Sol](#) is a family-owned agricultural company based in Costa Rica. It specialises in the production and export of premium melons. It has become a key supplier of melons to the European market, with strong sales in the UK, France, the Netherlands, Denmark and Italy.

The company operates around 170 hectares. It focuses on varieties like Yellow melons, and it exports most of its harvest between January and April.

With a strong focus on quality, Melones del Sol uses advanced agricultural practices and modern packing facilities. The company is committed to sustainability. It has almost two decades of experience in biological pest control and soil health management.

Melones del Sol has several key certifications that the European market requires. This includes GLOBALG.A.P., [Rainforest Alliance](#) and [LEAF \(Linking Environment and Farming\)](#). They were the first melon producer in Costa Rica to achieve LEAF certification, which is especially valued by UK retailers like [Tesco](#).

Tips:

Use innovative packaging technologies like Xtend packaging to increase shelf life and reduce waste during transport;

Emphasise your sustainability practices in promotional materials. These are a key selling point for market leaders that appeal to buyers in Western Europe.

Which products are you competing with?

Melons face limited direct competition from other fruits, as they are a traditional fruit during the European summer. Nevertheless, several substitutes compete for the same consumption moments and shelf space.

The main competitor is watermelon, which is widely known and consumed in Europe. Like melons, watermelons are considered refreshing and are popular in summer. They are often cheaper and available in larger volumes, attracting price-sensitive buyers and consumers. Other substitutes include tropical fruits, such as pineapple. These are used in similar ways, like in fruit salads, desserts and smoothies.

Tips:

Explore other ways to process your melons, especially those with skin defects that cannot be sold as fresh produce. IQF (quick frozen) and freeze-dried melons can be good alternatives;

See our studies about [dried tropical fruit](#) and [tropical frozen fruit](#) for more information about processed fruits.

4. What are the prices of melons on the European market?

Over the last five years, the price of melons has changed significantly. This is because supply depends heavily on weather conditions in the producing countries. For example, prices rose in 2023, a year with low availability due to weather conditions. In 2024, prices fell slightly because more melons were available. This is not expected to change.

Melon prices depend on the season and supply of the main producers. During Spain's high season, prices are low. They increase in the off-season. The figure below shows average wholesale melon prices for Charentais melon in the Rungis wholesale market in Paris over the last 12 months.

Source: [Rungis](#), elaborated by [Globally Cool](#) (June 2025)

From October to February, prices increase. So do imports from Brazil, Senegal and Martinique. Between March and June, prices start to decrease again. Morocco becomes more relevant in March, April and May. The

European season starts in May, but these origins' prices are still high. They start to fall in June.

Table 1: Average monthly wholesale prices for Charentais melons between June 2024 and May 2025

Melon type	Origin	Kg or unit	Weight	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
Year				2024	2024	2024	2024	2024	2024	2024	2025	2025	2025	2025	2025
Monthly average				2.08	1.67	1.54	1.13	4.39	4.42	5.23	4.06	4.36	3.24	3.27	3.56
Charentais Yellow	Brazil	kg	-						4.33	5.12	3.55	2.58	2.30		
Charentais Yellow	Spain	unit	1150-1450g												4.17
Charentais Yellow	Spain	kg	1150-1450g												4.50
Charentais Yellow	Spain	unit	750-975g	1.49	1.35										
Charentais Yellow	Spain	unit	975-1250g	1.81	1.67										3.65
Charentais Yellow	France	unit	1150-1450g	2.87	2.15	1.80	1.26								5.00
Charentais Yellow	France	unit	600-780g	1.55											
Charentais Yellow	France	unit	750-975g	2.15	1.44	1.23									
Charentais yellow	France	unit	975-1250g	2.58	1.73	1.60	0.99								3.60
Charentais Yellow	Import*	kg	-										2.20		
Charentais Yellow	Italy	unit	750-975g					4.39	4.50						
Charentais Yellow	Martinique	kg	-									6.14	5.80	5.17	
Charentais Yellow	Senegal	kg	950-1150g							5.33	4.57				
Charentais Green	Morocco	unit	600-780g										1.88	1.66	1.50
Charentais Green	Morocco	unit	950-1150g										3.45	2.95	2.87
Charentais Green	Morocco	unit	975-1250g										3.80	3.29	3.22

*No information about the origin

Source: [Rungis](#), elaborated by [Globally Cool](#) (June 2025)

Several factors other than season can influence melon prices. These include:

- Availability and weather conditions: Prices may be higher if weather delays the start of the season and there are fewer melons on the market than expected;
- Certifications: Organic-certified melons, for example, are more expensive than conventional melons;
- Varieties: Rare varieties, such as Charentais, Orange Candy and Dino, are more expensive than common

types, like Galia and Canary Yellow.

Profit margins differ depending on the country and sales channel. In general, retailers make the biggest profits. These shares can change depending on the product, season and buyer.

A simple example of the final melon price can be seen in Figure 9.

*Including 7% VAT

Source: [Globally Cool](#) (June 2025)

[Globally Cool](#) carried out this study on behalf of CBI.

Please review our [market information disclaimer](#).