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## Picota cherries arrive in the UK

European-grown cherries hit UK shelves, where they will appear until August



**E**uropean Picota cherries have hit the shelves in the UK for their short season of just six weeks, running through until August.

Picota cherry growers in the European Jerte Valley, who grow the exclusive variety by following rigorous quality control procedures that grant the Picota its DO (Denomination of Origin) status, are welcoming an abundant harvest this season.

"The growing conditions have been very favourable this year, with enough low temperatures throughout the winter to ensure that the trees were able to flower easily," said Mónica Luz Garcia of Agrupación de Cooperativas Valle Del Jerte. "In fact, this season we are expecting both excellent fruit quality as well as high volumes."

"The rains earlier this year benefitted the later varieties including the Picota, as they take slightly longer to ripen than other varieties," she noted. "Our growers don't use artificial fertigation during the growth of the cherry crop, and so the rains created a natural humidity that was essential in helping the cherry trees

to produce high quality fruit."

### UK leads the way

The predicted Picota volumes destined for the UK this season are high. It is estimated that around 4m Picota cherries will be exported to the UK, the biggest importer of the variety.

Agrupación hopes to harvest around 24m kg cherries in total, of which they are expecting to export around 14m kg, mainly to European markets. Besides the UK, the cherries are also exported to Germany and the Nordic countries.

This summer's campaign includes in-store promotions with retailers, a trade event at Grosvenor House in London in July, and food influencer collaborations during #PickaPicotaWeek, running on the social media from 21-27 June.

"For years we have opted to offer our clients not only the best volumes and quality of cherries possible, but have also gone for the innovation of processes that favour sustainability and ensured that the work of our farmers meets the technical requirements and quality expected by our clients," Garcia added.

"We work tirelessly to be the most competitive in the market and to be the brand and cherry variety that consumers come to know and recognise."

### Production region

The Jerte Valley is located 200km west of Madrid, in Northern Extremadura. Over 1m cherry trees are grown on the slopes of the mountain, on terraces.

When the cherries are ready to be harvested at optimum ripeness, they are hand-picked off the trees, leaving the stalks behind, and placed into chestnut baskets. This method has been handed down from generation to generation.

The cherries are then sorted one-by-one, at the base of the trees, as the farmers select only the best ones to be sold and eaten. The Picota cherries are then packaged in the Jerte Valley and shipped off to their final destinations.

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