

Papaya UK's fastest-growing fruit

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Brits are going crazy for exotic fruit, with papaya now being the fastest-growing fruit in the UK. Demand for this orange-coloured fruit, primarily grown in tropical regions of South America, has surged by nearly 160 per cent over the past year.

Papaya is increasingly enjoyed on its own, but it has also gained popularity as an ingredient to enhance the flavour of healthy dishes, including fish, chicken, and salads. Other fruits contributing to the rising interest in exotic varieties include kiwis, mangos, passion fruit, and persimmons.

In the last year, tropical fruit has become the fastest-growing segment of the UK fruit market, with demand soaring by nearly 30 per cent. This has resulted in a market now valued at £460 million annually.

The top-growing tropical fruits in 2024 are as follows:

- Papaya up by nearly 160 per cent
- Kiwis up by nearly 90 per cent
- Mangos up by nearly 80 per cent
- Passion fruit up by 50 per cent
- Persimmon up by 45 per cent
- Dates up by 35 per cent
- Coconut up by 15 per cent

Maksim Ivanov, an exotic fruit expert at Tesco, stated, "Not too long ago, fruits like pineapples, coconuts, passion fruit, pomegranates, and nectarines were still considered exotic to the average shopper. However, as these fruits have become more mainstream, shoppers seek more unusual varieties to excite their taste buds and impress friends at dinner parties."

A significant factor driving the UK sales of tropical fruit is the decrease in travel costs and the growing popularity of Caribbean and Far Eastern destinations, such as Thailand. Many people try exotic fruits while on vacation and become interested in purchasing them when they return home.