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## **Everybody's favorite mango varietal- the Aaulfo, up first**

The Mexican mango season always opens with small volumes, and this season's start promises much of the same. Cooperating weather has given way to an "on-time" start with the expected minimal volumes of organic Aaulfos. Growers expect fruit to arrive on US soil around the first ten days of February.

The season generally begins in late January and runs through mid-September. The southern regions of Oaxaca and Chiapas are always first to begin. From there, the season moves north approximately every three to four months as warmer weather travels up Mexico, through Michoacán, Nayarit, and Sinaloa. Several regions eventually overlap, creating many peaks in production.

Each region generally produces specific varietals. This is in part due to the success those varietals have within the varying micro-climates and in part because of how varietals fare the [hydro-thermic treatment](#) required for US entry.

Each varietal has a different season within each region. Within each region and up until the last several years, patterns were much more precise.

These days, global warming and irregularities due to climate change have made it difficult to gauge what normal is. Last season every single region's varietals behaved without a pattern - other than that each varietal arrived late and without much clarity to gauge, some

regions were affected more than others. Sizing and volumes were incredibly hard to predict until just before harvest.

Past seasons have taught most of us to approach this coming season with a hesitation to make clear cut predictions too far ahead. Today the sector's most important factor seems to be more about having actual access to fruit in whatever volume that is.



The brokerage game is consequently more complicated with these irregularities in production, timing, quality, and sizing. Growers like us, [El Grupo Crespo](#), seem to have an advantage by owning our own chain: orchards, packhouses, trucking inside Mexico, and border warehouses. Mango production is supremely complicated these days, despite the fact that production is increasing as an attempt to keep up with growing mango demand.

Consumer interest continues to grow rapidly as shoppers begin to view mango consumption as ordinary —mainstream. The American shopper has finally embraced what the rest of the world has long known - mangoes are delicious and thus the most consumed fruit on the planet.



Season predictions also become a little more complicated as we move through a time where the layout of production and varieties within each region is changing, again as an attempt to meet the particulars of volume, varietal and sizing demands.

Especially on the conventional side, there has been a large change of varieties in many orchards throughout all regions. On the organic side, things have stayed rather consistent but we are beginning to see things shift in this sector as well, as demand of organic mangoes outpaces demand, especially in key time frames of within the Mexican mango season.

This is especially true in the southern regions where the Ataulfo and the Tommy Atkins varieties have been the predominant varieties. In the north we see many more Kents and Keitts than the south. Northern production of Keitts are increasing rapidly in an attempt to extend the season longer through September and ideally, if weather permits, into October.

Michoacán has always had a significant amount of the Haden production, but over the last several years growers have started to replace these with more Kent and Tommy Atkins varieties.

Haden mangoes - as delicious as they are -perfumed, sweet and beautifully orange hued - are notoriously small. They average a size 12-14cnt, which is extremely small for industry standards today which prefer 7-8 cnts on the conventional side and 8-9-10 on the organic side.

Grower returns on suboptimal sizing have long been a problem, but the increase in unpredictable weather patterns are contributing to more fruit that is too small. Growers must do what they can to mitigate these uncontrollable losses of revenue, and more predictable varieties can help.

The northern region of Nayarit has much of the same organically as the southern regions: Ataulfos and Tommy Atkins. There are some Kents in this region but not many Keitts. The Sinaloa region is the biggest and longest lasting region with several sub-regions. Sinaloa has the most diverse varietal plantings.

El Grupo Crespo grows several varieties in this region; including several specialty varieties pioneered by El Grupo Crespo, like that [Thai Mango](#). The Mexican season ends with the northern region of Los Mochis (a sub-region of Sinaloa). Los Mochis tends to have a generally short season of Kents followed by a long season of Keitts, typically ending sometime in mid-to-late September.



### **What to expect this season?**

It's a bit too early to predict the entire season, outside the fact that the southern regions seem to be progressing "normally" and on-time with ample quality fruit behind onset volumes. But there are exceptions, there are always exceptions as far as nature is concerned.

**Oaxaca & Chiapas** Most pack houses are open or beginning to open in the southern regions, with most set to be open by February 15<sup>th</sup>. Crespo's Oaxacan packhouse is set to open this week and Empaque Don Jorge II will open by the 15<sup>th</sup>.

Everyone's initial volumes will be small, as is normal, and an overall quality outlook appears to be good. A better assessment will be made once the fruit starts to get picked, packed, shipped, purchased, and consumed. At the moment, Crespo expects a wide array of sizes - for their Ataulfo program (14-20cnt), but this could change as we monitor the weather in the coming weeks. By early March volumes should be excellent and extend into August, norther weather permitting.

Round mangoes (Tommy Atkins varietal) are set to begin around the second week of March,

again generally normal timing and with minimal onset volumes. By April volumes should be excellent.

**Michoacán** seems to be the chaos-maker again this season. It is predicted to start late, as it did last year. This puts incredible strain on demand, right around the same time Peruvian fruit dwindles and the market gets fully ready to embrace Mexican fruit. This late season start for Michoacán typically translates into a market SHORTAGE. So, despite the fact that Oaxaca and Chiapas seem to be reporting normal to decent expected volumes, the market is predicted to be short overall with Michoacán's late entry. Several growers predict that April and May will be short on round mangoes because of this delay.



**Nayarit & Sinaloa** There was some initial worry back in December when the area experienced a lot of rain right before initial blooms. Rain is almost always good, except right before and during the blooming stage. All turned out fine, and the regions are currently experiencing beautiful blooming. We will not know which will turn into fruit until the setting stage.

### **Peruvian Mexican Round Fruit Transition**

Peru typically winds down in March and most projections believe this will be the case. Quality on round mangoes, though, seems to be the most important factor to watch during the transition. Many buyers are reporting quality issues with fruit cutting black. This may put extra pressure on buyers to switch to Mexico sooner than volumes can satiate demand. We will have to watch closely as we move through February. And we expect this transition, to be a difficult one.