

First South African 2025 lemons arrive in India

The first shipment of South African lemons for the 2025 season arrived in India this week. This arrival is also the very first shipment of lemons exported to India by FruitOne, a local citrus cultivation and export company.

"We are delighted to announce the arrival of the first shipment of South African lemons in India for the season," said Boitshoko Ntshabele, CEO of the Citrus Growers' Association of Southern Africa (CGA). "This shipment signifies the strong trade relationship between South Africa and India. It starts the season and hopefully also starts an era of increased exports and opportunities for our two countries."



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Leardt van der Burgh, Head of Commercial at exporter FruitOne, said: "India, just because of its sheer population size and its growing middle-class, is important to South African fruit's future. The FruitOne brand is known in India, and it is important for us to supply the whole citrus basket to this market. Adding lemons to this basket in 2025 is a big step forward in this regard."

The shipment of 1600 cartons of lemons arrived in Jawaharlal Nehru Port on the vessel Navios Verde and was welcomed by importers IG International.

Sachin Khurana, the CGA's trade representative in India, said: "In India, there is a noticeable appreciation of South African citrus and its juiciness, vibrant colour, and fresh flavour. For five months of the year - when the produce of India's own citrus growers is out of season, South Africa sustains Indian consumers." South Africa also exports oranges, mandarins, and grapefruit to India.



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Ntshabele pointed out that citrus exports to India have increased significantly. Since 2020, citrus exports have almost tripled to 30,000 tonnes. But he also mentioned an obstacle to further growth. "A steep citrus import tariff of 30% keeps South African growers and the citrus-loving Indian consumer from benefiting even more," Ntshabele said. He expressed the hope that the progress already made in trade relations between SA and India continues.

Expanded market access for South African citrus is the cornerstone of the CGA's goal to export 260 million 15kg cartons of citrus by 2032, which will create an estimated 100,000 more jobs and contribute significantly to export-led growth in the economy.

A group of CGA representatives will be traveling to India next week as part of a Fruit SA delegation. They will meet with the Indian government, the South African High Commission and also have a presence at Fresh Produce India in Mumbai, a leading trade gathering.

The South African Lemon season is looking good, with better sizing compared to 2024. The South African volume for 2025 seems to match the global demand well - with 32.9 million cartons expected to be exported in total - and a stable market is anticipated.

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