

"South Africa's just-wrapped season in India offers lessons for citrus exporters"

South Africa's mandarin and orange exports to India doubled in 2025, but spelled trouble for Indian importers, says Abdul Hadi, Managing Partner at DFC Global. "Between July-September, orange volumes grew from 778 to 1,600 containers and mandarins from 1,000 to 2,000, creating oversupply, price crashes, and heavy losses to citrus importers. Early European interest faded fast, redirecting volumes to India, Bangladesh, and the UAE just as Indian demand peaked in July-August."



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Abdul dissects the South African season: "Europe did not follow through as planned, so suppliers turned to India two months later, exactly when southern rains suppressed consumption and domestic Nagpur/Kinnow oranges arrived," he explains. "Midnight Valencia led with thick, clean skin and long shelf life at USD 15 CIF Nhava Sheva versus USD 13.5 to 14.5 for other Valencias from Limpopo,

Eastern Cape, and Western Cape. Even strong quality could not overcome excess inventories sold at USD 10 to 13.2 per box of 15kg against USD 19.3 landed costs."

From South Africa's experience, Abdul advises, "Match volumes to actual demand for capturing India's early window efficiently; track domestic competition because local Nagpur/Kinnow variety hurt imports from September; be cautious with early European interest as market dynamics can shift; and price competitively since Egypt's USD 9 to 10 CIF Nhava Sheva offers better economics over South Africa's range."



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Egyptian Navel and Valencia oranges now target India's citrus gap from early January, with stable production, global standards, and early maturity signaling summer success, Abdul notes. "Recent buyer visits confirm strong early arrivals, perfectly timed for mass-market demand. We anticipate 2026 buying to move with caution and discipline."

As Abdul sums it up, "Egypt has mastered timing and volume control. For South Africa, Tango, Nova, and Nadorcott mandarins proved that quality matters, but market alignment decides profit. Limpopo delivered excellent fruit, yet misalignment dissolved returns. Egypt's pricing, summer timing, and export discipline position it perfectly for India. For us, South African quality sets the benchmark, but Egyptian strategy ensures market recovery."

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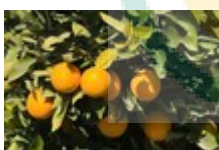
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