# "South African and Egyptian citrus continue to be the most popular in India"

The consumer in India has a taste for domestically grown citrus, but certainly for imported varieties as well, says Shubha Rawal, head of sourcing of IG International: "The citrus market in India is currently quite dynamic. We're seeing steady demand for imported citrus fruits, especially during the off-season for local produce. Domestically, Indian citrus varieties like kinnow and mosambi dominate, but there is a clear appetite for high-quality, seedless, and easy-peel imported citrus. The market has matured significantly, with consumers becoming more aware of taste, origin, and quality. Retail and modern trade are playing a key role in expanding this segment further."

© IG International Pvt. Ltd. Although there are certain origins that have the upper hand when it comes to imported citrus in India, Rawal has noticed other origins gaining in popularity among consumers. "South African and Egyptian citrus continue to be the most popular in India, due to their competitive pricing, consistency, and availability. In recent years, we've also seen growing interest in premium origins like Spain and Australia, especially in metros and among discerning consumers. One notable trend is the increasing demand for easy peelers, such as mandarins and clementines, driven by both taste preferences and convenience. Additionally, there's growing curiosity about organic and sustainably grown citrus."

But what does the consumer in India prefer when it comes to citrus? "Indian consumers generally prefer sweet-tasting, juicy citrus fruits with a good shelf life. Seedless varieties and easy peelers are especially popular among families with children. Visual appeal, such as bright color and uniform size, also plays a big role in the buying decision. In urban areas, consumers are also beginning to look at nutritional content, with vitamin C being a key driver of purchase, especially post-COVID," Rawal explains.

Rawal emphasizes that the price of citrus has been influenced by the increased freight prices, although the situation seems to have improved: "Citrus prices have remained relatively stable, with seasonal fluctuations and some upward movement due to global supply chain challenges and currency volatility. Freight costs had a considerable impact on citrus pricing. However, as supply chains normalize, we see more competitive pricing again. Another development is better pre-season planning and sourcing, which has helped in achieving more consistency in landed costs."


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Looking at the demand for citrus fruits in India, the hot weather has contributed to the increased demand recently, Rawal says. "India's unusually hot summer this year has pushed up the demand for hydrating and vitamin-rich fruits like citrus. Oranges and mandarins are being consumed widely for their cooling effect and immunity-boosting benefits. Additionally, extreme weather events in some citrus-producing countries have tightened global supply slightly, making forecasting and allocation more critical this season."

According to Rawal, the citrus industry has had to develop at every step of the process. But she feels there is still a way to go in terms of reaching the full potential of the Indian market. "The Indian citrus import market is evolving rapidly. There's increasing sophistication in sourcing, handling, and distribution. As consumer awareness grows, so does the demand for transparency in origin, certifications, and quality standards. For importers like us, this means working even more closely with suppliers to ensure consistency and innovation. India still holds immense untapped potential, particularly in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities, and we foresee strong growth in the years to come as cold chain infrastructure and retail penetration improve," she concludes.

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