



Tunisia

Target market report for the
export of GB seed potatoes



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Climate

Tunisia is temperate in the north with mild, rainy winters and hot, dry summers. Desert in the south.

The Market For Seed Potatoes

Potatoes in Tunisia are grown all year round. They are planted in January-February for harvest in May-June or grown in September-October for harvest in December-February.

Alternatively, they may be planted in November-December for harvest in April-May.

This particularity has made the need for seed potatoes high throughout the year.

Tunisian is a net importer of seed potatoes.

Tunisia grows 25000 ha of potatoes with an average yield of 15.2 t/ha. In 2004, Tunisia imported 28,500 tonnes of seed potatoes from Europe. The majority of this seed was from France and the Netherlands with a smaller quantity from Belgium.

Market Preference

‘Spunta’ is the variety preferred by Tunisian farmers. Spunta’s continued popularity is due to the fact that it has a low commercial risk and it is still preferred by the Tunisian consumer, hence its harvest can always be sold. It can also be grown twice a year.

Tunisian farmers have generally chosen to grow new varieties only when there is a demand for export. Buy-back agreements have been used to supply the French market with ware potatoes.

Tunisians consume between 22,000 and 25,000 tonnes of potatoes a month.

Variety List

Variety	Variety Rights	Maturity	Skin Colour	Flesh Colour	Use
Agata	1990	First Early	Yellow	Yellow	Table
Ajax	1973	Second Early	Yellow	Light-yellow, buff	Table
Ariane	1984	Second Early	Yellow	Yellow	Table
Arinda	1993	Second Early	Yellow	Light-yellow, buff	Table
Asterix	1991	Medium late,	Red	Light-yellow, buff	Table
Atlas	1962	Late	Light-yellow-white	White	
Baraka	1971	Late	Light-yellow, buff	Light-yellow, buff	Table. Processing. French fries
Cardinal	1971	Medium late,	Red	Light-yellow, buff	Table
Diamant	1982	Second Early	Yellow	Light-yellow, buff	Table
Ditta	1989	Second Early	Deep-yellow	Light-yellow, buff	Table
Fabula	1996	Second Early	Light-yellow-white	Light-yellow, buff	Table
Florice	2001	First Early			Table
Kondor	1984	Medium late,	Red	Light-yellow, buff	Table
Latona	1994	Early	Yellow	Light-yellow, buff	Table. Processing
Liseta	1987	Early	Light-yellow, buff	Light-yellow-white	Table
Lyra	1987	Second Early	Yellow	Yellow	Table
Monalisa	1979	Early	Light-yellow, buff	Light-yellow, buff	Table
Mondial	1987	Medium late,	Yellow	Light-yellow, buff	Table
Nicola	1973	Second Early	Yellow	Yellow	Table
Novita	1991	Second Early	Yellow	Yellow	Table
Obelix	1988	Second Early	Yellow	Light-yellow, buff	Table
Orla		First Early	White	Light-yellow, buff	
Pamina	1988	Medium late,	White	Yellow	Table
Platina	1994	Second Early	Light-yellow-white	Light-yellow, buff	Table
Safrane	1991	Second Early	Yellow	Yellow	Table
Santana	1992	Second Early	Yellow	Light-yellow-white	Table. Processing. French fries
Selecta		Medium late,	Light-yellow-white	Light-yellow-white	Table
Spunta	1969	Second Early	Light-yellow, buff	Light-yellow, buff	Table
Timate	1984	Second Early	Yellow	Light-yellow, buff	Table. Processing. French fries

Market Structure

Tunisian farmers can be divided into three categories:

Large farms of 10 to 15 ha owned by SMVDAs (Société de Mises en Valeurs et de Développement Agricole) and which use modern equipment. Medium farms of 5 to 10 ha owned and managed by young agronomic engineers. Small farms of 1 to 2 ha, constituting the majority of Tunisian farms. Although these farms are small and their owners use traditional methods and techniques, their productivity in the Tunisian potato sector is the highest and their quality is the best because of the care and attention they give to their land. Mr Nouri Khemmasi, who is leading an enthusiastic programme for the modernisation of irrigation and storage techniques for potatoes amongst the small farms, said that he always advised exporters of potatoes to deal with these small farmers.

Other Major Agricultural Products

Olives, olive oil, grain, dairy products, tomatoes, citrus fruit, beef, sugar beets, dates, almonds.

Import Regulation

Seed potato export conditions for Tunisia are listed on the SEERAD website at: www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Agriculture/plant/18273/potatoexpconds/CountriesS-T/Tunisia

The import of seed potatoes has been deregulated, though GIL still keeps a limited control. GIL still issues the health and technical specification book for the potatoes to be imported. The private Tunisian companies importing seed potatoes must comply with the book either for the seed to be distributed to farmers or for seed to be sold to GIL. The precise specifications will be described in the individual tenders issued.

Political and Cultural Considerations

The UK has no bilateral aid programme in Tunisia. Through the EU, however, Britain is a major contributor to the MEDA programme (the EU's development assistance programme for the Maghreb). Many of our EU competitors (France, Belgium, Spain and Italy in particular) do have bilateral aid programmes, including favourable bilateral credit arrangements, which, we know from experience, have been used to support the commercial activities of their national companies' products. In some cases, this has proven to be a disadvantage to UK firms seeking to compete. We are not aware, however, of any such arrangements covering the export of seed potatoes. Arabic and French are the main languages spoken in Tunisia, the latter being the main commercial language. Most public tenders are therefore advertised in French language and bids usually also need to be submitted in French.

The Tunisian Government is actively taking steps to simplify and improve both law and practice applying to commerce in Tunisia. The need to tackle the existing 'black market' in Tunisia and improve transparency in business dealings is on the Government agenda, but it is the view of this Embassy that these issues do **not** pose concern to the extent that UK companies need be deterred from pursuing business here. Many British companies are both investing in, and trading with, Tunisia very successfully. The Embassy would be happy to brief the company further on any political or cultural considerations should this be required.

CONTACT LIST

Public Sector

GIL

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22, rue Maouia Ibn Abi Sofiane
1002 Tunis Belvédère
Tel: 216 71 793 056
Fax: 216 71 801 686
Contact: Mr Touhami Jami

INRAT

Institut National de Recherche Agronomique de Tunisie
Rue Hédi Karray
2080 Ariana
Tel: 71 230 239 / 71 230 024
Fax: 71 752 897
Contact: Mr Nouri Khemassi

Seed Importers

Agricuta

71, rue Alain Savary
Bloc B Appt B 22
1002 Tunis
Tel: 216 71 809 473
Fax: 216 71 766 304
e-mail : info@stecia.com

Contact: Mr Mohamed Ben Mansour, Manager
Mr Walid Gueddes, Commercial Director

Grafoupast

Graines Fouragères et Pastorales

71, rue Alain Savary
1002 Tunis Belvédère
Tel: 71 807 979 / 71 806 190
Fax: 71 809 492
Contact: Mr Ezzedine Ben Yahia

PROTAGRI

88, rue Palestine
1002 Tunis Bevedere
Tel: 71 801 910
Fax: 71 802 486
Contact: Mr Hatem Mlayeh
This company deals with German companies and imports 'Nicola' and 'Spunta' varieties, as do the other companies.

NOVAGRI

13, rue Hassen et Houcine

1004 Menzah

Tel: 71 753 334 / 78 561 071

Fax: 71 753 334

Contact: Mr Mohamed Brahim

Mr Taoufik Khouli

This company said they would be able to rent farms to grow any variety of potato if a market could be guaranteed in the UK.

STUCOD

Société Tunisienne de Commerce et de Distribution

34, rue Ali Ben Gheghahem

1000 Tunis RP

Tel: 71 337 907

Fax: 71 339 713

Contact: Mr Khemayes Rhimi

Mr Rhimi said that he is satisfied with the Belgian company he is already dealing with, but he would be interested in learning about British varieties and their characteristics.