

ISSUE 005 | JANUARY 2026

McLays Foods

Meat | Fish | Produce

MCLAYS MONTHLY



Hello, and Happy New Year from all of us at McLays!

January is a time when we rest our heads, and so does nature. While crop planning for the year ahead is underway, we are already manifesting a fruitful growing season.

We have moved into the coldest month of the year, making it the perfect time to focus on our natural larder. While fresh growth is scarce, the produce available is of exceptionally high quality. This period requires us to think deeply about seasonality and lean into our own crops, which can be more challenging in Scotland than elsewhere.

At McLays, we are committed to working with Scottish farmers to supply as much local produce as possible. We want our customers to know exactly where their food comes from, allowing every ingredient to tell a story and celebrate our unique cuisine.

This month's newsletter delves into the rich, comforting flavors our landscape has to offer. It is a little shorter than usual following a busy festive period for us all, but we'll be back next month with more sustainable stories.



Featured on the cover is the McLays tartan.

Haggis neeps and tatties photo courtesy of deliciousmagazine.co.uk

VEGETABLES

In season this month.

Beetroot

Brussel Sprouts

Red Cabbage

Savoy Cabbage

Carrots

Celeriac

Chard

Kale

Leeks

Mushrooms

Onions

Parsnips

Potatoes

Radicchio

Daikon (Mooli)

Romanesco

Spinach

Winter Squash

Swede

Turnips

The harvest from our frost touched fields has sustained people in Scotland for centuries. This month, we should celebrate them.

Kale, crisp savoy cabbage, sweet parsnips and giant leeks are all at their peak right now, but there are a couple of seasonal staples that reign supreme in these cold winter months: neeps and tatties.

Why neeps and tatties?

The seasonality of them, especially in the 18th and 19th centuries, meant that they were often the only fresh vegetables available in the depths of winter. Reliable, easy to store and nutritious. The same rings true today.

It also has The Bard's blessing. Robert Burns's birthday falls on the 25th of January and the Burns Supper to commemorate it cemented neeps and tatties as the essential accompaniment to the Great Chieftain.

McLays Haggis

Since 1987 we have been supplying our Haggis across Scotland and parts of Europe at Burns Night. You probably won't know that we also supply Haggis in the US, popular among expats..

FRUIT

In season this month.



Apples

Pears

Forced Rhubarb

While our home-grown fruit remains limited to stored apples and pears, quantities are beginning to dwindle. As we wait for the Scottish soil to wake up, we look towards the European market for the most sustainable and high-quality alternatives.

We have now entered the “Golden Month” for Mediterranean citrus. Right now, the fruit boasts its highest sugar content and most vibrant color. This is the peak of the season, the ideal time to enjoy clementines and mandarins at their absolute best, without the heavy food miles associated with fruit from further afield.

SUSTAINABLE CHOICE OF THE MONTH - YORKSHIRE FORCED RHUBARB

Forcing rhubarb means that it is available earlier in the year. It is more tender, sweeter and pink than the outdoor varieties. Essentially it's an out of season rhubarb.

To "force" rhubarb is to cheat the seasons in the most gentle way possible. By growing the plants in completely dark sheds, the stalks stretch upward rapidly in search of light. This process results in stems that are a vibrant, glowing pink, far more tender and sweet than the hardy outdoor varieties that arrive later in the spring.

It is often harvested by candlelight, as even a small amount of light can toughen the stem, turning the stalks green and bitter.



If it's in season and abundant, then the prices are going to drop. Veg such as neeps, tatties, and cabbage are cheaper during the harvest months (and more delicious) compared to the imported alternatives.

Choose Scottish, Support Local Farmers, and Live within Planetary Boundaries.

Get in touch with us if you want to know more about seasonality and how you can incorporate it into your menu.

For sustainability enquiries, contact
Matthew, our Net Zero Coordinator:
matthew.harkins@mclaysfoods.co.uk



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70 GLENTANAR ROAD, GLASGOW, G22 7XS | PHONE: 0141 336 6543 | EMAIL:
ENQUIRIES@MCLAYSFOODS.CO.UK