

MARKET INSIGHT - PHILIPPINES

CULTURAL FESTIVALS AND EVENTS
FEATURING FRUIT AS GIFTS OR OFFERINGS

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PHILIPPINES MARKET SNAPSHOT

Approximately 86 per cent of the Philippines population is Roman Catholic. This makes Christmas the most keenly anticipated festival in the year and the greatest driver of retail sales¹, although other cultural events and Chinese festivals are also observed. The tradition of gifting fruit at Christmas provides Australian exporters with opportunities to displace existing US suppliers.

During the Christmas period, Filipino household consumption rises by approximately 40 per cent. This is partly due to Christmas bonuses and to annual salary increases which take place at this time of year. Retail revenues increase by an average of 46 per cent as Filipinos shop for gifts, and groceries for the traditional *Noche Buena* (or Christmas Eve meal).²

Fresh fruit and gift-giving

Fresh fruit remains one of the best sellers during Christmas festivities. Gift giving is common throughout the Christmas and New Year period on a personal and corporate level, and baskets of fruit are a popular gift. Seasonal demand is therefore huge, and fresh fruits typically achieve 30 to 50 per cent of annual sales during the fourth quarter.

The United States is a traditional supplier of fruit to the Philippines during the Christmas and New Year period. Early-season Australian fruit has the opportunity to compete during this period, including especially in cherries, stone fruits and table grapes.



Chinese New Year

The Philippines has a long history of immigration from China and over one million Filipinos claim some form of Chinese heritage. As a result, Chinese influences are embedded in multiple aspects of Philippines culture, and Chinese New Year is widely celebrated.

In Chinese culture, rounded fruits are believed to provide good fortune, luck and prosperity. These fruits are served in most Filipino households during the calendrical New Year and Chinese New Year. Almost every family serves 12 kinds of round fruit during their *Media Noche* (New Year's Eve dinner): this signifies hopes for prosperity and good fortune for the coming 12 months.³

In Manila, many local residences bulk buy imported fruits from community wet markets in some of the older city districts – including Divisoria in Tondo and Chinatown in Binondo. Other public markets and supermarkets increase their stock of imported fruits during this period. The principal retail opportunities are for citrus fruits (oranges and mandarins), apples, stone fruits and cherries.

For more information on the Philippines market, please contact Austrade Manila, Patricia De Mesa: Patricia.Demesa@austrade.gov.au

¹ Department of Tourism – Philippines: People and Religion

² Philippines Statistics Authority, 2017

³ [Inquirer: Filipino traditions and beliefs during New Year](#)