



**Johannesburg | Durban | Cape Town | Springbok |  
Pietermaritzburg**

**March 2023**

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**Pietermaritzburg Economic Justice & Dignity Group [PMBEJD]**

For information and media enquiries contact:

Mervyn Abrahams on 079 398 9384 and [mervyn@pmbejd.org.za](mailto:mervyn@pmbejd.org.za)

Julie Smith on 072 324 5043 and [julie@pmbejd.org.za](mailto:julie@pmbejd.org.za)

Website: [www.pmbejd.org.za](http://www.pmbejd.org.za)

Facebook: [www.Facebook.com/pmbejd](http://www.Facebook.com/pmbejd)

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### About the Household Affordability Index

The Household Food Basket in the Household Affordability Index has been designed together with women living on low incomes in Johannesburg (Soweto, Alexandra, Tembisa and Hillbrow), Cape Town (Gugulethu, Philippi, Khayelitsha, Langa, Delft, Dunoon), Durban (KwaMashu, Umlazi, Isipingo, Durban CBD, Hammarsdale, Pinetown, and Mtubatuba), and Springbok (in the Northern Cape), and Pietermaritzburg. It includes the foods and the volumes of these foods which women living in a family of seven members (an average low-income household size) tell us they typically try and secure each month. The basket was designed through a pilot project which ran from April 2020 to August 2020. ***It cannot however be considered the basket for every family living on a low income in each area and for all areas covered. It is however considered a reasonable proxy for a food basket which women identified as including the most important typical foods which most households try and buy each month, given affordability constraints.*** The Household Food Basket is not nutritionally complete.

Food prices are tracked directly by women data collectors off the shelves of **44 supermarkets and 30 butcheries** that target the low-income market and which women identified as those they shop at in the areas where they live. Food selection at the supermarket shelves mirrors how women themselves make decisions at the supermarket shelves given affordability constraints viz. that the foods are chosen on relative affordability and reasonable quality, and food brands are switched to seek out the cheapest prices and special deals. The selection of food brands is dynamic and subjective. Women are smart and savvy, and shop around for bargains: this specific methodology used provides an accurate cost of a monthly household food basket, as purchased by women living on low incomes.

**There are 44 foods in the Household Food Basket.** The date for data collection is between the 1st and 4th day of each month. Data is collected and released in the same month. Data is presented for each area, and it is also weighted and averaged for all 5 areas. *For more on methodology, see page 15-16.*

### About the Pietermaritzburg Economic Justice & Dignity Group

The Pietermaritzburg Economic Justice & Dignity Group is a Civil Society initiative founded in July 2018. This initiative focusses on issues of economic justice, the low-wage regime and on the increasing household affordability and food price crisis, with its attendant nutritional deficiencies, health and developmental consequences, and the lack of imaginative policy and systemic responses to deal with this crisis.

***The Pietermaritzburg Economic Justice & Dignity Group envisions and work towards a society of solidarity, based on a politics of love and universality, and an economy which provides justice, equity, and dignity for all.***

# 1. MARCH 2023 Summary Data Reference Sheet

## Summary of Household Affordability Data

National Minimum Wage March 2023 (22 working days)	
General workers at R25,42/hr	<b>R4 473,92</b>
General workers at 10% exemption at R22,88/hr	R4 026,53
Minimum underspend on food in March 2023	<b>-38,7%</b>

Cost of Household Food Basket in March 2023	
Cost of Joburg Household Food Basket	R5 020,21
Cost of Durban Household Food Basket	R4 871,40
Cost of Cape Town Household Food Basket	R4 927,77
Cost of Springbok Household Food Basket	R5 430,03
Cost of Maritzburg Household Food Basket	R4 892,35
<b>Average cost of Household Food Basket (all areas).</b>	<b>R4 966,20</b>
<b>Month-on-month change</b>	<b>R37,87</b> <b>0,8%</b>
<b>Year-on-year change</b>	<b>R516,12</b> <b>11,6%</b>

Cost of foods prioritised & bought first in Household Food Basket: year-on-year		
Core foods	Mar_2022	Mar_2023
	cost	cost
Maize meal (30kg)	R 244,20	R 307,32
Rice (10kg)	R 133,92	R 130,42
Cake Flour (10kg)	R 101,72	R 122,22
White sugar (10kg)	R 166,51	R 177,65
Sugar beans (5kg)	R 172,97	R 170,56
Samp (5kg)	R 51,51	R 64,09
Cooking oil (5L)	R 150,81	R 174,68
Salt (1kg)	R 13,03	R 14,20
Potatoes (10kg)	R 63,71	R 97,12
Onions (10kg)	R 72,29	R 120,74
Frozen chicken pieces (10kg)	R 363,67	R 397,24
Curry powder (200g)	R 29,87	R 32,78
Stock cubes (24 cubes x2)	R 37,33	R 44,29
Soup (400g x2)	R 39,37	R 41,75
Tea (250g)	R 24,47	R 26,13
White bread (25 loaves)	R 355,42	R 416,21
Brown bread (25 loaves)	R 323,43	R 377,57
<b>Subtotal of core foods</b>	<b>R2 344,23</b>	<b>R 2 714,97</b>

Cost of Household Domestic and Personal Hygiene Products Basket in March 2023	<b>R921,80</b>
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Cost of a basic nutritious diet for a family per month	
Household size with 4 members	R3 430,75
Household size with 5 members	R4 336,85
Household size with 7 members	<b>R5 996,70</b>

Average cost of a basic nutritious diet for a child per month in March 2023	
Small child aged 3-9 years	R769,98
Small child aged 10-13 years	R838,04
Girl child aged 14-18 years	R889,88
Boy child aged 14-18 years	R1 000,92
<b>Average for all children</b>	<b>R874,71</b>
In Mar 2023, the Child Support Grant (R480) is <b>28%</b> below the food poverty line (R663) & <b>45%</b> below the average cost to secure a basic nutritious diet for a child (R874,71).	

## Summary of Statistics South Africa's Economic and Social Data

All South Africans	
Population size	60,6 million
Unemployment rate	32,7%
Expanded unemployment rate	<b>42,6%</b>
Numbers of people unemployed	11,8 million
Numbers of people employed	15,9 million
Number of people one wage supports	<b>3,8</b>
Maximum NMW March 2023	<b>R4 473,92</b>
NMW shared in a family, per person	<b>R1 177,35</b>

Black South Africans	
Population size	49,1 million
Unemployment rate	36,8%
Expanded unemployment rate	<b>47,3%</b>
Numbers of people unemployed	10,7 million
Numbers of people employed	12 million
Number of people one wage supports	<b>4,1</b>
Maximum NMW March 2023	<b>R4 473,92</b>
NMW shared in a family, per person	<b>R1 091,20</b>

White South Africans	
Population size	4,6 million
Unemployment rate	8,2%
Expanded unemployment rate	<b>10,0%</b>
Numbers of people unemployed	194 000
Numbers of people employed	1,7 million
Number of people one wage supports	<b>2,7</b>
Maximum NMW March 2023	<b>R4 473,92</b>
NMW shared in a family, per person	<b>R1 657,01</b>

The maximum value of the National Minimum Wage [NMW]	R25,42/hour
Level of NMW at 10% exemption	R22,88/hour
The value of the Child Support Grant [CSG]	R480,00
The value of the Old-age Grant [OAG]	R1 990,00
The number of children receiving a CSG	12,78 million
The number of pensioners receiving an OAG	3,67 million
The upper-bound poverty line [UBPL]	R1 417,00
The lower-bound poverty line [LBPL]	R945,00
The food poverty line [FPL]	R663,00

% of people living below the UBPL (30,4m)	55,5%
% of people living below the FPL (13,8m)	25,2%
% of Black South Africans living below the UBPL (±29,9m)	64,2%
Stunting levels in boy children under 5 years	30%
Stunting levels in girl children under 5 years	25%
Estimated overall HIV prevalence rate among population in 2022 (8,45 million)	13,9%

Any errors in data entry or calculations are our own. See reference page 17 for Statistics South Africa data references. All efforts are made to source the latest available data.

## 2. MARCH 2023 Household Food Index: All areas

Foods tracked	Quantity tracked	Index 2022/23			change in Rands		change in %	
		Mar_2022	Feb_2023	Mar_2023	Feb 2023 vs. Mar 2023	Mar 2022 vs. Mar 2023	Feb 2023 vs. Mar 2023	Mar 2022 vs. Mar 2023
Maize meal	30kg	R244,20	R309,43	R307,32	-R 2,11	R 63,12	-1%	26%
Rice	10kg	R133,92	R134,06	R130,42	-R 3,64	-R 3,50	-3%	-3%
Cake Flour	10kg	R101,72	R122,42	R122,22	-R 0,20	R 20,51	0%	20%
White sugar	10kg	R166,51	R179,75	R177,65	-R 2,10	R 11,14	-1%	7%
Sugar beans	5kg	R172,97	R171,53	R170,56	-R 0,97	-R 2,41	-1%	-1%
Samp	5kg	R51,51	R66,64	R64,09	-R 2,55	R 12,58	-4%	24%
Cooking oil	5L	R150,81	R178,88	R174,68	-R 4,20	R 23,87	-2%	16%
Salt	1kg	R13,03	R14,38	R14,20	-R 0,19	R 1,16	-1%	9%
Potatoes	10kg	R63,71	R89,56	R97,12	R 7,56	R 33,41	8%	52%
Onions	10kg	R72,29	R125,69	R120,74	-R 4,95	R 48,45	-4%	67%
Frozen chicken portions	10kg	R363,67	R390,68	R397,24	R 6,56	R 33,57	2%	9%
Curry powder	200g	R29,87	R33,09	R32,78	-R 0,31	R 2,91	-1%	10%
Stock cubes	24 cubes x2	R37,33	R43,65	R44,29	R 0,64	R 6,97	1%	19%
Soup	400g x2	R39,37	R43,08	R41,75	-R 1,34	R 2,38	-3%	6%
Tea	250g	R24,47	R25,41	R26,13	R 0,72	R 1,66	3%	7%
Full cream milk	6L	R79,34	R86,11	R89,09	R 2,97	R 9,75	3%	12%
Maas	4L	R49,85	R52,96	R54,62	R 1,66	R 4,77	3%	10%
Eggs	60 eggs	R114,28	R118,52	R122,03	R 3,51	R 7,75	3%	7%
Chicken feet	2kg	R71,71	R78,53	R79,30	R 0,77	R 7,60	1%	11%
Gizzards	2kg	R79,13	R87,40	R87,21	-R 0,18	R 8,08	0%	10%
Chicken livers	2kg	R67,52	R71,22	R70,96	-R 0,26	R 3,44	0%	5%
Beef liver	2kg	R97,18	R100,33	R101,14	R 0,80	R 3,96	1%	4%
Beef	2kg	R171,43	R178,37	R178,83	R 0,46	R 7,40	0%	4%
Wors	2kg	R125,89	R135,49	R138,50	R 3,01	R 12,60	2%	10%
Inyama yangaphakathi	2kg	R85,13	R91,12	R92,04	R 0,92	R 6,90	1%	8%
Fish	2kg	R101,62	R111,03	R112,06	R 1,03	R 10,45	1%	10%
Tomatoes	6kg	R113,64	R121,93	R129,03	R 7,10	R 15,39	6%	14%
Carrots	5kg	R34,72	R36,67	R45,20	R 8,53	R 10,48	23%	30%
Butternut	10kg	R83,09	R86,86	R86,36	-R 0,51	R 3,26	-1%	4%
Spinach	8 bunches	R92,07	R111,93	R105,74	-R 6,19	R 13,67	-6%	15%
Cabbage	2 heads	R34,21	R40,62	R41,68	R 1,06	R 7,47	3%	22%
Green pepper	2kg	R42,37	R56,42	R55,09	-R 1,33	R 12,71	-2%	30%
Cremora	800g	R40,97	R43,02	R41,90	-R 1,12	R 0,94	-3%	2%
Tinned pilchards	400g x6	R125,09	R136,67	R140,12	R 3,45	R 15,03	3%	12%
Canned beans	410g x6	R71,45	R77,83	R80,01	R 2,18	R 8,57	3%	12%
Bananas	4kg	R63,17	R65,59	R67,71	R 2,12	R 4,54	3%	7%
Apples	3kg	R44,81	R46,83	R45,64	-R 1,19	R 0,83	-3%	2%
Oranges	7kg	R125,02	R83,14	R83,14	R 0,00	-R 41,88	0%	-33%
Margarine	1kg	R39,08	R40,17	R40,11	-R 0,05	R 1,03	0%	3%
Peanut butter	400g x2	R63,34	R65,31	R66,26	R 0,95	R 2,91	1%	5%
Polony	2.5kg	R60,46	R65,46	R65,24	-R 0,22	R 4,78	0%	8%
Apricot jam	900g	R29,26	R33,26	R32,22	-R 1,04	R 2,95	-3%	10%
White bread	25 loaves	R355,42	R408,73	R416,21	R 7,48	R 60,79	2%	17%
Brown bread	25 loaves	R323,43	R368,54	R377,57	R 9,03	R 54,14	2%	17%
<b>Total household food basket</b>		<b>R 4 450,09</b>	<b>R 4 928,34</b>	<b>R 4 966,20</b>	<b>R 37,87</b>	<b>R 516,12</b>	<b>0,8%</b>	<b>11,6%</b>

**Month-on-month:** The cost of the **average household food basket increased** by **R37,87 (0,8%)** from R4 928,34 in February 2023 to R4 966,20 in March 2023.

**Year-on-year:** The cost of the **average household food basket increased** by **R516,12 (11,6%)** from R4 450,09 in March 2022 to R4 966,20 in March 2023.

### 3. MARCH 2023 Household Food Index: All areas, by foods prioritised & bought first

Foods tracked	Quantity tracked	Index 2022/23			change in Rands		change in %	
		Mar_2022	Feb_2023	Mar_2023	Feb 2023 vs. Mar 2023	Mar 2022 vs. Mar 2023	Feb 2023 vs. Mar 2023	Mar 2022 vs. Mar 2023
Maize meal	30kg	R244,20	R309,43	R307,32	-R 2,11	R 63,12	-1%	26%
Rice	10kg	R133,92	R134,06	R130,42	-R 3,64	-R 3,50	-3%	-3%
Cake Flour	10kg	R101,72	R122,42	R122,22	-R 0,20	R 20,51	0%	20%
White sugar	10kg	R166,51	R179,75	R177,65	-R 2,10	R 11,14	-1%	7%
Sugar beans	5kg	R172,97	R171,53	R170,56	-R 0,97	-R 2,41	-1%	-1%
Samp	5kg	R51,51	R66,64	R64,09	-R 2,55	R 12,58	-4%	24%
Cooking oil	5L	R150,81	R178,88	R174,68	-R 4,20	R 23,87	-2%	16%
Salt	1kg	R13,03	R14,38	R14,20	-R 0,19	R 1,16	-1%	9%
Potatoes	10kg	R63,71	R89,56	R97,12	R 7,56	R 33,41	8%	52%
Onions	10kg	R72,29	R125,69	R120,74	-R 4,95	R 48,45	-4%	67%
Frozen chicken portions	10kg	R363,67	R390,68	R397,24	R 6,56	R 33,57	2%	9%
Curry powder	200g	R29,87	R33,09	R32,78	-R 0,31	R 2,91	-1%	10%
Stock cubes	24 cubes x2	R37,33	R43,65	R44,29	R 0,64	R 6,97	1%	19%
Soup	400g x2	R39,37	R43,08	R41,75	-R 1,34	R 2,38	-3%	6%
Tea	250g	R24,47	R25,41	R26,13	R 0,72	R 1,66	3%	7%
White bread	25 loaves	R355,42	R408,73	R416,21	R 7,48	R 60,79	2%	17%
Brown bread	25 loaves	R323,43	R368,54	R377,57	R 9,03	R 54,14	2%	17%
<b>Total household food basket</b>		<b>R 2 344,23</b>	<b>R2 705,53</b>	<b>R2 714,97</b>	<b>R 9,44</b>	<b>R 370,74</b>	<b>0,3%</b>	<b>15,8%</b>

**Month-on-month:** The **average cost of the foods prioritised and bought first** in the household food basket **increased** by **R9,44 (0,3%)** from R2 705,53 in February 2023 to R2 714,97 in March 2023.

**Year-on-year:** The **average cost of the foods prioritised and bought first** in the household food basket **increased** by **R370,74 (15,8%)** from R2 344,23 in March 2022 to R2 714,97 in March 2023.

**The cost of the foods prioritised and bought first in the Household Food Basket is important.** The core foods are bought first and these foods ensure that families do not go hungry whilst ensuring that meals can be cooked. When the prices of core foods increase, there is less money to secure other important mostly nutritionally-rich foods, which are essential for health and well-being and strong immune systems (*viz.* meat, eggs and dairy which are critical for protein, iron and calcium; vegetables and fruit which are critical for vitamins, minerals and fibre; and Maas, peanut butter and pilchards, good fats, protein and calcium essential for children. The data shows that the core foods contribute **55%** of the total cost of the Household Food Basket. At an average cost of **R2 714,97 in March 2023**, these foods are relatively very expensive in relation to the total money available in the household purse to secure food. These foods must be bought regardless of price escalations. The high cost of core staple foods result in a lot of proper nutritious food being removed off the family plates. The consequences of high costs on the core foods has a negative impact on overall household health and well-being, and child development.

#### 4. MARCH 2023 Household Food Index: Zero-rated vs. VAT

Foods tracked	Quantity tracked	Index 2022/23			change in Rands		change in %	
		Mar_2022	Feb_2023	Mar_2023	Feb 2023 vs. Mar 2023	Mar 2022 vs. Mar 2023	Feb 2023 vs. Mar 2023	Mar 2022 vs. Mar 2023
<b>Zero-rated foods</b>								
Maize meal	30kg	R244,20	R309,43	R307,32	-R 2,11	R 63,12	-1%	26%
Rice	10kg	R133,92	R134,06	R130,42	-R 3,64	-R 3,50	-3%	-3%
Samp	5kg	R51,51	R66,64	R64,09	-R 2,55	R 12,58	-4%	24%
Sugar beans	5kg	R172,97	R171,53	R170,56	-R 0,97	-R 2,41	-1%	-1%
Cooking oil	5L	R150,81	R178,88	R174,68	-R 4,20	R 23,87	-2%	16%
Full cream milk	6L	R79,34	R86,11	R89,09	R 2,97	R 9,75	3%	12%
Maas	4L	R49,85	R52,96	R54,62	R 1,66	R 4,77	3%	10%
Eggs	60 eggs	R114,28	R118,52	R122,03	R 3,51	R 7,75	3%	7%
Potatoes	10kg	R63,71	R89,56	R97,12	R 7,56	R 33,41	8%	52%
Onions	10kg	R72,29	R125,69	R120,74	-R 4,95	R 48,45	-4%	67%
Tomatoes	6kg	R113,64	R121,93	R129,03	R 7,10	R 15,39	6%	14%
Carrots	5kg	R34,72	R36,67	R45,20	R 8,53	R 10,48	23%	30%
Butternut	10kg	R83,09	R86,86	R86,36	-R 0,51	R 3,26	-1%	4%
Spinach	8 bunches	R92,07	R111,93	R105,74	-R 6,19	R 13,67	-6%	15%
Cabbage	2 heads	R34,21	R40,62	R41,68	R 1,06	R 7,47	3%	22%
Green Pepper	2kg	R42,37	R56,42	R55,09	-R 1,33	R 12,71	-2%	30%
Tinned pilchards	6 tins	R125,09	R136,67	R140,12	R 3,45	R 15,03	3%	12%
Bananas	4kg	R63,17	R65,59	R67,71	R 2,12	R 4,54	3%	7%
Apples	3kg	R44,81	R46,83	R45,64	-R 1,19	R 0,83	-3%	2%
Oranges	7kg	R125,02	R83,14	R83,14	R 0,00	-R 41,88	0%	-33%
Brown bread	25 loaves	R323,43	R368,54	R377,57	R 9,03	R 54,14	2%	17%
Cake flour	10kg	R101,72	R122,42	R122,22	-R 0,20	R 20,51	0%	20%
<b>Subtotal of zero-rated foods</b>		<b>R 2 316,23</b>	<b>R 2 611,02</b>	<b>R 2 630,18</b>	<b>R 19,16</b>	<b>R 313,95</b>	<b>0,7%</b>	<b>13,6%</b>
<b>Foods subject to VAT</b>								
White sugar	10kg	166,51	179,75	177,65	-R 2,10	R 11,14	-1%	7%
Frozen chicken portions	10kg	363,67	390,68	397,24	R 6,56	R 33,57	2%	9%
Chicken feet	2kg	71,71	78,53	79,30	R 0,77	R 7,60	1%	11%
Gizzards	2kg	79,13	87,40	87,21	-R 0,18	R 8,08	0%	10%
Chicken livers	2kg	67,52	71,22	70,96	-R 0,26	R 3,44	0%	5%
Beef liver	2kg	97,18	100,33	101,14	R 0,80	R 3,96	1%	4%
Beef	2kg	171,43	178,37	178,83	R 0,46	R 7,40	0%	4%
Wors	2kg	125,89	135,49	138,50	R 3,01	R 12,60	2%	10%
Inyama yangapakhathi	2kg	85,13	91,12	92,04	R 0,92	R 6,90	1%	8%
Fish	2kg	101,62	111,03	112,06	R 1,03	R 10,45	1%	10%
Salt	1kg	13,03	14,38	14,20	-R 0,19	R 1,16	-1%	9%
Stock	48 cubes	37,33	43,65	44,29	R 0,64	R 6,97	1%	19%
Soup	800g	39,37	43,08	41,75	-R 1,34	R 2,38	-3%	6%
Curry powder	400g	29,87	33,09	32,78	-R 0,31	R 2,91	-1%	10%
Tea	200g	24,47	25,41	26,13	R 0,72	R 1,66	3%	7%
Cremora	1kg	40,97	43,02	41,90	-R 1,12	R 0,94	-3%	2%
Canned beans	6 cans	71,45	77,83	80,01	R 2,18	R 8,57	3%	12%
Margarine	1kg	39,08	40,17	40,11	-R 0,05	R 1,03	0%	3%
Peanut butter	400g x2	63,34	65,31	66,26	R 0,95	R 2,91	1%	5%
Polony	2.5kg	60,46	65,46	65,24	-R 0,22	R 4,78	0%	8%
Apricot jam	900g	29,26	33,26	32,22	-R 1,04	R 2,95	-3%	10%
White bread	25 loaves	355,42	408,73	416,21	R 7,48	R 60,79	2%	17%
<b>Subtotal of VATable foods</b>		<b>R2 133,86</b>	<b>R 2 317,32</b>	<b>R 2 336,03</b>	<b>R 18,71</b>	<b>R 202,17</b>	<b>0,8%</b>	<b>9,5%</b>
Vatable foods (excl. VAT)		R1 855,53	R2 015,06	R2 031,33	R 16,27	R175,80	0,8%	9,5%
<b>VAT total</b>		<b>R278,33</b>	<b>R302,26</b>	<b>R304,70</b>	<b>R2,44</b>	<b>R26,37</b>	<b>0,8%</b>	<b>9,5%</b>
<b>Total household food basket</b>		<b>R4 450,09</b>	<b>R4 928,34</b>	<b>R4 966,20</b>	<b>R37,87</b>	<b>R516,12</b>	<b>0,8%</b>	<b>11,6%</b>

**Month-on-month:** The **zero-rated foods** in the household food basket **increased** by **R19,16 (0,7%)** from R2 611,02 in February 2023 to R2 630,18 in March 2023.

**Year-on-year:** The **zero-rated foods** in the household food basket **increased** by **R313,95 (13,6%)** from R2 316,23 in March 2022 to R2 630,18 in March 2023.

**Month-on-month:** The **foods subject to VAT** in the household food basket **increased** by **R18,71 (0,8%)** from R2 317,32 in February 2023 to R2 336,03 in March 2023.

**Year-on-year:** The **foods subject to VAT** in the household food basket **increased** by **R202,17 (9,5%)** from R2 133,86 in March 2022 to R2 336,03 in March 2023.

**22/44** foods in the total household food basket are subject to VAT. Foods subject to VAT make up **47%** of the total cost of the household food basket. VAT on the total household food basket came to **R304,70 in March 2023**. This means **6,1%** of the household food basket is made up of VAT. A tax of **R304,70** is nearly the same cost of a large household's requirement of **30kg maize meal** per month (in March 2023, 30kg maize meal cost R307,32). VAT on basic foods stuffs is still very high and removes food off the plate.

## 5. MARCH 2023 Household Domestic & Personal Hygiene Index: All areas

Products tracked	Quantity tracked	Index 2022/23			change in Rands		change in %	
		Mar_2022	Feb_2023	Mar_2023	Feb 2023 vs. Mar 2023	Mar 2022 vs. Mar 2023	Feb 2023 vs. Mar 2023	Mar 2022 vs. Mar 2023
Green bar soap	500g x8	R70,65	R116,51	R111,29	-R 5,22	R 40,65	-4%	58%
Washing powder	3kg	R68,40	R89,22	R87,93	-R 1,29	R 19,53	-1%	29%
Dishwashing liquid	750ml	R27,92	R31,08	R32,31	R 1,23	R 4,39	4%	16%
Handy Andy	750ml	R25,71	R29,09	R28,83	-R 0,26	R 3,12	-1%	12%
Jik	1,5L	R39,87	R40,97	R41,39	R 0,42	R 1,52	1%	4%
Toilet paper	24 rolls	R92,80	R110,19	R108,29	-R 1,89	R 15,49	-2%	17%
Bath soap	500g x4	R59,82	R80,75	R82,42	R 1,66	R 22,59	2%	38%
Toothpaste	100ml x3	R45,41	R57,63	R54,20	-R 3,43	R 8,80	-6%	19%
Vaseline	500g	R42,01	R45,77	R46,11	R 0,33	R 4,10	1%	10%
Cream	big bottle x2	R38,85	R53,22	R54,93	R 1,72	R 16,09	3%	41%
Roll-on deodorant	x4	R68,10	R76,65	R77,45	R 0,80	R 9,35	1%	14%
Spray-on deodorant	big spray x3	R82,33	R93,74	R92,66	-R 1,08	R 10,33	-1%	13%
Sanitary pads	2 big packs	R68,34	R71,92	R71,27	-R 0,66	R 2,93	-1%	4%
Shoe Polish	100ml	R29,19	R29,76	R32,71	R 2,95	R 3,52	10%	12%
<b>Total household domestic and hygiene products</b>		<b>R 759,40</b>	<b>R 926,51</b>	<b>R 921,80</b>	<b>-R 4,71</b>	<b>R 162,40</b>	<b>-0,5%</b>	<b>21,4%</b>

**Month-on-month:** The cost of the **household domestic and personal hygiene products basket decreased** by **R4,71 (-0,5%)** from R926,51 in February 2023 to R921,80 in March 2023.

**Year-on-year:** The cost of the **household domestic and personal hygiene products basket increased** by **R162,40 (21,4%)** from R759,40 in March 2022 to R921,80 in March 2023.

Domestic and personal hygiene products are critical expenses for safe hygiene and overall health and well being. The money needed to secure domestic and personal hygiene products are sourced from within the food budget. These products compete viciously in the food budget.

## 6. MARCH 2023 Basic Nutritional Food Index: families

By number of family members	Index 2022/23			change in Rands		change in %	
	Mar_2022	Feb_2023	Mar_2023	Feb 2023 vs. Mar 2023	Mar 2022 vs. Mar 2023	Feb 2023 vs. Mar 2023	Mar 2022 vs. Mar 2023
Four (4)	R3 092,25	R3 388,00	R3 430,75	R 42,75	R 338,50	1,3%	10,9%
Five (5)	R3 906,43	R4 283,87	R4 336,85	R 52,98	R 430,42	1,2%	11,0%
Seven (7)	R5 400,95	R5 922,97	R5 996,70	R 73,73	R 595,75	1,2%	11,0%

**Month-on-month:** The cost of a **basic nutritional food basket for a family of 7 members increased** by **R73,73 (1,2%)** from R5 922,97 in February 2023 to R5 996,70 in March 2023.

**Year-on-year:** The cost of a **basic nutritional food basket for a family of 7 members increased** by **R595,75 (11,0%)** from R5 400,95 in March 2022 to R5 996,70 in March 2023.

In **March 2023** the difference in cost between the foods which families living on low incomes try and buy each month (the household food basket) and the foods which families would like to buy and should buy to meet basic nutrition (a basic nutritional food basket) was **R1 030,50 (R4 966,20 vs. R5 996,70)**.

It means that in **March 2023**, families with seven members underspent on basic nutritional food by a **minimum of 17% (R1 030,50)**.

## 7. MARCH 2022 Basic Nutritional Food Index: children

By age of child	Index 2022/23			change in Rands		change in %	
	Mar_2022	Feb_2023	Mar_2023	Feb 2023 vs. Mar 2023	Mar 2022 vs. Mar 2023	Feb 2023 vs. Mar 2023	Mar 2022 vs. Mar 2023
Small child aged 3-9 years	R 694,77	R759,39	R769,98	R 10,59	R 75,21	1,4%	10,8%
Small child aged 10-13 years	R 754,48	R827,63	R838,04	R 10,41	R 83,56	1,3%	11,1%
Girl child aged 14-18 years	R 799,75	R879,71	R889,88	R 10,17	R 90,13	1,2%	11,3%
Boy child aged 14-18 years	R 902,96	R989,50	R1 000,92	R 11,42	R 97,96	1,2%	10,8%
<b>Average for all children</b>	<b>R787,99</b>	<b>R864,06</b>	<b>R874,71</b>	<b>R 10,65</b>	<b>R 86,72</b>	<b>1,2%</b>	<b>11,0%</b>

**Month-on-month:** The **average cost to feed a child a basic nutritious diet increased** by **R10,65 (1,2%)** from R864,06 in February 2023 to R874,71 in March 2023.

**Year-on-year:** The **average cost to feed a child a basic nutritious diet increased** by **R86,72 (11,0%)** from R787,99 in March 2022 to R874,71 in March 2023.

As children grow older, their nutritional requirements increase. It means that the cost of feeding a child increases in price as a child grows older and is also different for teenage girls and boys. The Child Support Grant is a fixed amount: it does not account for age.

The Child Support Grant is **R480**. (The increase for the 2022/23 term was **R20**, and came into effect in April 2022).

The food poverty line calculated by Statistics South Africa is **R663** per capita per month (latest April 2022).

In **March 2023** the average cost to feed a child a basic nutritious diet per month cost **R874,71**.

The Child Support Grant of **R480** is set below the food poverty line of **R663**, and further below the average cost of **R874,71** to secure a basic nutritious diet for a child in **March 2023**.

In **March 2023**, the Child Support Grant is **28% below** the food poverty line and **45% below** the average cost to secure a basic nutritious diet for a child.

### About the Basic Nutritional Food Index

**Households living on low incomes change their purchasing patterns in response to changes in affordability conditions.** On low incomes, women buy the core staple foods first so that their families do not go hungry and for basic meals to be prepared. Where the money remaining is short, women have no choice but to drop foods from their trolleys or reduce the volumes of nutritionally rich foods in their trolleys. This has negative consequences for health, well-being, and nutrition. As financial and economic circumstances worsen, so too does household health and nutrition. The gap between what women are able to buy and what they need to buy for proper nutrition widens. The Basic Nutritional Food Basket is an attempt to track the cost of foods required for balanced nutrition, viz. the foods and the cost of these foods for families to ensure their health and nutrition and for children to grow and develop properly. The basket was designed in consultation with a Registered Dietician Philippa Barnard.

The Basic Nutritional Food Basket is an index on which we can start talking realistically about the cost of nutritious food, and the inadequacies of low wages and social grants. Importantly it ensures that current food expenditure (severely limited by affordability constraints) are not conflated with the food expenditure required to secure proper nutrition.



## 8. MARCH 2023 National Minimum Wage Scenarios

**Number of working days in March 2023 = 22 days**

Affordability, in its simplest form, is relative to income levels and the cost of goods and services (expenses). Workers work to support their families. Workers, reasonably expect to cover the costs of goods and services needed for dignity and household functionality off their wages. In most Black South African households, only one family member works. This one wage must support, a reductive average of **4,1 persons in March 2023**.

The Minister of Employment and Labour gazetted a **9,6%** annual increase on the National Minimum Wage, which took effect on the 1st of March 2023. For a worker, the 9,6% increment works out to be an extra R2,23 an hour, R17,84 for an 8-hour day, and if the full working-day month is worked (average 22 days), a R392,48 monthly increase. **The NMW increased by R2,23 from R23,19 per hour to R25,42 per hour.**

**The National Minimum Wage is R25,42 per hour, with effect from 1 March 2023.**

The tables over the page provide income scenarios for households with workers remunerated at the National Minimum Wage level, as well as for different number of days and hours worked. Households do not prioritise paying for food first out of the wage. Instead households paid low incomes are forced to secure non-negotiable expenses like transport and electricity before food. Other important expenses like debt servicing, scholar transport, education and burial insurances, including household domestic and personal hygiene products also compete viciously in the purse.

A reasonable indicator of whether the NMW is improving the lives of workers is whether workers earning the NMW are able to secure the basic household expenses needed to live at a basic level of dignity and household functionality.

In the scenarios we pull out just 3 core worker expenses: transport to get to work and back; prepaid electricity and the cost of a basic basket of nutritional food for a family of 4 persons. We take the NMW in its various scenarios and subtract the cost of transport and electricity. We then look at the money remaining to buy food.

*The last row in the tables highlights the minimum surplus/shortfall on food costs. If the NMW value is set at a reasonable level than we should see a surplus on the food costs, because households have a myriad of other expenses which also need to be secured. If however we see a shortfall on just the food costs, then we must conclude that the level at which the NMW has been set is inadequate because this scenario means that a worker cannot secure even the basic cost of food let alone the other essential goods and services families require.*

A note on the data in the scenarios: The NMW and social grant data is national data. The food data is based on the average cost of the PMBEJD Basic Nutritional Food Basket for a family of 4 persons for Joburg, Durban, Cape Town, Springbok and Pietermaritzburg. We use Pietermaritzburg-based costs as a proxy for the transport and electricity figures. **In July 2022, the electricity tariffs in Msunduzi Municipality increased by 7,47%, with prepaid electricity costing R2,25/kWh (incl. VAT) for the 2022/23 period (up from R2,09/kWh from 2021/2022). The new taxi fare increases for Pietermaritzburg came into effect on the 1st of August 2022. Local fares went up by R2, from R16 to R18 (an increase of 12,5%).**

*The data in the tables are relevant as at March 2023.*

The tables below calculates transport to work on 2 taxi fare, return (R18x4 = R72), multiplied by number of working days. The electricity charge is based on Msunduzi Municipality's prepaid tariffs (R2,25 per kWh = R787,50 for 350kWh). The table below provides scenarios for the NMW for General Workers at R25,42 an hour. The scenario provides for the maximum NMW for the maximum number of working days and hours; and for a 15 day working month and full 8-hours; and for a 15 day working month for 5 hours.

**General Workers: at NMW** **R25,42 an hour**

Income	Wage scenario 1	Wage scenario 2	Wage scenario 3
Number of days worked	22	15	15
Number of hours worked	8	8	5
Remuneration rate	R25,42	R25,42	R25,42
Wage income	<b>R4 473,92</b>	<b>R3 050,40</b>	<b>R1 906,50</b>

	Wage scenario 1	Wage scenario 2	Wage scenario 3
<b>Wage income</b>	<b>R4 473,92</b>	<b>R3 050,40</b>	<b>R1 906,50</b>
<b>Household expenses</b>			
	<b>% of wage</b>	<b>% of wage</b>	<b>% of wage</b>
Transport to work (2 taxi, return)	R1 584,00 35,4%	R1 080,00 35,4%	R1 080,00 56,6%
Prepaid electricity (350kWh)	R787,50 17,6%	R787,50 25,8%	R787,50 41,3%
Total for transport + electricity	<b>R2 371,50 53,0%</b>	<b>R1 867,50 61,2%</b>	<b>R1 867,50 98,0%</b>
Money remaining to secure all other expenses	<b>R2 102,42</b>	<b>R1 182,90</b>	<b>R39,00</b>
Subtract: food (4 persons)	R3 430,75	R3 430,75	R3 430,75
<b>Minimum surplus/shortfall on food costs</b>	<b>-R1 328,33 -38,7%</b>	<b>-R2 247,85 -65,5%</b>	<b>-R3 391,75 -98,9%</b>

All the scenarios above show that workers paid at the level of the NMW cannot meet even the 3 core household expenses on the NMW. This provides a stark indication of the deficiencies in low baseline wages. The NMW set at such a low level does not allow workers and their families the possibility to secure even their most basic expenses. Instead it appears from the data above that the NMW has worked to lock workers and their families into even deeper levels of poverty. Workers will have to cut back further on food and go into deeper levels of debt to cover wage shortfalls.

*The National Minimum Wage is a poverty wage - it hurts workers, it reduces productivity in the workplace, and slows down economic growth.* The maximum wage of **R4 473,92 in March 2023** when disbursed in a family of **4 persons is R1 118,48**. This is below the **upper-bound poverty line of R1 417** per capita per month. Set at such a low level, the NMW works to institutionalise the low-baseline wage regime and lock millions of workers into poverty. Small annual increments off such a low base, and which do not reflect inflation levels as experienced by workers (including not projecting inflation forward for workers in the entire 2023/24 term), means that workers on the NMW are getting poorer and poorer each year. **The minimum shortfall on food for a family is 38,7% in March 2023.** After securing transport and electricity workers are left with R2 102,42. **If all of this money went to food, then for a family of 4, it would provide R525,60 per person per month. The Food Poverty Line is R663.**

## 9. MARCH 2023 Household Food Basket: Per area, compared.

Foods tracked	Quantity tracked	Joburg	Durban	Cape Town	Springbok	Maritzburg	Average
Maize meal	30kg	R282,57	R288,79	R330,24	R377,97	R304,77	R307,32
Rice	10kg	R132,99	R122,08	R139,16	R149,66	R110,59	R130,42
Cake Flour	10kg	R122,08	R119,24	R124,99	R119,99	R124,39	R122,22
White sugar	10kg	R178,16	R171,41	R179,74	R196,66	R174,99	R177,65
Sugar beans	5kg	R164,30	R163,84	R204,02	R174,90	R145,19	R170,56
Samp	5kg	R70,85	R59,49	R66,65	R75,31	R47,59	R64,09
Cooking oil	5L	R174,07	R162,49	R182,71	R199,98	R170,99	R174,68
Salt	1kg	R15,57	R14,16	R9,57	R20,32	R18,39	R14,20
Potatoes	10kg	R89,82	R102,46	R98,32	R99,03	R96,56	R97,12
Onions	10kg	R116,23	R126,17	R112,22	R152,34	R115,70	R120,74
Frozen chicken portions	10kg	R378,27	R394,12	R386,10	R453,30	R430,94	R397,24
Curry powder	200g	R33,78	R28,57	R34,94	R40,32	R31,19	R32,78
Stock cubes	24 cubes x2	R42,47	R45,81	R44,48	R45,31	R43,98	R44,29
Soup	400g x2	R44,23	R38,48	R51,41	R41,98	R29,98	R41,75
Tea	250g	R29,72	R25,91	R24,49	R28,32	R21,39	R26,13
Full cream milk	6L	R91,36	R89,74	R81,39	R90,66	R99,59	R89,09
Maas	4L	R54,07	R51,74	R56,40	R62,32	R53,99	R54,62
Eggs	60 eggs	R117,58	R122,16	R129,25	R120,98	R115,18	R122,03
Chicken feet	2kg	R99,49	R79,96	R45,41	R99,98	R91,94	R79,30
Gizzards	2kg	R95,39	R83,93	R75,98	R99,98	R97,94	R87,21
Chicken livers	2kg	R72,84	R61,93	R56,84	R139,94	R74,59	R70,96
Beef liver	2kg	R108,98	R98,19	R91,98	R107,98	R103,94	R101,14
Beef	2kg	R190,49	R169,94	R163,98	R198,98	R192,94	R178,83
Wors	2kg	R163,48	R132,19	R103,73	R144,98	R167,44	R138,50
Inyama yangaphakathi	2kg	R91,73	R97,19	R88,38	R89,98	R87,44	R92,04
Fish	2kg	R89,32	R109,93	R119,98	R168,99	R122,94	R112,06
Tomatoes	6kg	R117,45	R138,94	R132,84	R151,94	R107,48	R129,03
Carrots	5kg	R47,58	R41,38	R42,14	R59,96	R46,97	R45,20
Butternut	10kg	R90,17	R81,93	R84,62	R104,39	R81,12	R86,36
Spinach	8 bunches	R111,93	R107,50	R103,19	R93,25	R127,92	R105,74
Cabbage	2 heads	R35,98	R40,49	R51,98	R47,31	R35,18	R41,68
Green pepper	2kg	R58,71	R45,18	R58,78	R71,31	R51,98	R55,09
Cremora	800g	R42,24	R42,70	R40,88	R41,32	R41,99	R41,90
Tinned pilchards	400g x6	R144,44	R143,45	R135,94	R137,94	R133,14	R140,12
Canned beans	410g x6	R83,70	R79,45	R72,28	R91,94	R83,94	R80,01
Bananas	4kg	R77,96	R68,13	R65,41	R77,96	R47,16	R67,71
Apples	3kg	R46,53	R44,57	R47,68	R53,98	R37,19	R45,64
Orange	7kg	R76,96	R104,95	R91,74	R64,11	R31,00	R83,14
Margarine	1kg	R42,78	R38,41	R36,32	R39,32	R47,39	R40,11
Peanut butter	400g x2	R71,05	R63,98	R64,32	R69,98	R63,58	R66,26
Polony	2.5kg	R71,74	R60,56	R58,39	R59,99	R71,99	R65,24
Apricot jam	900g	R33,90	R32,16	R31,16	R32,32	R30,79	R32,22
White bread	25 loaves	R425,81	R409,19	R424,60	R374,75	R414,75	R416,21
Brown bread	25 loaves	R391,44	R368,56	R383,13	R358,08	R364,25	R377,57
<b>Total household food basket</b>		<b>R 5 020,21</b>	<b>R 4 871,40</b>	<b>R 4 927,77</b>	<b>R 5 430,03</b>	<b>R 4 892,35</b>	<b>R 4 966,20</b>

The average cost (weighted) of the total household food basket in March 2023 is R4 966,20.

## 10. MARCH 2023 Household Food Index: Johannesburg

Foods tracked	Quantity tracked	Index 2022/23			change in Rands		change in %	
		Mar_2022	Feb_2023	Mar_2023	Feb 2023 vs. Mar 2023	Mar 2022 vs. Mar 2023	Feb 2023 vs. Mar 2023	Mar 2022 vs. Mar 2023
Maize meal	30kg	R246,72	R294,87	R282,57	-R 12,30	R 35,85	-4%	15%
Rice	10kg	R145,65	R142,07	R132,99	-R 9,08	-R 12,66	-6%	-9%
Cake Flour	10kg	R109,15	R120,91	R122,08	R 1,17	R 12,93	1%	12%
White sugar	10kg	R166,82	R174,19	R178,16	R 3,97	R 11,33	2%	7%
Sugar beans	5kg	R167,23	R168,53	R164,30	-R 4,22	-R 2,93	-3%	-2%
Samp	5kg	R59,31	R74,12	R70,85	-R 3,28	R 11,54	-4%	19%
Cooking oil	5L	R146,11	R175,91	R174,07	-R 1,83	R 27,96	-1%	19%
Salt	1kg	R14,99	R15,44	R15,57	R 0,13	R 0,58	1%	4%
Potatoes	10kg	R67,52	R82,97	R89,82	R 6,85	R 22,31	8%	33%
Onions	10kg	R67,47	R93,85	R116,23	R 22,39	R 48,77	24%	72%
Frozen chicken portions	10kg	R340,99	R373,48	R378,27	R 4,79	R 37,28	1%	11%
Curry powder	200g	R30,66	R31,37	R33,78	R 2,42	R 3,13	8%	10%
Stock cubes	24 cubes x2	R36,93	R41,98	R42,47	R 0,48	R 5,53	1%	15%
Soup	400g x2	R41,25	R45,40	R44,23	-R 1,17	R 2,98	-3%	7%
Tea	250g	R24,32	R27,99	R29,72	R 1,73	R 5,39	6%	22%
Full cream milk	6L	R83,03	R93,19	R91,36	-R 1,83	R 8,33	-2%	10%
Maas	4L	R50,40	R51,98	R54,07	R 2,09	R 3,67	4%	7%
Eggs	60 eggs	R106,23	R114,15	R117,58	R 3,43	R 11,35	3%	11%
Chicken feet	2kg	R89,90	R94,23	R99,49	R 5,25	R 9,59	6%	11%
Gizzards	2kg	R85,98	R93,71	R95,39	R 1,68	R 9,40	2%	11%
Chicken livers	2kg	R64,71	R70,23	R72,84	R 2,61	R 8,13	4%	13%
Beef liver	2kg	R102,40	R108,23	R108,98	R 0,75	R 6,58	1%	6%
Beef	2kg	R178,23	R188,48	R190,49	R 2,00	R 12,25	1%	7%
Wors	2kg	R123,24	R158,48	R163,48	R 5,00	R 40,25	3%	33%
Inyama yangaphakathi	2kg	R88,48	R90,98	R91,73	R 0,75	R 3,25	1%	4%
Fish	2kg	R81,98	R98,98	R89,32	-R 9,66	R 7,33	-10%	9%
Tomatoes	6kg	R121,16	R101,87	R117,45	R 15,58	-R 3,71	15%	-3%
Carrots	5kg	R38,79	R37,91	R47,58	R 9,67	R 8,80	26%	23%
Butternut	10kg	R93,09	R88,20	R90,17	R 1,96	-R 2,92	2%	-3%
Spinach	8 bunches	R82,33	R118,93	R111,93	-R 7,00	R 29,60	-6%	36%
Cabbage	2 heads	R28,71	R32,07	R35,98	R 3,91	R 7,27	12%	25%
Green pepper	2kg	R38,96	R49,37	R58,71	R 9,34	R 19,75	19%	51%
Cremora	800g	R42,74	R44,15	R42,24	-R 1,91	-R 0,50	-4%	-1%
Tinned pilchards	400g x6	R127,90	R140,90	R144,44	R 3,55	R 16,55	3%	13%
Canned beans	410g x6	R72,15	R81,76	R83,70	R 1,94	R 11,55	2%	16%
Bananas	4kg	R69,00	R82,63	R77,96	-R 4,67	R 8,97	-6%	13%
Apples	3kg	R44,80	R47,78	R46,53	-R 1,25	R 1,73	-3%	4%
Oranges	7kg	R124,39	R76,96	R76,96	R 0,00	-R 47,43	0%	-38%
Margarine	1kg	R42,74	R44,19	R42,78	-R 1,41	R 0,04	-3%	0%
Peanut butter	400g x2	R67,48	R68,15	R71,05	R 2,91	R 3,57	4%	5%
Polony	2.5kg	R67,37	R72,57	R71,74	-R 0,83	R 4,37	-1%	6%
Apricot jam	900g	R30,24	R32,28	R33,90	R 1,62	R 3,66	5%	12%
White bread	25 loaves	R358,88	R403,18	R425,81	R 22,63	R 66,94	6%	19%
Brown bread	25 loaves	R326,82	R374,77	R391,44	R 16,66	R 64,62	4%	20%
<b>Total household food basket</b>		<b>R 4 497,23</b>	<b>R 4 923,41</b>	<b>R 5 020,21</b>	<b>R 96,80</b>	<b>R 522,98</b>	<b>2,0%</b>	<b>11,6%</b>

**Month-on-month:** The cost of the **Joburg household food basket increased** by **R96,80 (2,0%)** from R4 923,41 in February 2023 to R5 020,21 in March 2023.

**Year-on-year:** The cost of the **Joburg household food basket increased** by **R522,98 (11,6%)** from R4 497,23 in March 2022 to R5 020,21 in March 2023.

## 11. MARCH 2023 Household Food Index: Durban

Foods tracked	Quantity tracked	Index 2022/23			change in Rands		change in %	
		Mar_2022	Feb_2023	Mar_2023	Feb 2023 vs. Mar 2023	Mar 2022 vs. Mar 2023	Feb 2023 vs. Mar 2023	Mar 2022 vs. Mar 2023
Maize meal	30kg	R223,97	R283,33	R288,79	R 5,45	R 64,82	2%	29%
Rice	10kg	R125,07	R117,26	R122,08	R 4,82	-R 2,99	4%	-2%
Cake Flour	10kg	R98,57	R119,09	R119,24	R 0,15	R 20,67	0%	21%
White sugar	10kg	R156,57	R176,90	R171,41	-R 5,49	R 14,83	-3%	9%
Sugar beans	5kg	R164,59	R152,92	R163,84	R 10,92	-R 0,75	7%	0%
Samp	5kg	R48,07	R62,44	R59,49	-R 2,95	R 11,42	-5%	24%
Cooking oil	5L	R150,24	R168,99	R162,49	-R 6,50	R 12,25	-4%	8%
Salt	1kg	R13,82	R14,08	R14,16	R 0,08	R 0,33	1%	2%
Potatoes	10kg	R72,71	R96,14	R102,46	R 6,32	R 29,75	7%	41%
Onions	10kg	R83,20	R141,02	R126,17	-R 14,85	R 42,98	-11%	52%
Frozen chicken portions	10kg	R357,83	R392,68	R394,12	R 1,44	R 36,29	0%	10%
Curry powder	200g	R27,74	R30,17	R28,57	-R 1,60	R 0,83	-5%	3%
Stock cubes	24 cubes x2	R37,31	R50,35	R45,81	-R 4,53	R 8,50	-9%	23%
Soup	400g x2	R39,15	R38,98	R38,48	-R 0,50	-R 0,67	-1%	-2%
Tea	250g	R23,72	R25,90	R25,91	R 0,01	R 2,19	0%	9%
Full cream milk	6L	R81,66	R86,26	R89,74	R 3,48	R 8,08	4%	10%
Maas	4L	R45,24	R50,99	R51,74	R 0,75	R 6,50	1%	14%
Eggs	60 eggs	R114,15	R120,16	R122,16	R 2,00	R 8,01	2%	7%
Chicken feet	2kg	R78,44	R86,69	R79,96	-R 6,73	R 1,52	-8%	2%
Gizzards	2kg	R81,69	R91,10	R83,93	-R 7,17	R 2,24	-8%	3%
Chicken livers	2kg	R68,79	R73,91	R61,93	-R 11,98	-R 6,86	-16%	-10%
Beef liver	2kg	R99,19	R99,36	R98,19	-R 1,17	-R 1,00	-1%	-1%
Beef	2kg	R182,44	R181,94	R169,94	-R 12,00	-R 12,50	-7%	-7%
Wors	2kg	R131,19	R140,19	R132,19	-R 8,00	R 1,00	-6%	1%
Inyama yangaphakathi	2kg	R79,94	R98,44	R97,19	-R 1,25	R 17,25	-1%	22%
Fish	2kg	R106,19	R117,19	R109,93	-R 7,25	R 3,75	-6%	4%
Tomatoes	6kg	R116,38	R147,66	R138,94	-R 8,72	R 22,56	-6%	19%
Carrots	5kg	R37,15	R45,20	R41,38	-R 3,82	R 4,23	-8%	11%
Butternut	10kg	R88,61	R81,17	R81,93	R 0,76	-R 6,68	1%	-8%
Spinach	8 bunches	R98,24	R140,75	R107,50	-R 33,25	R 9,26	-24%	9%
Cabbage	2 heads	R31,57	R38,17	R40,49	R 2,32	R 8,92	6%	28%
Green pepper	2kg	R42,53	R57,18	R45,18	-R 12,00	R 2,66	-21%	6%
Cremora	800g	R42,07	R42,95	R42,70	-R 0,25	R 0,63	-1%	1%
Tinned pilchards	400g x6	R134,44	R145,04	R143,45	-R 1,59	R 9,01	-1%	7%
Canned beans	410g x6	R69,95	R73,87	R79,45	R 5,58	R 9,50	8%	14%
Bananas	4kg	R67,96	R64,15	R68,13	R 3,98	R 0,17	6%	0%
Apples	3kg	R44,98	R46,62	R44,57	-R 2,05	-R 0,42	-4%	-1%
Oranges	7kg	R145,54	R104,95	R104,95	R 0,00	-R 40,59	0%	-28%
Margarine	1kg	R37,99	R40,90	R38,41	-R 2,49	R 0,42	-6%	1%
Peanut butter	400g x2	R62,48	R67,98	R63,98	-R 4,00	R 1,50	-6%	2%
Polony	2.5kg	R55,12	R65,71	R60,56	-R 5,14	R 5,45	-8%	10%
Apricot jam	900g	R29,74	R35,72	R32,16	-R 3,56	R 2,42	-10%	8%
White bread	25 loaves	R343,56	R399,80	R409,19	R 9,39	R 65,63	2%	19%
Brown bread	25 loaves	R305,02	R354,32	R368,56	R 14,24	R 63,54	4%	21%
<b>Total household food basket</b>		<b>R 4 444,78</b>	<b>R 4 968,59</b>	<b>R 4 871,40</b>	<b>-R 97,19</b>	<b>R 426,62</b>	<b>-2,0%</b>	<b>9,6%</b>

**Month-on-month:** The cost of the **Durban household food basket decreased** by **R97,19 (-2,0%)** from R4 968,59 in February 2023 to R4 871,40 in March 2023.

**Year-on-year:** The cost of the **Durban household food basket increased** by **R426,62 (9,6%)** from R4 444,78 in March 2022 to R4 871,40 in March 2023.

## 12. MARCH 2023 Household Food Index: Cape Town

Foods tracked	Quantity tracked	Index 2022/23			change in Rands		change in %	
		Mar_2022	Feb_2023	Mar_2023	Feb 2023 vs. Mar 2023	Mar 2022 vs. Mar 2023	Feb 2023 vs. Mar 2023	Mar 2022 vs. Mar 2023
Maize meal	30kg	R257,72	R346,97	R330,24	-R 16,73	R 72,52	-5%	28%
Rice	10kg	R137,24	R145,82	R139,16	-R 6,67	R 1,92	-5%	1%
Cake Flour	10kg	R101,82	R127,32	R124,99	-R 2,33	R 23,17	-2%	23%
White sugar	10kg	R172,82	R184,57	R179,74	-R 4,83	R 6,92	-3%	4%
Sugar beans	5kg	R188,01	R203,29	R204,02	R 0,73	R 16,01	0%	9%
Samp	5kg	R50,17	R68,64	R66,65	-R 1,98	R 16,48	-3%	33%
Cooking oil	5L	R155,39	R184,25	R182,71	-R 1,54	R 27,31	-1%	18%
Salt	1kg	R7,64	R10,37	R9,57	-R 0,79	R 1,93	-8%	25%
Potatoes	10kg	R54,33	R91,02	R98,32	R 7,30	R 43,99	8%	81%
Onions	10kg	R64,85	R134,73	R112,22	-R 22,51	R 47,37	-17%	73%
Frozen chicken portions	10kg	R362,55	R382,16	R386,10	R 3,94	R 23,55	1%	6%
Curry powder	200g	R31,44	R36,74	R34,94	-R 1,79	R 3,50	-5%	11%
Stock cubes	24 cubes x2	R38,81	R39,98	R44,48	R 4,50	R 5,67	11%	15%
Soup	400g x2	R43,53	R56,55	R51,41	-R 5,14	R 7,88	-9%	18%
Tea	250g	R25,03	R24,41	R24,49	R 0,08	-R 0,54	0%	-2%
Full cream milk	6L	R70,23	R77,14	R81,39	R 4,25	R 11,17	6%	16%
Maas	4L	R55,26	R54,82	R56,40	R 1,58	R 1,14	3%	2%
Eggs	60 eggs	R120,48	R124,78	R129,25	R 4,47	R 8,77	4%	7%
Chicken feet	2kg	R42,65	R43,69	R45,41	R 1,71	R 2,76	4%	6%
Gizzards	2kg	R66,23	R75,23	R75,98	R 0,75	R 9,75	1%	15%
Chicken livers	2kg	R59,98	R58,48	R56,84	-R 1,64	-R 3,14	-3%	-5%
Beef liver	2kg	R88,54	R88,98	R91,98	R 3,00	R 3,44	3%	4%
Beef	2kg	R149,48	R161,48	R163,98	R 2,50	R 14,50	2%	10%
Wors	2kg	R113,48	R102,98	R103,73	R 0,75	-R 9,75	1%	-9%
Inyama yangaphakathi	2kg	R80,99	R72,38	R88,38	R 16,00	R 7,40	22%	9%
Fish	2kg	R91,98	R98,98	R119,98	R 21,00	R 28,00	21%	30%
Tomatoes	6kg	R109,69	R129,05	R132,84	R 3,79	R 23,16	3%	21%
Carrots	5kg	R25,43	R29,90	R42,14	R 12,24	R 16,71	41%	66%
Butternut	10kg	R71,34	R98,37	R84,62	-R 13,75	R 13,28	-14%	19%
Spinach	8 bunches	R97,71	R103,12	R103,19	R 0,07	R 5,49	0%	6%
Cabbage	2 heads	R45,79	R53,80	R51,98	-R 1,82	R 6,20	-3%	14%
Green pepper	2kg	R42,34	R58,20	R58,78	R 0,58	R 16,44	1%	39%
Cremora	800g	R38,91	R42,41	R40,88	-R 1,53	R 1,97	-4%	5%
Tinned pilchards	400g x6	R113,94	R131,94	R135,94	R 4,00	R 22,00	3%	19%
Canned beans	410g x6	R68,42	R72,30	R72,28	-R 0,02	R 3,86	0%	6%
Bananas	4kg	R63,56	R59,23	R65,41	R 6,18	R 1,85	10%	3%
Apples	3kg	R45,53	R53,98	R47,68	-R 6,30	R 2,16	-12%	5%
Oranges	7kg	R100,18	R91,74	R91,74	R 0,00	-R 8,44	0%	-8%
Margarine	1kg	R36,91	R33,81	R36,32	R 2,51	-R 0,58	7%	-2%
Peanut butter	400g x2	R61,31	R62,31	R64,32	R 2,00	R 3,00	3%	5%
Polony	2.5kg	R55,59	R58,29	R58,39	R 0,10	R 2,80	0%	5%
Apricot jam	900g	R27,82	R34,24	R31,16	-R 3,08	R 3,33	-9%	12%
White bread	25 loaves	R373,77	R442,52	R424,60	-R 17,92	R 50,83	-4%	14%
Brown bread	25 loaves	R345,65	R391,48	R383,13	-R 8,35	R 37,48	-2%	11%
<b>Total household food basket</b>		<b>R 4 354,52</b>	<b>R 4 942,45</b>	<b>R 4 927,77</b>	<b>-R 14,68</b>	<b>R 573,25</b>	<b>-0,3%</b>	<b>13,2%</b>

**Month-on-month:** The cost of the **Cape Town household food basket** *decreased* by **R14,68 (-0,3%)** from R4 942,45 in February 2023 to R4 927,77 in March 2023.

**Year-on-year:** The cost of the **Cape Town household food basket** *increased* by **R573,25 (13,2%)** from R4 354,52 in March 2022 to R4 927,77 in March 2023.



### 13. MARCH 2023 Household Food Index: Springbok

Foods tracked	Quantity tracked	Index 2022/23			change in Rands		change in %	
		Mar_2022	Feb_2023	Mar_2023	Feb 2023 vs. Mar 2023	Mar 2022 vs. Mar 2023	Feb 2023 vs. Mar 2023	Mar 2022 vs. Mar 2023
Maize meal	30kg	R244,97	R310,97	R377,97	R 67,00	R 133,00	22%	54%
Rice	10kg	R159,99	R152,99	R149,66	-R 3,33	-R 10,33	-2%	-6%
Cake Flour	10kg	R100,99	R119,99	R119,99	R 0,00	R 19,00	0%	19%
White sugar	10kg	R189,99	R200,66	R196,66	-R 4,00	R 6,67	-2%	4%
Sugar beans	5kg	R219,90	R204,90	R174,90	-R 30,00	-R 45,00	-15%	-20%
Samp	5kg	R58,64	R68,97	R75,31	R 6,34	R 16,67	9%	28%
Cooking oil	5L	R148,64	R210,40	R199,98	-R 10,42	R 51,34	-5%	35%
Salt	1kg	R17,99	R19,99	R20,32	R 0,33	R 2,33	2%	13%
Potatoes	10kg	R60,93	R99,03	R99,03	R 0,00	R 38,09	0%	63%
Onions	10kg	R92,67	R134,26	R152,34	R 18,08	R 59,67	13%	64%
Frozen chicken portions	10kg	R408,72	R443,30	R453,30	R 10,00	R 44,58	2%	11%
Curry powder	200g	R31,99	R40,98	R40,32	-R 0,66	R 8,33	-2%	26%
Stock cubes	24 cubes x2	R34,65	R40,65	R45,31	R 4,67	R 10,67	11%	31%
Soup	400g x2	R39,98	R39,98	R41,98	R 2,00	R 2,00	5%	5%
Tea	250g	R28,66	R23,99	R28,32	R 4,33	-R 0,33	18%	-1%
Full cream milk	6L	R69,99	R83,32	R90,66	R 7,33	R 20,67	9%	30%
Maas	4L	R52,65	R58,32	R62,32	R 4,00	R 9,66	7%	18%
Eggs	60 eggs	R135,31	R115,98	R120,98	R 5,00	-R 14,33	4%	-11%
Chicken feet	2kg	R33,98	R91,98	R99,98	R 8,00	R 66,00	9%	194%
Gizzards	2kg	R73,98	R79,98	R99,98	R 20,00	R 26,00	25%	35%
Chicken livers	2kg	R100,98	R123,94	R139,94	R 16,00	R 38,96	13%	39%
Beef liver	2kg	R103,98	R112,98	R107,98	-R 5,00	R 4,00	-4%	4%
Beef	2kg	R164,98	R179,98	R198,98	R 19,00	R 34,00	11%	21%
Wors	2kg	R128,98	R149,98	R144,98	-R 5,00	R 16,00	-3%	12%
Inyama yangaphakathi	2kg	R109,98	R87,98	R89,98	R 2,00	-R 20,00	2%	-18%
Fish	2kg	R160,98	R159,98	R168,99	R 9,01	R 8,01	6%	5%
Tomatoes	6kg	R137,94	R109,94	R151,94	R 42,00	R 14,00	38%	10%
Carrots	5kg	R54,96	R51,63	R59,96	R 8,33	R 5,01	16%	9%
Butternut	10kg	R92,67	R106,33	R104,39	-R 1,94	R 11,72	-2%	13%
Spinach	8 bunches	R93,25	R74,59	R93,25	R 18,67	R 0,00	25%	0%
Cabbage	2 heads	R31,98	R41,98	R47,31	R 5,33	R 15,33	13%	48%
Green pepper	2kg	R67,31	R69,98	R71,31	R 1,33	R 4,01	2%	6%
Cremora	800g	R35,32	R41,32	R41,32	R 0,00	R 6,00	0%	17%
Tinned pilchards	400g x6	R111,94	R119,94	R137,94	R 18,00	R 26,00	15%	23%
Canned beans	410g x6	R73,94	R91,94	R91,94	R 0,00	R 18,00	0%	24%
Bananas	4kg	R65,29	R70,61	R77,96	R 7,35	R 12,67	10%	19%
Apples	3kg	R51,32	R33,99	R53,98	R 19,99	R 2,66	59%	5%
Oranges	7kg	R111,93	R64,11	R64,11	R 0,00	-R 47,82	0%	-43%
Margarine	1kg	R30,99	R33,66	R39,32	R 5,67	R 8,33	17%	27%
Peanut butter	400g x2	R57,31	R59,98	R69,98	R 10,00	R 12,67	17%	22%
Polony	2.5kg	R53,99	R54,99	R59,99	R 5,00	R 6,00	9%	11%
Apricot jam	900g	R27,99	R33,99	R32,32	-R 1,67	R 4,33	-5%	15%
White bread	25 loaves	R337,25	R328,92	R374,75	R 45,83	R 37,50	14%	11%
Brown bread	25 loaves	R324,75	R312,25	R358,08	R 45,83	R 33,33	15%	10%
<b>Total household food basket</b>		<b>R 4 734,63</b>	<b>R5 055,61</b>	<b>R5 430,03</b>	<b>R 374,42</b>	<b>R 695,39</b>	<b>7,4%</b>	<b>14,7%</b>

**Month-on-month:** The cost of the **Springbok household food basket increased** by **R374,42 (7,4%)** from R5 055,61 in February 2023 to R5 430,03 in March 2023.

**Year-on-year:** The cost of the **Springbok household food basket increased** by **R695,39 (14,7%)** from R4 734,63 in March 2022 to R5 430,03 in March 2023.

## 14. MARCH 2023 Household Food Index: Pietermaritzburg

Foods tracked	Quantity tracked	Index 2022/23			change in Rands		change in %	
		Mar_2022	Feb_2023	Mar_2023	Feb 2023 vs. Mar 2023	Mar 2022 vs. Mar 2023	Feb 2023 vs. Mar 2023	Mar 2022 vs. Mar 2023
Maize meal	30kg	R253,77	R310,77	R304,77	-R 6,00	R 51,00	-2%	20%
Rice	10kg	R103,39	R112,19	R110,59	-R 1,60	R 7,20	-1%	7%
Cake Flour	10kg	R91,59	R122,39	R124,39	R 2,00	R 32,80	2%	36%
White sugar	10kg	R160,39	R172,99	R174,99	R 2,00	R 14,60	1%	9%
Sugar beans	5kg	R160,99	R149,19	R145,19	-R 4,00	-R 15,80	-3%	-10%
Samp	5kg	R38,74	R48,99	R47,59	-R 1,40	R 8,85	-3%	23%
Cooking oil	5L	R153,79	R175,99	R170,99	-R 5,00	R 17,20	-3%	11%
Salt	1kg	R16,39	R18,79	R18,39	-R 0,40	R 2,00	-2%	12%
Potatoes	10kg	R56,04	R80,67	R96,56	R 15,88	R 40,52	20%	72%
Onions	10kg	R60,84	R124,27	R115,70	-R 8,57	R 54,85	-7%	90%
Frozen chicken portions	10kg	R400,18	R411,79	R430,94	R 19,15	R 30,76	5%	8%
Curry powder	200g	R28,39	R30,19	R31,19	R 1,00	R 2,80	3%	10%
Stock cubes	24 cubes x2	R36,38	R43,58	R43,98	R 0,40	R 7,60	1%	21%
Soup	400g x2	R27,58	R29,58	R29,98	R 0,40	R 2,40	1%	9%
Tea	250g	R22,59	R21,39	R21,39	R 0,00	-R 1,20	0%	-5%
Full cream milk	6L	R92,39	R91,99	R99,59	R 7,60	R 7,20	8%	8%
Maas	4L	R45,99	R51,74	R53,99	R 2,25	R 8,00	4%	17%
Eggs	60 eggs	R106,38	R114,38	R115,18	R 0,80	R 8,80	1%	8%
Chicken feet	2kg	R74,89	R88,44	R91,94	R 3,50	R 17,05	4%	23%
Gizzards	2kg	R87,44	R94,48	R97,94	R 3,46	R 10,50	4%	12%
Chicken livers	2kg	R67,39	R68,94	R74,59	R 5,65	R 7,20	8%	11%
Beef liver	2kg	R94,44	R96,94	R103,94	R 7,00	R 9,50	7%	10%
Beef	2kg	R182,94	R183,98	R192,94	R 8,96	R 10,00	5%	5%
Wors	2kg	R149,92	R138,65	R167,44	R 28,79	R 17,52	21%	12%
Inyama yangaphakathi	2kg	R87,31	R100,98	R87,44	-R 13,55	R 0,12	-13%	0%
Fish	2kg	R118,94	R116,44	R122,94	R 6,50	R 4,00	6%	3%
Tomatoes	6kg	R79,99	R107,57	R107,48	-R 0,09	R 27,50	0%	34%
Carrots	5kg	R22,97	R21,59	R46,97	R 25,38	R 24,00	118%	105%
Butternut	10kg	R67,98	R58,84	R81,12	R 22,29	R 13,14	38%	19%
Spinach	8 bunches	R49,94	R127,92	R127,92	R 0,00	R 77,98	0%	156%
Cabbage	2 heads	R29,98	R32,98	R35,18	R 2,20	R 5,20	7%	17%
Green pepper	2kg	R33,98	R57,98	R51,98	-R 6,00	R 18,00	-10%	53%
Cremora	800g	R42,39	R42,99	R41,99	-R 1,00	-R 0,40	-2%	-1%
Tinned pilchards	400g x6	R128,34	R129,54	R133,14	R 3,60	R 4,80	3%	4%
Canned beans	410g x6	R79,14	R82,74	R83,94	R 1,20	R 4,80	1%	6%
Bananas	4kg	R39,16	R44,96	R47,16	R 2,20	R 8,00	5%	20%
Apples	3kg	R37,49	R37,39	R37,19	-R 0,20	-R 0,30	-1%	-1%
Oranges	7kg	R64,46	R31,00	R31,00	R 0,00	-R 33,46	0%	-52%
Margarine	1kg	R42,99	R46,79	R47,39	R 0,60	R 4,40	1%	10%
Peanut butter	400g x2	R63,98	R63,58	R63,58	R 0,00	-R 0,40	0%	-1%
Polony	2.5kg	R64,79	R66,59	R71,99	R 5,40	R 7,20	8%	11%
Apricot jam	900g	R29,99	R27,39	R30,79	R 3,40	R 0,80	12%	3%
White bread	25 loaves	R339,19	R407,35	R414,75	R 7,40	R 75,56	2%	22%
Brown bread	25 loaves	R301,69	R364,85	R364,25	-R 0,60	R 62,56	0%	21%
<b>Total household food basket</b>		<b>R 4 237,51</b>	<b>R 4 751,76</b>	<b>R 4 892,35</b>	<b>R 140,59</b>	<b>R 654,84</b>	<b>3,0%</b>	<b>15,5%</b>

**Month-on-month:** The cost of the Pietermaritzburg household food basket *increased* by **R140,59 (3,0%)** from R4 751,76 in February 2023 to R4 892,35 in March 2023.

**Year-on-year:** The cost of the Pietermaritzburg household food basket *increased* by **R654,84 (15,5%)** from R4 237,51 in March 2022 to R4 892,35 in March 2023.



## 15. Food Price Methodology

In 2019 we began a process of thinking through how to expand the scope of the Pietermaritzburg-based Household Affordability Index. The reason to expand the scope of the Pietermaritzburg data was to seek greater empirical evidence of the national picture of household affordability constraints and how families, living on low incomes, were responding to a deepening financial and economic crisis, given rising expenditure costs, job losses, stagnant employment, a deepening food crisis, deepening poverty and entrenched inequality.

The Pietermaritzburg Household Affordability Index is a realistic and accurate tool to measure inflation on basic expenditure items for households living on low incomes, whilst able to provide a picture of how families living on low incomes are responding to a deepening household affordability crisis. The data that we release monthly is important and provides a reflection of what is playing out in Pietermaritzburg but it is also able to provide a reasonable reflection of what might be playing out nationally. Expanding the scope of our data beyond Pietermaritzburg is an attempt to better track and analyse the national picture of household affordability.

In April 2020, PMBEJD started a process of expanding the scope of food price data collection and having conversations with women in four new areas: Johannesburg, Durban, Cape Town, and Springbok. Women living in low-income households within these areas were approached to work with us, talk with us, think with us, and track food prices and other expenditures in the areas in which they lived. The areas include Soweto, Alexandra, Tembisa and Hillbrow; Gugulethu, Philippi, Khayelitsha, Langa, Delft, Dunoon; KwaMashu, Umlazi, Isipingo, Durban CBD, and Mtubatuba; and Springbok, and includes Pietermaritzburg.

Between April and August 2020 we ran a pilot, based on the Pietermaritzburg methodology, to (1) test which foods constitute the core foods and the volumes of these foods in the trollies of low income households in the new areas; (2) identify, test and verify supermarkets and butcheries which target the low-income market and where women living on low incomes do their shopping; and (3) collect food prices from the supermarkets and butcheries every two weeks (for 5 months), whilst improving the practice of selection of foods for greater accuracy of data (this included buying and cooking selected cheaper food brands to check quality), as well as to continually track and reflect how women themselves make decisions at the supermarket shelves.

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*The pilot was successful.*

The outcomes of which were that the core foods identified by women as constituting those in the area-based household food baskets were very closely reflective of the foods and volumes of foods in the Pietermaritzburg Household Food Basket. Women agreed that the Pietermaritzburg Household Food Basket was a good proxy for the baskets in new areas, but that a few modifications should be made to improve its accuracy of area-based food purchasing dynamics to better reflect the core foods in the basket. In this regard several new foods were added to the new Food Basket, and some foods originally in the Pietermaritzburg Household Food Basket were increased/decreased in volume or dropped from the trolley.

The new Food Basket retains the core of the Pietermaritzburg Household Food Basket with the following modifications: **new foods** added are 6L Full cream milk, 2kg chicken livers, 2kg beef livers, 2kg fish (seasonal), 2kg green pepper and 7kg oranges. **Increased volumes** are 3kg apples (up from 1,5kg), 4 bars of 500g green bar bath soap (up from 2 bars of 500g), and 1,5L of *jik* (up from 750ml). **Reduced volumes** are 30kg maize meal (down from 35kg), 2kg chicken feet (down from 5kg), 1kg margarine (down from 2 x 1kg), and 1 x 900g apricot jam (down from 2 x 900g). **Removed item** is *jeyes fluid*. **The new Food Basket includes 44 foods & the Domestic & Hygiene Products Basket includes 14 products.**

The new basket reflects the most important foods in the trollies of families living on low incomes in the new areas. Because we have universalised the new basket (the basket is the same for all 5 areas: Joburg, Durban, Cape Town, Springbok and Pietermaritzburg), it is important to note that whilst the new basket reflects the core foods in the trollies across the five areas; there will be nuances within households and areas. For example, there will be differences in the volumes of starches (viz. maize meal and rice); types of meats (viz. chicken feet, fish, offal, and red meats); and purchasing of types of fruits and vegetables (seasonality). This is expected. The new basket therefore is a proxy of the foods, the volumes of foods and the cost of foods which form a household basket in each area and averaged for all areas. ***It cannot however be considered the basket for every family living on a low income in each area and***

**for all areas covered. It is however considered a reasonable proxy for a food basket which women identified as including the most important typical foods which most households try and buy each month.**

The supermarkets and butcheries selected by women are those which most households, in the areas in which they live, do their shopping in, and which offer the cheapest/or most affordable prices. These are all supermarkets which target the low-income market. In total, prices are tracked in 44 supermarkets and 30 butcheries.

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The methodology used to collect food prices is unique and has some significant implications: (1) food price inflation is tempered by switching to cheaper brands if monthly prices increase beyond what women consider affordable or reasonable; and (2) [linked to 1] the cost of the household food basket month-to-month is relatively stable, and therefore provides an accurate measure of inflation, whilst also better able to show spikes (because women absorb price shocks by switching to cheaper brands – if there is a spike, then there really is a spike because the shock was not absorbed by switching as most brands of that food would have increased); and (3) the household food basket is accurately able to capture the real costs of food and other basic expenditures for households living on low incomes.

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### **Implications of expanding the scope of the Household Affordability Index**

Expanding the scope of the food price work provides a better lens into the national picture of food price inflation, the cost of a food basket, household affordability, low wages, and low social grants. Conversing with women in Johannesburg, Durban, Cape Town, and Springbok further provides a deeper level of understanding on inflation on different foods, the vagaries of local contexts, the different ways women respond to food price and other expenditure fluctuations and how women cope on low incomes; and what different local situations look like and what women think about what is happening, and what should be done about it. Through dialogue and confirming stories and insights with all women data collectors we are also able to provide a joint narrative of what is happening (what the situation is like), whilst pulling out the nuances. The Household Affordability Index is better able to reflect the national picture of the deepening household affordability crisis.

Whilst we intend to continue broadening the scope of the Household Affordability Index, to include more areas in South Africa as well as including more expense and income data; and therefore improving data capacity to better reflect a wider national picture, whilst continually improving the accuracy of data collected and analysis, we are confident that the data and analysis which we now release to the public from September 2020 is sound, grounded, verifiable and accurate in capturing the real cost of foods as purchased by women living on low incomes, and the decisions taken by women at the supermarket shelves in Johannesburg, Durban, Cape Town, Springbok and Pietermaritzburg.

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### **Summary of the new Household Food Basket**

The Household Food Basket has been designed together with women living on low incomes in Johannesburg (Soweto, Alexandra, Tembisa and Hillbrow), Cape Town (Gugulethu, Philippi, Khayelitsha, Langa, Delft, Dunoon), Durban (KwaMashu, Umlazi, Isipingo, Durban CBD, Hammarsdale, Pinetown, and Mtubatuba), and Springbok (in the Northern Cape), and Pietermaritzburg. It includes the foods and the volumes of these foods which women living in a family of seven members (an average low-income household size) tell us they typically try and secure each month. **The Household Food Basket is not nutritionally complete. It is a basket of food which women try and secure each month for their families given affordability constraints.**

Food prices are tracked directly by women data collectors off the shelves of 44 supermarkets and 30 butcheries that target the low-income market and which women identified as those they shop at. Food selection at the supermarket shelves mirrors how women themselves make decisions at the supermarket shelves given affordability constraints viz. that the foods are chosen on relative affordability and reasonable quality, and food brands are switched to seek out the cheapest prices and special deals. The selection of food brands is dynamic and subjective. Women are smart and savvy, and shop around for bargains: this specific methodology used provides an accurate cost of a monthly household food basket, as purchased by women living on low incomes.

There are 44 foods in the Household Food Basket. The date for data collection is between the 1st and 4th day of each month. Data is collected and released in the same month. Data is presented for each area, and it is also weighted and averaged for all 5 areas. Weighting is as follows: 27% for Joburg, Durban & Cape Town; 12% Pietermaritzburg, and 7% Springbok.

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