

Key data from the November 2023 Household Affordability Index

The November 2023 Household Affordability Index, which tracks food price data from 47 supermarkets and 32 butcheries, in Johannesburg (Soweto, Alexandra, Tembisa and Hillbrow), Durban (KwaMashu, Umlazi, Isipingo, Durban CBD, Hammarsdale and Pinetown), Cape Town (Khayelitsha, Gugulethu, Philippi, Langa, Delft and Dunoon), Pietermaritzburg, Mtubatuba (in Northern KwaZulu-Natal), and Springbok (in the Northern Cape), shows that:

- **In November 2023:** The average cost of the Household Food Basket is **R5 314,63**.
- **Month-on-month:** The average cost of the Household Food Basket **increased** by **R17,05 (0,3%)**, from R5 297,58 in October 2023 to R5 314,63 in November 2023.
- **Year-on-year:** The average cost of the Household Food Basket **increased** by **R478,67 (9,9%)**, from R4 835,96 in November 2022 to R5 314,63 in November 2023.

The following foods increased in price in November 2023.

Foods which increased in price in November 2023, by **5% or more**, include: eggs (18% -60 eggs [2 X 30 egg tray] increased on average by R29,73, to R191,83); chicken livers (5%), tomatoes (20%), apples (10%), oranges (31%).

Foods which increased in price in November 2023, by **2% or more**, include: sugar beans (4%), frozen chicken portions (4%), stock cubes (4%), *amasi* [maas], 2%, chicken feet (3%), beef (2%), cabbage (2%), tinned pilchards (3%), and bananas (2%).

This month we saw big price drops in onions (down -24% or R32,82, with a 10kg bag costing R106,53), and potatoes (down -11% or R15,29, with a 10kg bag costing R130,02).

The price of rice appears to be stabilising on a high base.

We are starting to see some upward movement in Frozen chicken portions in Durban, Cape Town, and Pietermaritzburg.

Statistics South Africa's latest Consumer Price Index.

Statistics South Africa's latest *Consumer Price Index* for October 2023ⁱ shows that **Headline inflation was 5,9%**, and for the **lowest expenditure quintiles 1-3, it is 8,9%, 8,2% and 7,1%** respectively. **CPI Food inflation was 8,8%** (for CPI Food & NAB it was 8,7%, we use the figure excluding non-alcoholic beverages). *STATS SA's Producer Price Index* for September 2023ⁱⁱ shows **agriculture was 7,8%** (October PPI due out on 30 November 2023).

Inflation on the food baskets per area tracked.

In November 2023, food baskets increased in Durban, Springbok, and Pietermaritzburg; and decreased in Joburg, Cape Town, and Mtubatuba.

The Joburg basket **decreased** by R98,60 (-1,8%) month-on-month, and **increased** by R500,62 (10,2%) year-on-year, to **R5 410,49** in November 2023.

The Durban basket **increased** by R92,08 (1,8%) month-on-month, and **increased** by R440,15 (9,1%) year-on-year, to **R5 269,70** in November 2023.

The Cape Town basket **decreased** by R14,27 (-0,3%) month-on-month, and **increased** by R546,06 (11,6%) year-on-year, to **R5 248,39** in November 2023.

The Springbok basket **increased** by R115,93 (2,1%) month-on-month, and **increased** by R482,35 (9,2%) year-on-year, to **R5 751,54** in November 2023.

The Maritzburg basket **increased** by R115,53 (2,3%) month-on-month, and **increased** by R388,45 (8,3%) year-on-year, to **R5 065,33** in November 2023.

The Mtubatuba basket **decreased** by R121,34 (-2,2%) month-on-month, and **increased** by R473,50 (9,7%) year-on-year, to **R5 352,52** in November 2023.

(See pages 10-15 for area specific data, in the November 2023, Household Affordability Index).

Workers

The National Minimum Wage is **R25,42** an hour and **R203.36** for an 8-hour day. In November 2023, with 22-working days, the maximum National Minimum Wage for a General Worker is **R4 473,92**. Workers work to support their families. The wage workers earn is not just to sustain themselves alone, it is used to support the entire family. For Black South African workers, one wage typically must support 3,9 people. **Dispersed in a worker's family of 4 persons, the NMW, is reduced to R1 118,48 per person – this is below the upper-bound poverty line of R1 558 per person per month.**

The November 2023 cost of a basic nutritional food basket for a family of four persons is **R3 713,99** (See page 6 of November 2023, Household Affordability Index).

On our calculations, using Pietermaritzburg-based figures for electricity and transport, and the average figure for a minimum nutritional basket of food for a family of four, puts electricity, and transport, taking up **59,6%** of a worker's wage (R2 666,92/R4 473,92). Food is bought after monies for transport and electricity have been paid for or set aside (leaving only **R1 807,00** – for food and everything else), and so in November 2023, PMBEJD calculates that workers' families will **underspend on food by a minimum of 51,3% (having R1 807,00 left after transport and electricity, and with food costing R3 713,99)**. **In this scenario there is no possibility of a worker being able to afford enough nutritious food for her family. If the entire R1 807,00 all went to buy food, then for a family of 4 persons, we are looking at R451,75 per person per month. This is below the food poverty line of R760** (See page 8 of November 2023, Household Affordability Index).

*This month sees taxi fares having now been increased in all areas tracked, as part of the annual increases. Local fares generally increased by R2-R3, for example from R18 to R20. This annual increase moves the proportion of the NMW spent on transport from **35,4% to 39,3%**. We use Pietermaritzburg transport data, as a proxy for the NMW calculations. In Pietermaritzburg local fares increase by R2, from R18 to R20. Workers typically take 2 taxis return to work and back viz. from township to local CBD hub, and then from the CBD hub to the place of work. This is now R80 a day. On a 22-day month, transport costs **R1760 (taking up 39,3% of the NMW of R4 473,92)**. Apartheid geography, being largely unchanged, means that workers still live far from their places of work, and therefore spend a very large portion of their wages just to get to work and back.*

Women and children

In November 2023, the average cost to feed a child a basic nutritious diet was **R946,98**. Over the past month, the average cost to feed a child a basic nutritious diet **increased** by **R14,25** or **1,5%**. Year-on-year, the average cost to feed a child a basic nutritious diet **increased** by **R108,34** or **12,9%** (See page 6 of November 2023, Household Affordability Index).

In November 2023, the **Child Support Grant** of **R510** is **33%** below the **Food Poverty Line** of **R760**, and **46%** below the average **cost to feed a child a basic nutritious diet (R946,98)**.

Household domestic and personal hygiene products

The November 2023 *Household Domestic & Personal Hygiene Index* shows a **decrease** of **R6,17 (-0,6%)** month-on-month. Year-on-year the household domestic and personal hygiene products index **increased** by **R97,22 (10,9%)** bringing the total average cost of basic household domestic and personal hygiene products to **R992,88 in November 2023** (See page 5 of November 2023, Household Affordability Index).

The cost of basic hygiene products is high. These products compete in the household purse with food. These products are essential for good health and hygiene.

ⁱ STATSSA (2023). **Consumer Price Index October 2023**. Statistical release P0141. 22 November 2023. Statistics South Africa. Pretoria. P4, 7. See Link: <https://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0141/P0141October2023.pdf>

ⁱⁱ STATSSA (2023). **Producer Price Index September 2023**. Statistical release P0142.1. 26 October 2023. Statistics South Africa. Pretoria. P12. See Link: <https://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P01421/P01421September2023.pdf>