

Key data from the October 2024 Household Affordability Index

The October 2024 Household Affordability Index, which tracks the prices of 44 basic foods 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 October 2024:** The average cost of the Household Food Basket is **R5 348,65**.
- **Month-on-month:** The average cost of the Household Food Basket **increased** by **R92,97 (1,8%)**, from R5 255,68 in September 2024 to R5 348,65 in October 2024.
- **Year-on-year:** The average cost of the Household Food Basket **increased** by **R51,07 (1,0%)**, from R5 297,58 in October 2023 to R5 348,65 in October 2024.

Between May 2024 and August 2024, we saw a slight decrease in the overall cost of the basket but in September we again saw an upwards trajectory in the price of the basket, and this has continued in October. This upward trend is taking place as we see petrol and diesel prices decline, stability of electricity supply, interest rates and CPI headline inflation trending downwards. In such a context we would expect that food prices should have continued its lower trajectory and continued on a downward trend.

On page 4 we include a graphic that shows food price movements on the average household food basket over the past 3 years, - for 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024. The graphic, in most cases show how a crisis viz. bird flu (eggs and chicken), the war in the Ukraine (sunflower oil), embargos on rice, amongst others, and just general time-bound and lesser challenges, often once resolved, do not result in food prices stabilizing at levels reasonably close enough to pre-crisis prices. The graphic, providing a picture of how South African foods have increased over the past three years, asks questions of food producers and retailers.

South Africans are net buyers of food and food affordability largely determines household food security. It is therefore incumbent on the food producers and retailers to explain why the prices of certain foods continue to increase, what margins they are working with, and what pressures they encounter. This is necessary to assure consumers that the price they pay reflect true costs of food and that the food and retailer sectors are not unfairly increasing prices, nor holding back or constraining legitimate price drops.

The cost of the core foods still too expensive relative to low wages and social grants.

The core foods, or foods which women tell us they prioritise and buy first, remain expensive. These foods ensure that families do not go hungry whilst also being the primary basis for meals (the starches of maize meal, rice, flour, samp, potatoes, bread), and inputs so that meals can be cooked (e.g. oil), and palatable (e.g. salt, onions, stock cubes, sugar). **These 17 foods cost R2 908,76 in October 2024, and increased by R47,92 (1,7%) over the past month. Of the 17 foods, 14 increased in price over the past month.** In relation to the value of social grants and minimum wages, families struggle even to afford these basic foods, and basic hygiene products. For a healthy populace, it is important that the cost of these foods is affordable, as this may allow women to include more nutritious foods into their family baskets viz. eggs, maas, vegetables and fruits, and meat. (See page 3 of October 2024, Household Affordability Index).

Food pricing trends in October 2024.

In October 33 foods increased in price, and 11 foods decreased in price.

Foods in the basket which increased in price in October 2024 by 5% or more, include: potatoes (19%, or R22,01 on a 10kg pocket), soup (11%), carrots (6%), spinach (9%), *cremora* (6%), bananas (8%), and oranges (23%).

Foods in the basket which increased in price in October 2024 by 2% or more, include: rice (3%), salt (3%), frozen chicken portions (3%), tea (2%), eggs (3%), beef liver (2%), wors (3%), beef tripe (3%), fish (4%), butternut (3%), cabbage (4%), apples (4%), polony (2%), and apricot jam (3%).

Foods in the basket which decreased in price in October 2024, by 5% or more, include: chicken feet (-7%).

Foods in the basket which decreased in price in October 2024, by 2% or more, include: chicken livers (-3%), tomatoes (-3%), green pepper (-2%), peanut butter (-4%), and brown bread (-2%).

See page 2 of October 2024, Household Affordability Index.

Statistics South Africa's latest Consumer Price Index.

Statistics South Africa's latest *Consumer Price Index* for August 2024¹ shows that **Headline inflation was 4,4%**, and for the **lowest expenditure quintiles 1-3 it is 5,7%, 5,2%, and 4,7%** respectively. **CPI Food inflation was 4,1%** (for CPI Food & NAB it was 4,7%, we use the figure excluding non-alcoholic beverages). STATS SA's *Producer Price Index* for August 2024² shows **agriculture was 7,3%**.

Inflation on the food baskets per area tracked.

In October 2024, food baskets increased marginally in Joburg and Durban, and substantially in Cape Town and Springbok. The Maritzburg and Mtubatuba food baskets decreased marginally. (See pages 10-15 for area specific data, in the October 2024, Household Affordability Index).

The Joburg basket **increased** by R4,22 (0,1%) month-on-month, and **decreased** by R22,22 (-0,4%) year-on-year, to **R5 486,87** in October 2024.

The Durban basket **increased** by R30,68 (0,6%) month-on-month, and **increased** by R79,80 (1,5%) year-on-year, to **R5 257,42** in October 2024.

The Cape Town basket **increased** by R249,89 (5,0%) month-on-month, and **increased** by R27,41 (0,5%) year-on-year, to **R5 290,07** in October 2024.

The Springbok basket **increased** by R457,32 (8,3%) month-on-month, and **increased** by R302,40 (5,4%) year-on-year, to **R5 938,01** in October 2024.

The Maritzburg basket **decreased** by R12,58 (-0,3%) month-on-month, and **increased** by R52,85 (1,1%) year-on-year, to **R5 002,65** in October 2024.

The Mtubatuba basket **decreased** by R14,49 (-0,3%) month-on-month, and **decreased** by R86,31 (-1,6%) year-on-year, to **R5 387,56** in October 2024.

Women and children

In October 2024, the average cost to feed a child a basic nutritious diet was **R956,40**. Over the past month, the average cost to feed a child a basic nutritious diet **increased** by **R14,88** or **1,6%**. Year-on-year, the average cost to feed a child a basic nutritious diet **increased** by **R23,67** or **2,5%** (*See page 6 of October 2024, Household Affordability Index*).

In October 2024, the **Child Support Grant** of **R530** is **33%** below the **Food Poverty Line** of **R796**, and **45%** below the average **cost to feed a child a basic nutritious diet (R956,40)**.

¹ STATSSA (2024). **Consumer Price Index August 2024**. Statistical release P0141. 18 September 2024. Statistics South Africa. Pretoria. P4, 7. See Link: <https://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0141/P0141August2024.pdf>. Expected release of September CPI is the 23rd October 2024.

² STATSSA (2024). **Producer Price Index August 2024**. Statistical release P0142.1. 26 September 2024. Statistics South Africa. Pretoria. P12. See Link: <https://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P01421/P01421August2024.pdf>. Expected release of September PPI is the 31st October 2024.

Workers

The National Minimum Wage is **R27,58** an hour and **R220,64** for an 8-hour day. In October 2024, with 23 working days, the maximum National Minimum Wage for a General Worker is **R5 074,72**. 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 4,1 people. Dispersed in a worker's family of 4 persons, the NMW, is R1 268,68 per person – this is below the upper-bound poverty line of R1 634 per person per month.**

The October 2024 average cost of a basic nutritional food basket for a family of four persons is **R3 750,75** (See page 6 of October 2024, 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 **56,8%** of a worker's wage (R2 882,97/R5 074,72). Food is bought after monies for transport and electricity have been paid for or set aside (leaving **R2 191,75** – for food and everything else), and so in October 2024, PMBEJD calculates that workers' families will **underspend on food by a minimum of 41,6% (having R2 191,75 left over after transport and electricity, and with food costing R3 750,75). In this scenario there is no possibility of a worker being able to afford enough nutritious food for her family. If the entire R2 191,75 all went to buy food, then for a family of 4 persons, it would provide R547,94 per person per month. This is below the food poverty line of R796** (See page 8 of October 2024, Household Affordability Index).

Household domestic and personal hygiene products

The October 2024 Household Domestic & Personal Hygiene Index **increased** by **R5,62 (0,6%)** month-on-month. Year-on-year the household domestic and personal hygiene products index **increased** by **R24,76 (2,5%)** bringing the total average cost of basic household domestic and personal hygiene products to **R1 023,81** in October 2024 (See page 5 of October 2024, Household Affordability Index).

The cost of basic hygiene products is high. These products are part of the monthly groceries, and compete in the household purse with food. These products are essential for good health and hygiene; and dignity.

Household Food Index: over the past 3 years, 2 years, and 1 year: all areas.

Foods tracked	Quantity	Index 2021/24				change in Rands				change in %	
		Oct 2021	Oct 2022	Oct 2023	Oct 2024	vs. 2023	vs. 2022	vs. 2021	vs. 2023	vs. 2022	vs. 2021
Maize meal	30kg	R248,55	R287,40	R306,24	R319,66	R 13,42	R 32,26	R 71,11	4%	11%	29%
Rice	10kg	R137,52	R136,50	R166,35	R179,29	R 12,93	R 42,78	R 41,76	8%	31%	30%
Cake Flour	10kg	R94,75	R120,08	R130,81	R127,63	-R 3,18	R 7,54	R 32,87	-2%	6%	35%
White sugar	10kg	R164,62	R171,48	R207,89	R212,88	R 5,00	R 41,41	R 48,27	2%	24%	29%
Sugar beans	5kg	R169,62	R174,36	R180,17	R227,16	R 46,99	R 52,80	R 57,54	26%	30%	34%
Samp	5kg	R49,59	R56,81	R63,85	R66,87	R 3,02	R 10,05	R 17,28	5%	18%	35%
Cooking oil	5L	R132,37	R192,28	R168,53	R153,76	-R 14,77	-R 38,52	R 21,39	-9%	-20%	16%
Salt	1kg	R12,95	R13,27	R15,63	R15,69	R 0,06	R 2,42	R 2,75	0%	18%	21%
Potatoes	10kg	R116,92	R71,96	R145,31	R138,97	-R 6,34	R 67,01	R 22,06	-4%	93%	19%
Onions	10kg	R65,08	R115,52	R139,35	R101,16	-R 38,19	-R 14,36	R 36,08	-27%	-12%	55%
Frozen chicken pieces	10kg	R348,39	R381,17	R384,66	R394,26	R 9,60	R 13,09	R 45,87	2%	3%	13%
Curry powder	200g	R31,47	R29,66	R36,17	R38,29	R 2,12	R 8,63	R 6,83	6%	29%	22%
Stock cubes	48 cubes	R38,82	R41,65	R48,25	R46,11	-R 2,15	R 4,45	R 7,28	-4%	11%	19%
Soup	400g x2	R39,36	R41,60	R46,37	R53,98	R 7,60	R 12,38	R 14,61	16%	30%	37%
Tea	250g	R23,27	R23,96	R29,19	R30,88	R 1,69	R 6,93	R 7,61	6%	29%	33%
Full cream milk	6L	R81,01	R86,15	R96,71	R98,09	R 1,38	R 11,94	R 17,08	1%	14%	21%
Maas	4L	R49,84	R51,74	R58,76	R60,82	R 2,06	R 9,07	R 10,97	4%	18%	22%
Eggs	60 eggs	R115,54	R118,81	R162,10	R169,56	R 7,47	R 50,75	R 54,02	5%	43%	47%
Chicken feet	2kg	R71,06	R75,58	R81,57	R78,47	-R 3,10	R 2,89	R 7,41	-4%	4%	10%
Gizzards	2kg	R79,19	R85,46	R91,91	R91,42	-R 0,49	R 5,96	R 12,24	-1%	7%	15%
Chicken livers	2kg	R62,38	R70,67	R80,50	R73,59	-R 6,92	R 2,91	R 11,20	-9%	4%	18%
Beef liver	2kg	R95,07	R96,39	R100,53	R106,21	R 5,68	R 9,82	R 11,15	6%	10%	12%
Beef	2kg	R166,23	R178,86	R178,75	R178,46	-R 0,29	-R 0,39	R 12,23	0%	0%	7%
Wors	2kg	R125,11	R134,47	R146,17	R145,53	-R 0,64	R 11,06	R 20,41	0%	8%	16%
Beef tripe	2kg	R81,02	R94,05	R91,79	R97,15	R 5,35	R 3,09	R 16,12	6%	3%	20%
Fish	2kg	R102,13	R107,81	R120,70	R121,90	R 1,19	R 14,08	R 19,77	1%	13%	19%
Tomatoes	6kg	R103,81	R109,17	R115,63	R134,02	R 18,39	R 24,85	R 30,21	16%	23%	29%
Carrots	5kg	R29,26	R35,98	R39,11	R43,38	R 4,28	R 7,41	R 14,12	11%	21%	48%
Butternut	10kg	R131,24	R122,52	R150,00	R99,68	-R 50,32	-R 22,84	-R 31,57	-34%	-19%	-24%
Spinach	8 bunches	R78,83	R93,33	R112,36	R107,72	-R 4,64	R 14,39	R 28,89	-4%	15%	37%
Cabbage	2 heads	R30,47	R35,54	R37,74	R40,96	R 3,21	R 5,42	R 10,49	9%	15%	34%
Green pepper	2kg	R43,21	R56,35	R70,52	R65,62	-R 4,90	R 9,27	R 22,41	-7%	16%	52%
Cremora	800g	R36,87	R42,57	R49,54	R61,42	R 11,88	R 18,84	R 24,54	24%	44%	67%
Tinned pilchards	400g x6	R120,58	R134,52	R140,25	R153,85	R 13,60	R 19,32	R 33,26	10%	14%	28%
Canned beans	410g x6	R69,50	R77,38	R85,85	R88,89	R 3,04	R 11,51	R 19,39	4%	15%	28%
Bananas	4kg	R59,63	R60,35	R71,04	R70,22	-R 0,82	R 9,87	R 10,59	-1%	16%	18%
Apples	3kg	R38,45	R38,28	R48,84	R49,71	R 0,87	R 11,43	R 11,26	2%	30%	29%
Oranges	7kg	R40,04	R43,44	R59,81	R74,65	R 14,84	R 31,22	R 34,61	25%	72%	86%
Margarine	1kg	R37,65	R41,85	R41,64	R41,59	-R 0,05	-R 0,27	R 3,94	0%	-1%	10%
Peanut butter	400g x2	R63,60	R67,74	R74,20	R81,50	R 7,30	R 13,76	R 17,90	10%	20%	28%
Polony	2.5kg	R57,06	R64,04	R68,11	R66,72	-R 1,39	R 2,68	R 9,66	-2%	4%	17%
Apricot jam	900g	R29,54	R32,80	R38,08	R38,78	R 0,70	R 5,97	R 9,24	2%	18%	31%
White bread	25 loaves	R338,93	R404,56	R424,22	R416,67	-R 7,55	R 12,11	R 77,74	-2%	3%	23%
Brown bread	25 loaves	R307,02	R369,70	R392,38	R385,51	-R 6,87	R 15,81	R 78,49	-2%	4%	26%
Total HH food basket		R 4 317,56	R4 787,83	R5 297,58	R5 348,65	R 51,07	R 560,82	R 1 031,09	1%	12%	24%

Year-on-year (2023-2024): The cost of the **average household food basket** increased by **R51,07 (1,0%)** from R5 297,58 in October 2023 to R5 348,65 in October 2024.

Year-on-year (2022-2024): The cost of the **average household food basket** increased by **R560,82 (12,0%)** from R4 787,83 in October 2022 to R5 348,65 in October 2024.

Year-on-year (2021-2024): The cost of the **average household food basket** increased by **R1 031,09 (24,0%)** from R4 317,56 in October 2021 to R5 348,65 in October 2024.