



HOUSEHOLD AFFORDABILITY INDEX

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

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Pietermaritzburg Economic Justice & Dignity Group [PMBEJD]

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**PIETERMARITZBURG
ECONOMIC JUSTICE & DIGNITY**

Economic justice through the lens of human dignity

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About the Household Affordability Index

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), Pietermaritzburg, Mtubatuba (in Northern KwaZulu-Natal), and Springbok (in the Northern Cape). 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 **47 supermarkets and 32 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 supermarkets and food brands are switched to seek out the cheapest prices and special deals. The selection of supermarkets and food brands is dynamic and subjective. Women are smart and savvy shoppers, 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 the first week 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 6 areas. *For more on methodology, see page 16-17.*

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 2026 Summary Data Reference Sheet

Summary of Household Affordability Data

National Minimum Wage March 2026 (22 working days)	
General workers at R30,23/hr	R5 320,48
General workers at 10% exemption at R27,21/hr	R4 788,43
Minimum underspend on food in March 2026	-35,1%

Cost of Household Food Basket in March 2026	
Cost of <i>Joburg</i> Household Food Basket	R5 585,67
Cost of <i>Durban</i> Household Food Basket	R5 267,26
Cost of <i>Cape Town</i> Household Food Basket	R5 156,88
Cost of <i>Springbok</i> Household Food Basket	R5 690,83
Cost of <i>Maritzburg</i> Household Food Basket	R5 002,77
Cost of <i>Mtubatuba</i> Household Food Basket	R5 312,73
Average cost of Household Food Basket (all areas).	R5 328,53
Month-on-month change	-R55,28 -1,0%
Year-on-year change	-R0,83 0,0%

Cost of foods prioritised & bought first in Household Food Basket: year-on-year March 2025 to March 2026		
Core foods	Mar_2025	Mar_2026
	cost	cost
Maize meal (30kg)	R 347,90	R 305,07
Rice (10kg)	R 173,33	R 129,92
Cake Flour (10kg)	R 127,20	R 117,86
White sugar (10kg)	R 221,63	R 224,78
Sugar beans (5kg)	R 234,81	R 183,54
Samp (5kg)	R 72,37	R 72,38
Cooking oil (5L)	R 160,11	R 158,43
Salt (1kg)	R 16,18	R 16,02
Potatoes (10kg)	R 100,79	R 87,63
Onions (10kg)	R 91,51	R 98,96
Frozen chicken pieces (10kg)	R 410,41	R 436,75
Curry powder (200g)	R 39,78	R 40,03
Stock cubes (24 cubes x2)	R 48,41	R 50,32
Soup (400g x2)	R 52,20	R 54,63
Tea (250g)	R 31,63	R 33,61
White bread (25 loaves)	R 410,78	R 418,15
Brown bread (25 loaves)	R 384,50	R 388,66
Subtotal of core foods	R2 923,52	R 2 816,75

VAT on Household Food Basket in March 2026	R342,74
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Cost of a basic nutritious diet for a family per month, Mar'26	
Household size with 4 members	R3 667,72
Household size with 5 members	R4 636,75
Household size with 7 members	R6 410,74

Cost of a basic nutritious diet for a child per month in March 2026	
Small child aged 3-9 years	R825,09
Small child aged 10-13 years	R897,06
Girl child aged 14-18 years	R948,90
Boy child aged 14-18 years	R1 068,65
Average for all children	R934,93

In March 2026, the Child Support Grant (R560) is 35% below the food poverty line (R855) & 40% below the average cost to secure a basic nutritious diet for a child (R934,93).

Summary of Statistics South Africa's (and other) Economic and Social Data

All South Africans	
Population size 2025	63,101 million
Unemployment rate	31,4%
Unemployed + potential labour force	42,1%
Numbers of people employed	17,099 million
Number of people one wage supports	3,7
Maximum NMW March 2026	R5 320,48
NMW shared in a family, per person	R1 437,97

Black South Africans	
Population size 2025	51,604 million
Unemployment rate	35,3%
Unemployed + potential labour force	46,3%
Numbers of people employed	13,058 million
Number of people one wage supports	4
Maximum NMW March 2026	R5 320,48
NMW shared in a family, per person	R1 330,12

White South Africans	
Population size 2025	4,497 million
Unemployment rate	8,1%
Unemployed + potential labour force	10,0%
Numbers of people employed	1,765 million
Number of people one wage supports	2,5
Maximum NMW March 2026	R5 320,48
NMW shared in a family, per person	R2 128,19

The maximum value of the National Minimum Wage [NMW] per hour	R28,79
Level of NMW at 10% exemption	R25,91
The value of the Social Relief of Distress Grant (SRD)	R370,00
The value of the Child Support Grant [CSG]	R560,00
The value of the Old-age Grant [OAG]	R2 320,00

The number of children receiving a CSG	12,87 million
The number of pensioners receiving an OAG	4,20 million

The food poverty line [FPL]	R855,00
The lower-bound poverty line [LBPL]	R1 415,00
The upper-bound poverty line [UBPL]	R2 846,00

% of Black South Africans living below the FPL	20,8%
% of Black South Africans living below the LBPL	43,8%
% of Black South Africans living below the UBPL	74,8%

Stunting levels in <i>boy children under 5 years</i>	30%
Stunting levels in <i>girl children under 5 years</i>	25%

Estimated overall HIV prevalence rate among population in 2025 (±8,15 million)	12,9%
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Any errors in data entry or calculations are our own. See reference page 18 for data references.

All efforts are made to source the latest available data.

2. MARCH 2026 Household Food Index: All areas

Foods tracked	Quantity tracked	Index 2025/26			change in Rands		change in %	
		Mar_2025	Feb_2026	Mar_2026	Feb 2026 vs. Mar 2026	Mar 2025 vs. Mar 2026	Feb 2026 vs. Mar 2026	Mar 2025 vs. Mar 2026
Maize meal	30kg	R347,90	R314,25	R305,07	-R 9,18	-R 42,83	-3%	-12%
Rice	10kg	R173,33	R138,33	R129,92	-R 8,40	-R 43,41	-6%	-25%
Cake Flour	10kg	R127,20	R120,10	R117,86	-R 2,24	-R 9,34	-2%	-7%
White sugar	10kg	R221,63	R225,97	R224,78	-R 1,19	R 3,15	-1%	1%
Sugar beans	5kg	R234,81	R185,90	R183,54	-R 2,36	-R 51,27	-1%	-22%
Samp	5kg	R72,37	R70,32	R72,38	R 2,06	R 0,01	3%	0%
Cooking oil	5L	R160,11	R156,60	R158,43	R 1,83	-R 1,68	1%	-1%
Salt	1kg	R16,18	R16,26	R16,02	-R 0,23	-R 0,16	-1%	-1%
Potatoes	10kg	R100,79	R90,34	R87,63	-R 2,70	-R 13,16	-3%	-13%
Onions	10kg	R91,51	R98,88	R98,96	R 0,07	R 7,45	0%	8%
Frozen chicken portions	10kg	R410,41	R435,75	R436,75	R 1,01	R 26,34	0%	6%
Curry powder	200g	R39,78	R40,51	R40,03	-R 0,48	R 0,26	-1%	1%
Stock cubes	24 cubes x2	R48,41	R50,87	R50,32	-R 0,55	R 1,92	-1%	4%
Soup	400g x2	R52,20	R52,21	R54,63	R 2,42	R 2,43	5%	5%
Tea	250g	R31,63	R31,44	R33,61	R 2,17	R 1,98	7%	6%
Full cream milk	6L	R95,33	R95,16	R95,64	R 0,49	R 0,32	1%	0%
Maas	4L	R59,35	R60,55	R60,01	-R 0,54	R 0,66	-1%	1%
Eggs	60 eggs	R152,63	R139,41	R138,38	-R 1,03	-R 14,25	-1%	-9%
Chicken feet	2kg	R75,92	R81,06	R75,01	-R 6,05	-R 0,91	-7%	-1%
Gizzards	2kg	R88,09	R103,13	R101,51	-R 1,62	R 13,42	-2%	15%
Chicken livers	2kg	R71,59	R74,09	R70,76	-R 3,33	-R 0,83	-4%	-1%
Beef liver	2kg	R105,88	R131,08	R128,67	-R 2,40	R 22,80	-2%	22%
Beef	2kg	R173,72	R212,15	R202,36	-R 9,79	R 28,64	-5%	16%
Wors	2kg	R146,47	R157,84	R157,46	-R 0,38	R 10,99	0%	8%
Beef tripe	2kg	R94,97	R104,45	R104,97	R 0,52	R 10,00	1%	11%
Fish	2kg	R117,27	R129,97	R125,84	-R 4,13	R 8,57	-3%	7%
Tomatoes	6kg	R125,95	R122,64	R128,92	R 6,29	R 2,97	5%	2%
Carrots	5kg	R43,76	R47,47	R45,87	-R 1,59	R 2,11	-3%	5%
Butternut	10kg	R92,61	R92,63	R88,25	-R 4,38	-R 4,36	-5%	-5%
Spinach	8 bunches	R119,65	R123,92	R125,42	R 1,50	R 5,77	1%	5%
Cabbage	2 heads	R42,35	R38,62	R40,93	R 2,31	-R 1,42	6%	-3%
Green pepper	2kg	R62,39	R58,79	R57,17	-R 1,63	-R 5,23	-3%	-8%
Cremora	800g	R57,62	R56,29	R54,68	-R 1,61	-R 2,94	-3%	-5%
Tinned pilchards	400g x6	R153,96	R157,65	R154,96	-R 2,69	R 1,00	-2%	1%
Canned beans	410g x6	R90,46	R93,40	R90,91	-R 2,49	R 0,45	-3%	1%
Bananas	4kg	R73,39	R75,16	R72,05	-R 3,11	-R 1,34	-4%	-2%
Apples	3kg	R51,22	R54,60	R49,59	-R 5,01	-R 1,63	-9%	-3%
Oranges	7kg	R84,07	R101,21	R101,21	R 0,00	R 17,14	0%	20%
Margarine	1kg	R42,11	R41,22	R42,97	R 1,74	R 0,86	4%	2%
Peanut butter	400g x2	R81,37	R83,24	R87,39	R 4,15	R 6,02	5%	7%
Polony	2.5kg	R65,97	R71,17	R70,51	-R 0,66	R 4,55	-1%	7%
Apricot jam	900g	R37,75	R40,05	R40,33	R 0,28	R 2,58	1%	7%
White bread	25 loaves	R410,78	R418,66	R418,15	-R 0,51	R 7,38	0%	2%
Brown bread	25 loaves	R384,50	R390,49	R388,66	-R 1,83	R 4,16	0%	1%
Total household food basket		R 5 329,36	R 5 383,81	R 5 328,53	-R 55,28	-R 0,83	-1,0%	0,0%

Month-on-month: The cost of the **average household food basket decreased** by **R55,28 (-1,0%)** from R5 383,81 in February 2026 to R5 328,53 in March 2026.

Year-on-year: The cost of the **average household food basket decreased** by **R0,83 (-0,0%)** from R5 329,36 in March 2025 to R5 328,53 in March 2026.

3. MARCH 2026 Household Food Index: All areas, by foods prioritised & bought first

Foods tracked	Quantity tracked	Index 2025/26			change in Rands		change in %	
		Mar_2025	Feb_2026	Mar_2026	Feb 2026 vs. Mar 2026	Mar 2025 vs. Mar 2026	Feb 2026 vs. Mar 2026	Mar 2025 vs. Mar 2026
Maize meal	30kg	R347,90	R314,25	R305,07	-R 9,18	-R 42,83	-3%	-12%
Rice	10kg	R173,33	R138,33	R129,92	-R 8,40	-R 43,41	-6%	-25%
Cake Flour	10kg	R127,20	R120,10	R117,86	-R 2,24	-R 9,34	-2%	-7%
White sugar	10kg	R221,63	R225,97	R224,78	-R 1,19	R 3,15	-1%	1%
Sugar beans	5kg	R234,81	R185,90	R183,54	-R 2,36	-R 51,27	-1%	-22%
Samp	5kg	R72,37	R70,32	R72,38	R 2,06	R 0,01	3%	0%
Cooking oil	5L	R160,11	R156,60	R158,43	R 1,83	-R 1,68	1%	-1%
Salt	1kg	R16,18	R16,26	R16,02	-R 0,23	-R 0,16	-1%	-1%
Potatoes	10kg	R100,79	R90,34	R87,63	-R 2,70	-R 13,16	-3%	-13%
Onions	10kg	R91,51	R98,88	R98,96	R 0,07	R 7,45	0%	8%
Frozen chicken portions	10kg	R410,41	R435,75	R436,75	R 1,01	R 26,34	0%	6%
Curry powder	200g	R39,78	R40,51	R40,03	-R 0,48	R 0,26	-1%	1%
Stock cubes	24 cubes x2	R48,41	R50,87	R50,32	-R 0,55	R 1,92	-1%	4%
Soup	400g x2	R52,20	R52,21	R54,63	R 2,42	R 2,43	5%	5%
Tea	250g	R31,63	R31,44	R33,61	R 2,17	R 1,98	7%	6%
White bread	25 loaves	R410,78	R418,66	R418,15	-R 0,51	R 7,38	0%	2%
Brown bread	25 loaves	R384,50	R390,49	R388,66	-R 1,83	R 4,16	0%	1%
Total household food basket		R 2 923,52	R2 836,87	R2 816,75	-R 20,12	-R 106,77	-0,7%	-3,7%

Month-on-month: The **average cost of the foods prioritised and bought first** in the household food basket **decreased** by **R20,12 (-0,7%)** from R2 836,87 in February 2026 to R2 816,75 in March 2026.

Year-on-year: The **average cost of the foods prioritised and bought first** in the household food basket **decreased** by **R106,77 (-3,7%)** from R2 923,52 in March 2025 to R2 816,75 in March 2026.

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 **53%** of the total cost of the Household Food Basket. At an average cost of **R2 816,75 in March 2026**, 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 2026 Household Food Index: Zero-rated vs. VAT

Foods tracked	Quantity tracked	Index 2025/26			change in Rands		change in %	
		Mar_2025	Feb_2026	Mar_2026	Feb 2026 vs. Mar 2026	Mar 2025 vs. Mar 2026	Feb 2026 vs. Mar 2026	Mar 2025 vs. Mar 2026
Zero-rated foods								
Maize meal	30kg	R347,90	R314,25	R305,07	-R 9,18	-R 42,83	-3%	-12%
Rice	10kg	R173,33	R138,33	R129,92	-R 8,40	-R 43,41	-6%	-25%
Samp	5kg	R72,37	R70,32	R72,38	R 2,06	R 0,01	3%	0%
Sugar beans	5kg	R234,81	R185,90	R183,54	-R 2,36	-R 51,27	-1%	-22%
Cooking oil	5L	R160,11	R156,60	R158,43	R 1,83	-R 1,68	1%	-1%
Full cream milk	6L	R95,33	R95,16	R95,64	R 0,49	R 0,32	1%	0%
Maas	4L	R59,35	R60,55	R60,01	-R 0,54	R 0,66	-1%	1%
Eggs	60 eggs	R152,63	R139,41	R138,38	-R 1,03	-R 14,25	-1%	-9%
Potatoes	10kg	R100,79	R90,34	R87,63	-R 2,70	-R 13,16	-3%	-13%
Onions	10kg	R91,51	R98,88	R98,96	R 0,07	R 7,45	0%	8%
Tomatoes	6kg	R125,95	R122,64	R128,92	R 6,29	R 2,97	5%	2%
Carrots	5kg	R43,76	R47,47	R45,87	-R 1,59	R 2,11	-3%	5%
Butternut	10kg	R92,61	R92,63	R88,25	-R 4,38	-R 4,36	-5%	-5%
Spinach	8 bunches	R119,65	R123,92	R125,42	R 1,50	R 5,77	1%	5%
Cabbage	2 heads	R42,35	R38,62	R40,93	R 2,31	-R 1,42	6%	-3%
Green Pepper	2kg	R62,39	R58,79	R57,17	-R 1,63	-R 5,23	-3%	-8%
Tinned pilchards	6 tins	R153,96	R157,65	R154,96	-R 2,69	R 1,00	-2%	1%
Bananas	4kg	R73,39	R75,16	R72,05	-R 3,11	-R 1,34	-4%	-2%
Apples	3kg	R51,22	R54,60	R49,59	-R 5,01	-R 1,63	-9%	-3%
Oranges	7kg	R84,07	R101,21	R101,21	R 0,00	R 17,14	0%	20%
Brown bread	25 loaves	R384,50	R390,49	R388,66	-R 1,83	R 4,16	0%	1%
Cake flour	10kg	R127,20	R120,10	R117,86	-R 2,24	-R 9,34	-2%	-7%
Subtotal of zero-rated foods		R 2 849,18	R 2 733,01	R 2 700,86	-R 32,14	-R 148,32	-1,2%	-5,2%
Foods subject to VAT								
White sugar	10kg	R221,63	R225,97	R224,78	-R 1,19	R 3,15	-1%	1%
Frozen chicken portions	10kg	R410,41	R435,75	R436,75	R 1,01	R 26,34	0%	6%
Chicken feet	2kg	R75,92	R81,06	R75,01	-R 6,05	-R 0,91	-7%	-1%
Gizzards	2kg	R88,09	R103,13	R101,51	-R 1,62	R 13,42	-2%	15%
Chicken livers	2kg	R71,59	R74,09	R70,76	-R 3,33	-R 0,83	-4%	-1%
Beef liver	2kg	R105,88	R131,08	R128,67	-R 2,40	R 22,80	-2%	22%
Beef	2kg	R173,72	R212,15	R202,36	-R 9,79	R 28,64	-5%	16%
Wors	2kg	R146,47	R157,84	R157,46	-R 0,38	R 10,99	0%	8%
Inyama yangapakhathi	2kg	R94,97	R104,45	R104,97	R 0,52	R 10,00	1%	11%
Fish	2kg	R117,27	R129,97	R125,84	-R 4,13	R 8,57	-3%	7%
Salt	1kg	R16,18	R16,26	R16,02	-R 0,23	-R 0,16	-1%	-1%
Stock	48 cubes	R48,41	R50,87	R50,32	-R 0,55	R 1,92	-1%	4%
Soup	800g	R52,20	R52,21	R54,63	R 2,42	R 2,43	5%	5%
Curry powder	400g	R39,78	R40,51	R40,03	-R 0,48	R 0,26	-1%	1%
Tea	200g	R31,63	R31,44	R33,61	R 2,17	R 1,98	7%	6%
Cremora	1kg	R57,62	R56,29	R54,68	-R 1,61	-R 2,94	-3%	-5%
Canned beans	6 cans	R90,46	R93,40	R90,91	-R 2,49	R 0,45	-3%	1%
Margarine	1kg	R42,11	R41,22	R42,97	R 1,74	R 0,86	4%	2%
Peanut butter	400g x2	R81,37	R83,24	R87,39	R 4,15	R 6,02	5%	7%
Polony	2.5kg	R65,97	R71,17	R70,51	-R 0,66	R 4,55	-1%	7%
Apricot jam	900g	R37,75	R40,05	R40,33	R 0,28	R 2,58	1%	7%
White bread	25 loaves	R410,78	R418,66	R418,15	-R 0,51	R 7,38	0%	2%
Subtotal of Vatable foods		R2 480,17	R 2 650,80	R 2 627,66	-R 23,14	R 147,49	-0,9%	5,9%
Vatable foods (excl. VAT)		R2 156,67	R2 305,05	R2 284,92	-R 20,12	R128,25	-0,9%	5,9%
VAT total		R323,50	R345,76	R342,74	-R3,02	R19,24	-0,9%	5,9%
Total household food basket		R5 329,36	R5 383,81	R5 328,53	-R55,28	-R0,83	-1,0%	0,0%

Month-on-month: The **zero-rated foods** in the household food basket **decreased** by **R32,14 (-1,2%)** from R2 733,01 in February 2026 to R2 700,86 in March 2026.

Year-on-year: The **zero-rated foods** in the household food basket **decreased** by **R148,32 (-5,2%)** from R2 849,18 in March 2025 to R2 700,86 in March 2026.

Month-on-month: The **foods subject to VAT** in the household food basket **decreased** by **R23,14 (-0,9%)** from R2 650,80 in February 2026 to R2 627,66 in March 2026.

Year-on-year: The **foods subject to VAT** in the household food basket **increased** by **R147,49 (5,9%)** from R2 480,17 in March 2025 to R2 627,66 in March 2026.

22/44 foods in the total household food basket are subject to VAT. Foods subject to VAT make up **49%** of the total cost of the household food basket. VAT on the total household food basket came to **R342,74 in March 2026**. This means **6,4%** of the household food basket is made up of VAT. **A tax of R342,74 is more than** the cost of an average low-income household's requirement of 30kg maize meal per month (**in March 2026, 30kg maize meal cost R305,07**) . The total Rand-value of VAT on basic food stuffs is very high and removes money from the purse that could be spent on more food.

5. MARCH 2026 Basic Nutritional Food Index: families

By number of family members	Index 2025/26			change in Rands		change in %	
	Mar_2025	Feb_2026	Mar_2026	Feb 2026 vs. Mar 2026	Mar 2025 vs. Mar 2026	Feb 2026 vs. Mar 2026	Mar 2025 vs. Mar 2026
Four (4)	R3 729,40	R3 696,21	R3 667,72	-R 28,49	-R 61,68	-0,8%	-1,7%
Five (5)	R4 711,69	R4 672,45	R4 636,75	-R 35,70	-R 74,94	-0,8%	-1,6%
Seven (7)	R6 509,75	R6 459,83	R6 410,74	-R 49,09	-R 99,01	-0,8%	-1,5%

Month-on-month: The cost of a **basic nutritional food basket for a family of 7 members decreased** by **R49,09 (-0,8%)** from R6 459,83 in February 2026 to R6 410,74 in March 2026.

Year-on-year: The cost of a **basic nutritional food basket for a family of 7 members decreased** by **R99,01 (-1,5%)** from R6 509,75 in March 2025 to R6 410,74 in March 2026.

In **March 2026** 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 082,21 (R5 328,53 vs. R6 410,74)**.

It means that in **March 2026**, families living on low-incomes may underspend on basic nutritional food by a **minimum of 17% (R1 082,21)**.

6. MARCH 2026 Basic Nutritional Food Index: children

By age of child	Index 2025/26			change in Rands		change in %	
	Mar_2025	Feb_2026	Mar_2026	Feb 2026 vs. Mar 2026	Mar 2025 vs. Mar 2026	Feb 2026 vs. Mar 2026	Mar 2025 vs. Mar 2026
Small child aged 3-9 years	R 833,09	R830,98	R825,09	-R 5,89	-R 8,00	-0,7%	-1,0%
Small child aged 10-13 years	R 907,69	R903,61	R897,06	-R 6,55	-R 10,63	-0,7%	-1,2%
Girl child aged 14-18 years	R 964,96	R956,40	R948,90	-R 7,50	-R 16,06	-0,8%	-1,7%
Boy child aged 14-18 years	R 1 098,25	R1 077,86	R1 068,65	-R 9,21	-R 29,60	-0,9%	-2,7%
Average for all children	R951,00	R942,21	R934,93	-R 7,29	-R 16,07	-0,8%	-1,7%

Month-on-month: The **average cost to feed a child a basic nutritious diet decreased** by **R7,29 (-0,8%)** from R942,21 in February 2026 to R934,93 in March 2026.

Year-on-year: The **average cost to feed a child a basic nutritious diet decreased** by **R16,07(-1,7%)** from R951,00 in March 2025 to R934,93 in March 2026.

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 **R560**. The CSG was increased by **R30** in April 2025.

The National Food Poverty Line calculated by Statistics South Africa is **R855** per capita per month (*in May 2025 prices*).

In **March 2026** the average cost to feed a child a basic nutritious diet per month cost **R934,93**.

The Child Support Grant of **R560** is set below the food poverty line of **R855**, and further below the average cost of **R934,93** to secure a basic nutritious diet for a child in **March 2026**.

In **March 2026** the Child Support Grant is **35% below** the food poverty line and **40% 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.

7. MARCH 2026 National Minimum Wage Scenarios

Number of working days in March 2026 = 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 persons in March 2026**.

The Minister of Employment and Labour gazetted a **5%** annual increase on the National Minimum Wage, which took effect on the 1st of March 2026. For a worker, the 5% increment works out to be an extra R1,44 an hour, R11,52 for an 8-hour day, and if the full working-day month is worked (average 21 days), a R241,92 monthly increase. **The NMW hourly rate increased by R1,44 from R28,79 per hour to R30,23 per hour.**

The National Minimum Wage is R30,23 per hour, R241,84 for an 8-hour day, and R5 078,64 for an average 21-day working month.

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 2025, the electricity tariffs in Msunduzi Municipality increased by 13,32%, with prepaid electricity costing R3,3767/kWh (incl. VAT) for the 2025/26 period (up from R2,9799/kWh (incl. VAT) for the 2024/25 period). The electricity expense on 350kWh went up by R138,88 (from R1 042,97 to R1 181.85).** The new taxi fare increases for Pietermaritzburg came into effect on the 1st of November 2023. Local fares went up by R2, from R18 to R20 (an increase of 11,1%). *Please note, no fares in the areas we track have increased since 2023.*

The data in the tables are relevant as at 2026 March.

The tables below calculates transport to work on 2 taxi fare, return (R20x4 = R80), multiplied by number of working days. The electricity charge is based on Msunduzi Municipality's prepaid tariffs (R3,3767 per kWh = R1 181,85 for 350kWh). The table below provides scenarios for the NMW for General Workers at R30,23 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 **R30,23 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	R30,23	R30,23	R30,23
Wage income	R5 320,48	R3 627,60	R2 267,25

	Wage scenario 1	Wage scenario 2	Wage scenario 3
Wage income	R5 320,48	R3 627,60	R2 267,25
Household expenses			
		% of wage	% of wage
Transport to work (2 taxi, return)	R1 760,00	33,1%	R1 200,00
Prepaid electricity (350kWh)	R1 181,85	22,2%	R1 181,85
Total for transport + electricity	R2 941,85	55,3%	R2 381,85
<i>Money remaining to spend on all other expenses</i>	R2 378,63		-R114,60
Subtract: food (4 persons)	R3 667,72		R3 667,72
Minimum surplus/shortfall on food costs	-R1 289,09	-35,1%	-R2 421,97
			-66,0%
			-R3 782,32
			-103,1%

The National Minimum Wage is a poverty wage - it harms workers' health, it reduces productivity in the workplace, and slows down economic growth. The maximum wage of **R5 320,48 in March 2026** when disbursed in a family of **four persons is R1 330,12**. This is **below the National Upper-Bound Poverty Line of R2 846 per capita per month**, and **below the National Lower-Bound Poverty Line of R1 415 per capita per month** (in May 2025 prices).

After paying for transport and electricity workers are left with **R2 378,63**. **The minimum shortfall on food for a workers' family in March 2026 is 35,1%** (a shortfall of R1 289,09 on a basket of nutritional food costing R3 667,72). If all the remaining money (R2 378,63) went to buy food, then for a family of 4, **it would provide R594,66 per person per month**. **This is 30% below the National Food Poverty Line of R855 per person per month**. *Note that: the Food Poverty Line is a monetary-based threshold below which a person cannot consume enough food to meet their minimum daily energy requirements.*

8. MARCH 2026 Household Food Basket: Per area, compared.

Foods tracked	Quantity tracked	Joburg	Durban	Cape Town	Springbok	Maritzburg	Mtubatuba	Average
Maize meal	30kg	R300,72	R285,72	R311,20	R373,97	R302,97	R309,97	R305,07
Rice	10kg	R139,40	R123,07	R132,16	R152,66	R98,59	R139,99	R129,92
Cake Flour	10kg	R124,40	R113,82	R117,91	R119,99	R105,19	R126,66	R117,86
White sugar	10kg	R224,07	R220,82	R232,57	R263,32	R208,99	R199,99	R224,78
Sugar beans	5kg	R188,89	R147,78	R243,25	R208,25	R122,59	R144,99	R183,54
Samp	5kg	R75,26	R69,24	R76,66	R96,65	R48,99	R71,99	R72,38
Cooking oil	5L	R161,02	R147,66	R167,69	R166,65	R154,99	R151,66	R158,43
Salt	1kg	R18,45	R17,16	R9,74	R21,32	R21,39	R12,66	R16,02
Potatoes	10kg	R85,93	R97,84	R82,88	R88,08	R80,84	R81,89	R87,63
Onions	10kg	R94,51	R105,10	R89,79	R134,40	R93,12	R98,55	R98,96
Chicken portions	10kg	R430,11	R422,10	R434,98	R447,47	R485,94	R419,98	R436,75
Curry powder	200g	R44,16	R34,16	R41,32	R44,99	R39,19	R38,32	R40,03
Stock cubes	24 x2	R53,15	R50,48	R51,15	R46,65	R43,98	R49,31	R50,32
Soup	400g x2	R68,81	R41,48	R64,23	R41,31	R37,58	R66,64	R54,63
Tea	250g	R38,16	R31,57	R32,74	R33,99	R28,19	R35,66	R33,61
Full cream milk	6L	R99,56	R94,99	R91,81	R89,99	R96,99	R101,32	R95,64
Maas	4L	R66,24	R54,32	R60,90	R65,65	R56,39	R54,66	R60,01
Eggs	60 eggs	R143,15	R132,98	R137,80	R152,65	R129,98	R139,98	R138,38
Chicken feet	2kg	R103,23	R81,65	R41,23	R79,98	R69,94	R84,98	R75,01
Gizzards	2kg	R99,23	R104,44	R83,47	R99,98	R128,94	R116,98	R101,51
Chicken livers	2kg	R68,73	R75,07	R56,73	R107,96	R65,92	R89,98	R70,76
Beef liver	2kg	R137,48	R127,44	R110,27	R118,98	R144,94	R139,98	R128,67
Beef	2kg	R225,23	R201,39	R187,23	R179,98	R200,94	R199,98	R202,36
Wors	2kg	R189,48	R167,69	R86,97	R179,98	R173,94	R214,98	R157,46
Beef tripe	2kg	R116,74	R112,53	R76,98	R115,98	R94,94	R129,98	R104,97
Fish	2kg	R100,23	R131,96	R107,12	R194,98	R144,94	R164,98	R125,84
Tomatoes	6kg	R141,45	R114,95	R138,96	R139,94	R91,30	R127,94	R128,92
Carrots	5kg	R50,10	R43,62	R45,32	R53,30	R37,98	R46,65	R45,87
Butternut	10kg	R97,35	R89,05	R79,73	R124,74	R75,41	R79,98	R88,25
Spinach	8 bunches	R109,74	R153,71	R114,59	R130,59	R95,92	R95,92	R125,42
Cabbage	2 heads	R36,69	R42,82	R40,53	R45,31	R43,98	R43,98	R40,93
Green pepper	2kg	R57,96	R57,25	R58,71	R69,98	R44,38	R57,31	R57,17
Cremora	800g	R57,87	R50,57	R54,99	R55,99	R55,59	R54,32	R54,68
Tinned pilchards	400g x6	R164,34	R157,45	R144,94	R157,94	R136,15	R175,94	R154,96
Canned beans	410g x6	R99,72	R88,45	R87,95	R101,94	R73,16	R95,94	R90,91
Bananas	4kg	R68,69	R75,63	R73,05	R79,95	R61,96	R71,96	R72,05
Apples	3kg	R61,90	R45,90	R48,06	R44,98	R38,79	R43,32	R49,59
Orange	7kg	R97,80	R94,31	R114,98	R107,75	R104,96	R104,97	R101,21
Margarine	1kg	R39,82	R44,91	R41,65	R39,99	R47,99	R47,66	R42,97
Peanut butter	400g x2	R93,25	R87,48	R85,07	R79,31	R79,18	R99,98	R87,39
Polony	2.5kg	R72,32	R67,72	R67,79	R56,66	R92,19	R60,32	R70,51
Apricot jam	900g	R40,82	R40,49	R40,16	R39,66	R36,19	R45,99	R40,33
White bread	25 loaves	R462,27	R427,96	R412,31	R374,75	R369,85	R349,75	R418,15
Brown bread	25 loaves	R437,25	R392,54	R379,36	R362,25	R337,40	R324,75	R388,66
Total household food basket		R 5 585,67	R 5 267,26	R 5 156,88	R 5 690,83	R 5 002,77	R 5 312,73	R 5 328,53

The average cost (weighted) of the total Household Food Basket in March 2026 is R5 328,53.

9. MARCH 2026 Household Food Index: Johannesburg

Foods tracked	Quantity tracked	Index 2025/26			change in Rands		change in %	
		Mar_2025	Feb_2026	Mar_2026	Feb 2026 vs. Mar 2026	Mar 2025 vs. Mar 2026	Feb 2026 vs. Mar 2026	Mar 2025 vs. Mar 2026
Maize meal	30kg	R333,47	R322,47	R300,72	-R 21,75	-R 32,75	-7%	-10%
Rice	10kg	R186,41	R143,16	R139,40	-R 3,76	-R 47,01	-3%	-25%
Cake Flour	10kg	R132,41	R122,91	R124,40	R 1,49	-R 8,01	1%	-6%
White sugar	10kg	R225,07	R223,91	R224,07	R 0,16	-R 1,00	0%	0%
Sugar beans	5kg	R237,81	R188,89	R188,89	R 0,00	-R 48,92	0%	-21%
Samp	5kg	R77,49	R77,17	R75,26	-R 1,91	-R 2,22	-2%	-3%
Cooking oil	5L	R155,40	R159,52	R161,02	R 1,50	R 5,62	1%	4%
Salt	1kg	R18,81	R18,37	R18,45	R 0,08	-R 0,36	0%	-2%
Potatoes	10kg	R95,26	R86,95	R85,93	-R 1,03	-R 9,34	-1%	-10%
Onions	10kg	R87,92	R95,41	R94,51	-R 0,90	R 6,60	-1%	8%
Frozen chicken portions	10kg	R385,98	R417,98	R430,11	R 12,12	R 44,12	3%	11%
Curry powder	200g	R41,15	R45,74	R44,16	-R 1,58	R 3,00	-3%	7%
Stock cubes	24 cubes x2	R47,48	R53,65	R53,15	-R 0,50	R 5,67	-1%	12%
Soup	400g x2	R55,64	R64,33	R68,81	R 4,49	R 13,18	7%	24%
Tea	250g	R35,57	R36,49	R38,16	R 1,67	R 2,59	5%	7%
Full cream milk	6L	R99,40	R100,49	R99,56	-R 0,93	R 0,16	-1%	0%
Maas	4L	R61,49	R65,35	R66,24	R 0,88	R 4,75	1%	8%
Eggs	60 eggs	R164,37	R145,98	R143,15	-R 2,83	-R 21,22	-2%	-13%
Chicken feet	2kg	R101,48	R101,73	R103,23	R 1,50	R 1,75	1%	2%
Gizzards	2kg	R96,48	R98,98	R99,23	R 0,25	R 2,75	0%	3%
Chicken livers	2kg	R77,23	R70,48	R68,73	-R 1,75	-R 8,50	-2%	-11%
Beef liver	2kg	R108,15	R137,19	R137,48	R 0,29	R 29,34	0%	27%
Beef	2kg	R182,24	R230,23	R225,23	-R 5,00	R 43,00	-2%	24%
Wors	2kg	R171,24	R199,98	R189,48	-R 10,50	R 18,25	-5%	11%
Beef tripe	2kg	R110,48	R112,98	R116,74	R 3,75	R 6,25	3%	6%
Fish	2kg	R98,48	R107,48	R100,23	-R 7,25	R 1,75	-7%	2%
Tomatoes	6kg	R116,05	R136,12	R141,45	R 5,32	R 25,40	4%	22%
Carrots	5kg	R41,08	R47,89	R50,10	R 2,21	R 9,02	5%	22%
Butternut	10kg	R102,93	R98,10	R97,35	-R 0,75	-R 5,58	-1%	-5%
Spinach	8 bunches	R104,82	R107,25	R109,74	R 2,48	R 4,92	2%	5%
Cabbage	2 heads	R40,08	R32,98	R36,69	R 3,71	-R 3,39	11%	-8%
Green pepper	2kg	R53,78	R67,78	R57,96	-R 9,82	R 4,18	-14%	8%
Cremora	800g	R60,16	R59,07	R57,87	-R 1,21	-R 2,29	-2%	-4%
Tinned pilchards	400g x6	R158,69	R169,63	R164,34	-R 5,30	R 5,65	-3%	4%
Canned beans	410g x6	R100,44	R99,46	R99,72	R 0,26	-R 0,72	0%	-1%
Bananas	4kg	R79,96	R72,32	R68,69	-R 3,64	-R 11,28	-5%	-14%
Apples	3kg	R53,99	R64,57	R61,90	-R 2,67	R 7,92	-4%	15%
Oranges	7kg	R104,96	R97,80	R97,80	R 0,00	-R 7,16	0%	-7%
Margarine	1kg	R42,03	R39,24	R39,82	R 0,58	-R 2,21	1%	-5%
Peanut butter	400g x2	R87,64	R91,48	R93,25	R 1,77	R 5,61	2%	6%
Polony	2.5kg	R72,15	R75,16	R72,32	-R 2,83	R 0,17	-4%	0%
Apricot jam	900g	R39,17	R40,82	R40,82	R 0,01	R 1,66	0%	4%
White bread	25 loaves	R431,04	R460,10	R462,27	R 2,17	R 31,23	0%	7%
Brown bread	25 loaves	R406,02	R426,83	R437,25	R 10,42	R 31,23	2%	8%
Total household food basket		R 5 481,88	R 5 614,44	R 5 585,67	-R 28,77	R 103,78	-0,5%	1,9%

Month-on-month: The cost of the **Joburg household food basket decreased** by **R28,77 (-0,5%)** from R5 614,44 in February 2026 to R5 585,67 in March 2026.

Year-on-year: The cost of the **Joburg household food basket increased** by **R103,78 (1,9%)** from R5 481,88 in March 2025 to R5 585,67 in March 2026.

10. MARCH 2026 Household Food Index: Durban

Foods tracked	Quantity tracked	Index 2025/26			change in Rands		change in %	
		Mar_2025	Feb_2026	Mar_2026	Feb 2026 vs. Mar 2026	Mar 2025 vs. Mar 2026	Feb 2026 vs. Mar 2026	Mar 2025 vs. Mar 2026
Maize meal	30kg	R328,97	R278,72	R285,72	R 7,00	-R 43,25	3%	-13%
Rice	10kg	R153,32	R125,91	R123,07	-R 2,83	-R 30,25	-2%	-20%
Cake Flour	10kg	R117,57	R111,90	R113,82	R 1,93	-R 3,75	2%	-3%
White sugar	10kg	R211,41	R213,24	R220,82	R 7,58	R 9,42	4%	4%
Sugar beans	5kg	R206,74	R148,82	R147,78	-R 1,04	-R 58,96	-1%	-29%
Samp	5kg	R69,66	R64,08	R69,24	R 5,16	-R 0,42	8%	-1%
Cooking oil	5L	R160,16	R141,66	R147,66	R 6,00	-R 12,50	4%	-8%
Salt	1kg	R16,82	R16,74	R17,16	R 0,42	R 0,33	2%	2%
Potatoes	10kg	R114,63	R96,77	R97,84	R 1,07	-R 16,79	1%	-15%
Onions	10kg	R101,76	R99,27	R105,10	R 5,84	R 3,34	6%	3%
Frozen chicken portions	10kg	R394,03	R437,10	R422,10	-R 15,00	R 28,07	-3%	7%
Curry powder	200g	R34,32	R34,74	R34,16	-R 0,58	-R 0,17	-2%	0%
Stock cubes	24 cubes x2	R50,48	R53,31	R50,48	-R 2,83	R 0,00	-5%	0%
Soup	400g x2	R43,15	R39,98	R41,48	R 1,50	-R 1,67	4%	-4%
Tea	250g	R28,66	R29,24	R31,57	R 2,33	R 2,92	8%	10%
Full cream milk	6L	R98,24	R94,74	R94,99	R 0,25	-R 3,25	0%	-3%
Maas	4L	R52,16	R55,57	R54,32	-R 1,25	R 2,17	-2%	4%
Eggs	60 eggs	R142,31	R130,65	R132,98	R 2,33	-R 9,33	2%	-7%
Chicken feet	2kg	R79,19	R85,94	R81,65	-R 4,29	R 2,47	-5%	3%
Gizzards	2kg	R82,44	R107,36	R104,44	-R 2,92	R 22,00	-3%	27%
Chicken livers	2kg	R67,69	R79,36	R75,07	-R 4,29	R 7,38	-5%	11%
Beef liver	2kg	R108,69	R134,69	R127,44	-R 7,25	R 18,75	-5%	17%
Beef	2kg	R175,69	R217,19	R201,39	-R 15,80	R 25,70	-7%	15%
Wors	2kg	R140,94	R158,94	R167,69	R 8,75	R 26,75	6%	19%
Beef tripe	2kg	R98,44	R114,94	R112,53	-R 2,41	R 14,09	-2%	14%
Fish	2kg	R124,69	R144,24	R131,96	-R 12,28	R 7,27	-9%	6%
Tomatoes	6kg	R126,44	R114,20	R114,95	R 0,75	-R 11,50	1%	-9%
Carrots	5kg	R49,62	R41,43	R43,62	R 2,19	-R 6,00	5%	-12%
Butternut	10kg	R92,84	R90,85	R89,05	-R 1,80	-R 3,79	-2%	-4%
Spinach	8 bunches	R149,65	R165,25	R153,71	-R 11,55	R 4,06	-7%	3%
Cabbage	2 heads	R44,23	R37,65	R42,82	R 5,17	-R 1,42	14%	-3%
Green pepper	2kg	R58,71	R47,07	R57,25	R 10,18	-R 1,45	22%	-2%
Cremora	800g	R53,17	R50,08	R50,57	R 0,49	-R 2,60	1%	-5%
Tinned pilchards	400g x6	R162,94	R162,94	R157,45	-R 5,50	-R 5,50	-3%	-3%
Canned beans	410g x6	R84,96	R90,20	R88,45	-R 1,76	R 3,49	-2%	4%
Bananas	4kg	R76,63	R79,63	R75,63	-R 4,00	-R 1,00	-5%	-1%
Apples	3kg	R53,23	R55,07	R45,90	-R 9,16	-R 7,33	-17%	-14%
Oranges	7kg	R78,80	R94,31	R94,31	R 0,00	R 15,51	0%	20%
Margarine	1kg	R44,57	R42,24	R44,91	R 2,67	R 0,33	6%	1%
Peanut butter	400g x2	R81,82	R80,15	R87,48	R 7,33	R 5,66	9%	7%
Polony	2.5kg	R64,43	R68,74	R67,72	-R 1,02	R 3,28	-1%	5%
Apricot jam	900g	R36,49	R39,32	R40,49	R 1,17	R 4,00	3%	11%
White bread	25 loaves	R422,73	R422,73	R427,96	R 5,23	R 5,23	1%	1%
Brown bread	25 loaves	R384,19	R392,52	R392,54	R 0,02	R 8,35	0%	2%
Total household food basket		R 5 267,58	R5 289,44	R5 267,26	-R 22,18	-R 0,33	-0,4%	0,0%

Month-on-month: The cost of the **Durban household food basket decreased** by **R22,18 (-0,4%)** from R5 289,44 in February 2026 to R5 267,26 in March 2026.

Year-on-year: The cost of the **Durban household food basket decreased** by **R0,33 (-0,0%)** from R5 267,58 in March 2025 to R5 267,26 in March 2026.

11. MARCH 2026 Household Food Index: Cape Town

Foods tracked	Quantity tracked	Index 2025/26			change in Rands		change in %	
		Mar_2025	Feb_2026	Mar_2026	Feb 2026 vs. Mar 2026	Mar 2025 vs. Mar 2026	Feb 2026 vs. Mar 2026	Mar 2025 vs. Mar 2026
Maize meal	30kg	R371,70	R321,97	R311,20	-R 10,77	-R 60,50	-3%	-16%
Rice	10kg	R192,57	R151,32	R132,16	-R 19,16	-R 60,42	-13%	-31%
Cake Flour	10kg	R132,49	R123,48	R117,91	-R 5,58	-R 14,58	-5%	-11%
White sugar	10kg	R233,57	R232,07	R232,57	R 0,50	-R 1,00	0%	0%
Sugar beans	5kg	R272,67	R234,13	R243,25	R 9,12	-R 29,42	4%	-11%
Samp	5kg	R74,07	R71,41	R76,66	R 5,25	R 2,59	7%	3%
Cooking oil	5L	R157,90	R163,52	R167,69	R 4,17	R 9,79	3%	6%
Salt	1kg	R10,57	R11,49	R9,74	-R 1,75	-R 0,83	-15%	-8%
Potatoes	10kg	R96,77	R89,03	R82,88	-R 6,15	-R 13,89	-7%	-14%
Onions	10kg	R87,87	R105,13	R89,79	-R 15,34	R 1,91	-15%	2%
Frozen chicken portions	10kg	R411,23	R429,73	R434,98	R 5,25	R 23,75	1%	6%
Curry powder	200g	R42,32	R40,81	R41,32	R 0,52	-R 1,00	1%	-2%
Stock cubes	24 cubes x2	R48,15	R46,48	R51,15	R 4,67	R 3,00	10%	6%
Soup	400g x2	R68,42	R59,09	R64,23	R 5,14	-R 4,19	9%	-6%
Tea	250g	R31,66	R29,24	R32,74	R 3,50	R 1,08	12%	3%
Full cream milk	6L	R86,56	R89,56	R91,81	R 2,25	R 5,25	3%	6%
Maas	4L	R64,74	R62,24	R60,90	-R 1,33	-R 3,84	-2%	-6%
Eggs	60 eggs	R150,15	R144,56	R137,80	-R 6,76	-R 12,35	-5%	-8%
Chicken feet	2kg	R37,98	R46,73	R41,23	-R 5,50	R 3,25	-12%	9%
Gizzards	2kg	R78,98	R86,10	R83,47	-R 2,63	R 4,49	-3%	6%
Chicken livers	2kg	R58,73	R60,48	R56,73	-R 3,75	-R 2,00	-6%	-3%
Beef liver	2kg	R97,98	R117,48	R110,27	-R 7,21	R 12,29	-6%	13%
Beef	2kg	R162,48	R185,98	R187,23	R 1,25	R 24,75	1%	15%
Wors	2kg	R108,73	R85,48	R86,97	R 1,49	-R 21,76	2%	-20%
Beef tripe	2kg	R79,58	R76,98	R76,98	R 0,00	-R 2,60	0%	-3%
Fish	2kg	R97,48	R108,84	R107,12	-R 1,71	R 9,64	-2%	10%
Tomatoes	6kg	R136,14	R133,16	R138,96	R 5,80	R 2,82	4%	2%
Carrots	5kg	R39,87	R42,22	R45,32	R 3,09	R 5,45	7%	14%
Butternut	10kg	R83,53	R97,19	R79,73	-R 17,47	-R 3,80	-18%	-5%
Spinach	8 bunches	R111,92	R117,74	R114,59	-R 3,15	R 2,67	-3%	2%
Cabbage	2 heads	R44,34	R47,31	R40,53	-R 6,79	-R 3,82	-14%	-9%
Green pepper	2kg	R67,18	R66,34	R58,71	-R 7,64	-R 8,47	-12%	-13%
Cremora	800g	R59,82	R58,32	R54,99	-R 3,34	-R 4,84	-6%	-8%
Tinned pilchards	400g x6	R144,94	R142,94	R144,94	R 2,00	R 0,00	1%	0%
Canned beans	410g x6	R87,44	R92,44	R87,95	-R 4,50	R 0,50	-5%	1%
Bananas	4kg	R73,33	R79,96	R73,05	-R 6,91	-R 0,28	-9%	0%
Apples	3kg	R53,23	R51,48	R48,06	-R 3,42	-R 5,17	-7%	-10%
Oranges	7kg	R86,64	R114,98	R114,98	R 0,00	R 28,34	0%	33%
Margarine	1kg	R39,90	R39,82	R41,65	R 1,83	R 1,75	5%	4%
Peanut butter	400g x2	R82,16	R79,80	R85,07	R 5,27	R 2,91	7%	4%
Polony	2.5kg	R57,99	R64,09	R67,79	R 3,70	R 9,80	6%	17%
Apricot jam	900g	R38,16	R40,41	R40,16	-R 0,25	R 2,00	-1%	5%
White bread	25 loaves	R432,10	R408,15	R412,31	R 4,17	-R 19,79	1%	-5%
Brown bread	25 loaves	R411,27	R383,15	R379,36	-R 3,78	-R 31,91	-1%	-8%
Total household food basket		R 5 305,31	R 5 232,82	R 5 156,88	-R 75,94	-R 148,43	-1,5%	-2,8%

Month-on-month: The cost of the **Cape Town household food basket decreased** by **R75,94 (-1,5%)** from R5 232,82 in February 2026 to R5 156,88 in March 2026.

Year-on-year: The cost of the **Cape Town household food basket decreased** by **R148,43 (-2,8%)** from R5 305,31 in March 2025 to R5 156,88 in March 2026.

12. MARCH 2026 Household Food Index: Springbok

Foods tracked	Quantity tracked	Index 2025/26			change in Rands		change in %	
		Mar_2025	Feb_2026	Mar_2026	Feb 2026 vs. Mar 2026	Mar 2025 vs. Mar 2026	Feb 2026 vs. Mar 2026	Mar 2025 vs. Mar 2026
Maize meal	30kg	R324,97	R382,97	R373,97	-R 9,00	R 49,00	-2%	15%
Rice	10kg	R196,66	R169,32	R152,66	-R 16,67	-R 44,00	-10%	-22%
Cake Flour	10kg	R129,99	R119,99	R119,99	R 0,00	-R 10,00	0%	-8%
White sugar	10kg	R229,99	R263,32	R263,32	R 0,00	R 33,33	0%	14%
Sugar beans	5kg	R269,90	R224,92	R208,25	-R 16,67	-R 61,65	-7%	-23%
Samp	5kg	R76,32	R103,98	R96,65	-R 7,33	R 20,33	-7%	27%
Cooking oil	5L	R191,23	R164,56	R166,65	R 2,08	-R 24,58	1%	-13%
Salt	1kg	R20,99	R18,99	R21,32	R 2,33	R 0,33	12%	2%
Potatoes	10kg	R104,74	R91,89	R88,08	-R 3,81	-R 16,66	-4%	-16%
Onions	10kg	R111,54	R142,81	R134,40	-R 8,41	R 22,86	-6%	20%
Frozen chicken portions	10kg	R473,72	R448,72	R447,47	-R 1,25	-R 26,25	0%	-6%
Curry powder	200g	R49,32	R48,32	R44,99	-R 3,33	-R 4,33	-7%	-9%
Stock cubes	24 cubes x2	R39,31	R49,98	R46,65	-R 3,33	R 7,33	-7%	19%
Soup	400g x2	R42,65	R41,98	R41,31	-R 0,67	-R 1,33	-2%	-3%
Tea	250g	R32,66	R31,99	R33,99	R 2,00	R 1,33	6%	4%
Full cream milk	6L	R89,99	R89,99	R89,99	R 0,00	R 0,00	0%	0%
Maas	4L	R64,98	R66,99	R65,65	-R 1,34	R 0,67	-2%	1%
Eggs	60 eggs	R174,65	R151,31	R152,65	R 1,33	-R 22,00	1%	-13%
Chicken feet	2kg	R71,98	R89,98	R79,98	-R 10,00	R 8,00	-11%	11%
Gizzards	2kg	R99,98	R99,98	R99,98	R 0,00	R 0,00	0%	0%
Chicken livers	2kg	R117,94	R105,96	R107,96	R 2,00	-R 9,98	2%	-8%
Beef liver	2kg	R113,98	R113,98	R118,98	R 5,00	R 5,00	4%	4%
Beef	2kg	R179,98	R184,98	R179,98	-R 5,00	R 0,00	-3%	0%
Wors	2kg	R179,98	R177,98	R179,98	R 2,00	R 0,00	1%	0%
Beef tripe	2kg	R119,98	R115,98	R115,98	R 0,00	-R 4,00	0%	-3%
Fish	2kg	R179,98	R190,98	R194,98	R 4,00	R 15,00	2%	8%
Tomatoes	6kg	R131,94	R111,94	R139,94	R 28,00	R 8,00	25%	6%
Carrots	5kg	R54,96	R50,52	R53,30	R 2,78	-R 1,66	6%	-3%
Butternut	10kg	R102,36	R126,17	R124,74	-R 1,43	R 22,38	-1%	22%
Spinach	8 bunches	R119,92	R130,59	R130,59	R 0,00	R 10,67	0%	9%
Cabbage	2 heads	R38,65	R42,65	R45,31	R 2,67	R 6,67	6%	17%
Green pepper	2kg	R79,97	R69,98	R69,98	R 0,00	-R 9,99	0%	-12%
Cremora	800g	R52,99	R56,32	R55,99	-R 0,33	R 3,00	-1%	6%
Tinned pilchards	400g x6	R145,94	R149,94	R157,94	R 8,00	R 12,00	5%	8%
Canned beans	410g x6	R95,94	R101,94	R101,94	R 0,00	R 6,00	0%	6%
Bananas	4kg	R71,95	R81,28	R79,95	-R 1,33	R 8,00	-2%	11%
Apples	3kg	R38,65	R48,98	R44,98	-R 4,00	R 6,33	-8%	16%
Oranges	7kg	R88,63	R107,75	R107,75	R 0,00	R 19,12	0%	22%
Margarine	1kg	R35,99	R38,66	R39,99	R 1,33	R 4,00	3%	11%
Peanut butter	400g x2	R83,98	R75,31	R79,31	R 4,00	-R 4,67	5%	-6%
Polony	2.5kg	R59,99	R59,32	R56,66	-R 2,67	-R 3,33	-4%	-6%
Apricot jam	900g	R39,66	R38,99	R39,66	R 0,67	R 0,00	2%	0%
White bread	25 loaves	R374,75	R374,75	R374,75	R 0,00	R 0,00	0%	0%
Brown bread	25 loaves	R362,25	R362,25	R362,25	R 0,00	R 0,00	0%	0%
Total household food basket		R 5 665,91	R 5 719,20	R 5 690,83	-R 28,37	R 24,92	-0,5%	0,4%

Month-on-month: The cost of the **Springbok household food basket decreased** by **R28,37 (-0,5%)** from R5 719,20 in February 2026 to R5 690,83 in March 2026.

Year-on-year: The cost of the **Springbok household food basket increased** by **R24,92 (0,4%)** from R5 665,91 in March 2025 to R5 690,83 in March 2026.

13. MARCH 2026 Household Food Index: Pietermaritzburg

Foods tracked	Quantity tracked	Index 2025/26			change in Rands		change in %	
		Mar_2025	Feb_2026	Mar_2026	Feb 2026 vs. Mar 2026	Mar 2025 vs. Mar 2026	Feb 2026 vs. Mar 2026	Mar 2025 vs. Mar 2026
Maize meal	30kg	R353,37	R320,97	R302,97	-R 18,00	-R 50,40	-6%	-14%
Rice	10kg	R130,79	R103,79	R98,59	-R 5,20	-R 32,20	-5%	-25%
Cake Flour	10kg	R125,79	R123,39	R105,19	-R 18,20	-R 20,60	-15%	-16%
White sugar	10kg	R211,19	R220,99	R208,99	-R 12,00	-R 2,20	-5%	-1%
Sugar beans	5kg	R204,99	R148,19	R122,59	-R 25,60	-R 82,40	-17%	-40%
Samp	5kg	R59,99	R48,39	R48,99	R 0,60	-R 11,00	1%	-18%
Cooking oil	5L	R159,99	R160,99	R154,99	-R 6,00	-R 5,00	-4%	-3%
Salt	1kg	R20,39	R21,59	R21,39	-R 0,20	R 1,00	-1%	5%
Potatoes	10kg	R82,84	R80,84	R80,84	R 0,00	-R 2,00	0%	-2%
Onions	10kg	R72,84	R72,84	R93,12	R 20,28	R 20,29	28%	28%
Frozen chicken portions	10kg	R428,98	R481,99	R485,94	R 3,94	R 56,96	1%	13%
Curry powder	200g	R38,19	R37,59	R39,19	R 1,60	R 1,00	4%	3%
Stock cubes	24 cubes x2	R48,38	R47,98	R43,98	-R 4,00	-R 4,40	-8%	-9%
Soup	400g x2	R35,58	R39,98	R37,58	-R 2,40	R 2,00	-6%	6%
Tea	250g	R27,79	R30,19	R28,19	-R 2,00	R 0,40	-7%	1%
Full cream milk	6L	R100,99	R97,99	R96,99	-R 1,00	-R 4,00	-1%	-4%
Maas	4L	R54,99	R57,79	R56,39	-R 1,40	R 1,40	-2%	3%
Eggs	60 eggs	R145,58	R124,78	R129,98	R 5,20	-R 15,60	4%	-11%
Chicken feet	2kg	R91,94	R91,44	R69,94	-R 21,50	-R 22,00	-24%	-24%
Gizzards	2kg	R91,94	R132,94	R128,94	-R 4,01	R 37,00	-3%	40%
Chicken livers	2kg	R65,44	R79,25	R65,92	-R 13,33	R 0,48	-17%	1%
Beef liver	2kg	R103,94	R142,94	R144,94	R 2,00	R 41,00	1%	39%
Beef	2kg	R178,94	R235,44	R200,94	-R 34,50	R 22,01	-15%	12%
Wors	2kg	R152,48	R169,94	R173,94	R 4,00	R 21,46	2%	14%
Beef tripe	2kg	R77,48	R86,94	R94,94	R 8,00	R 17,46	9%	23%
Fish	2kg	R125,98	R141,44	R144,94	R 3,50	R 18,96	2%	15%
Tomatoes	6kg	R92,23	R86,76	R91,30	R 4,54	-R 0,93	5%	-1%
Carrots	5kg	R29,79	R62,57	R37,98	-R 24,58	R 8,19	-39%	27%
Butternut	10kg	R82,27	R66,36	R75,41	R 9,05	-R 6,86	14%	-8%
Spinach	8 bunches	R110,32	R95,92	R95,92	R 0,00	-R 14,40	0%	-13%
Cabbage	2 heads	R40,48	R30,39	R43,98	R 13,59	R 3,50	45%	9%
Green pepper	2kg	R47,98	R43,98	R44,38	R 0,40	-R 3,60	1%	-8%
Cremora	800g	R55,39	R54,99	R55,59	R 0,60	R 0,20	1%	0%
Tinned pilchards	400g x6	R137,95	R140,34	R136,15	-R 4,19	-R 1,80	-3%	-1%
Canned beans	410g x6	R76,75	R78,55	R73,16	-R 5,39	-R 3,59	-7%	-5%
Bananas	4kg	R52,96	R59,16	R61,96	R 2,80	R 9,00	5%	17%
Apples	3kg	R42,79	R41,19	R38,79	-R 2,40	-R 4,00	-6%	-9%
Oranges	7kg	R45,66	R104,96	R104,96	R 0,00	R 59,30	0%	130%
Margarine	1kg	R48,39	R48,79	R47,99	-R 0,80	-R 0,40	-2%	-1%
Peanut butter	400g x2	R66,78	R84,38	R79,18	-R 5,20	R 12,40	-6%	19%
Polony	2.5kg	R72,99	R91,39	R92,19	R 0,80	R 19,20	1%	26%
Apricot jam	900g	R35,99	R37,39	R36,19	-R 1,20	R 0,20	-3%	1%
White bread	25 loaves	R350,50	R402,40	R369,85	-R 32,55	R 19,35	-8%	6%
Brown bread	25 loaves	R326,00	R377,40	R337,40	-R 40,00	R 11,40	-11%	3%
Total household food basket		R 4 906,00	R5 207,50	R5 002,77	-R 204,74	R 96,77	-3,9%	2,0%

Month-on-month: The cost of the Pietermaritzburg household food basket *decreased* by **R204,74 (-3,9%)** from R5 207,50 in February 2026 to R5 002,77 in March 2026.

Year-on-year: The cost of the Pietermaritzburg household food basket *increased* by **R96,77 (2,0%)** from R4 906,00 in March 2025 to R5 002,77 in March 2026.

14. MARCH 2026 Household Food Index: Mtubatuba

Foods tracked	Quantity tracked	Index 2025/26			change in Rands		change in %	
		Mar_2025	Feb_2026	Mar_2026	Feb 2026 vs. Mar 2026	Mar 2025 vs. Mar 2026	Feb 2026 vs. Mar 2026	Mar 2025 vs. Mar 2026
Maize meal	30kg	R399,97	R314,97	R309,97	-R 5,00	-R 90,00	-2%	-23%
Rice	10kg	R171,66	R143,32	R139,99	-R 3,33	-R 31,67	-2%	-18%
Cake Flour	10kg	R123,32	R119,99	R126,66	R 6,67	R 3,33	6%	3%
White sugar	10kg	R209,99	R231,66	R199,99	-R 31,67	-R 10,00	-14%	-5%
Sugar beans	5kg	R209,99	R154,15	R144,99	-R 9,17	-R 65,00	-6%	-31%
Samp	5kg	R72,66	R66,66	R71,99	R 5,33	-R 0,67	8%	-1%
Cooking oil	5L	R156,66	R161,66	R151,66	-R 10,00	-R 5,00	-6%	-3%
Salt	1kg	R13,66	R13,32	R12,66	-R 0,67	-R 1,00	-5%	-7%
Potatoes	10kg	R109,51	R97,60	R81,89	-R 15,72	-R 27,62	-16%	-25%
Onions	10kg	R90,46	R85,70	R98,55	R 12,85	R 8,09	15%	9%
Frozen chicken portions	10kg	R469,98	R419,98	R419,98	R 0,00	-R 50,00	0%	-11%
Curry powder	200g	R38,99	R38,66	R38,32	-R 0,33	-R 0,67	-1%	-2%
Stock cubes	24 cubes x2	R53,98	R53,31	R49,31	-R 4,00	-R 4,67	-8%	-9%
Soup	400g x2	R63,31	R66,64	R66,64	R 0,00	R 3,33	0%	5%
Tea	250g	R32,99	R30,32	R35,66	R 5,33	R 2,67	18%	8%
Full cream milk	6L	R98,32	R98,32	R101,32	R 3,00	R 3,00	3%	3%
Maas	4L	R59,66	R54,32	R54,66	R 0,33	-R 5,00	1%	-8%
Eggs	60 eggs	R146,65	R139,98	R139,98	R 0,00	-R 6,67	0%	-5%
Chicken feet	2kg	R82,32	R90,98	R84,98	-R 6,00	R 2,66	-7%	3%
Gizzards	2kg	R99,98	R114,98	R116,98	R 2,00	R 17,00	2%	17%
Chicken livers	2kg	R81,98	R84,98	R89,98	R 5,00	R 8,00	6%	10%
Beef liver	2kg	R108,98	R139,98	R139,98	R 0,00	R 31,00	0%	28%
Beef	2kg	R159,98	R204,98	R199,98	-R 5,00	R 40,00	-2%	25%
Wors	2kg	R174,98	R229,98	R214,98	-R 15,00	R 40,00	-7%	23%
Beef tripe	2kg	R79,98	R139,98	R129,98	-R 10,00	R 50,00	-7%	63%
Fish	2kg	R141,98	R159,98	R164,98	R 5,00	R 23,00	3%	16%
Tomatoes	6kg	R161,94	R137,94	R127,94	-R 10,00	-R 34,00	-7%	-21%
Carrots	5kg	R57,76	R61,08	R46,65	-R 14,43	-R 11,11	-24%	-19%
Butternut	10kg	R94,42	R82,28	R79,98	-R 2,31	-R 14,45	-3%	-15%
Spinach	8 bunches	R95,92	R95,92	R95,92	R 0,00	R 0,00	0%	0%
Cabbage	2 heads	R41,31	R39,98	R43,98	R 4,00	R 2,67	10%	6%
Green pepper	2kg	R97,97	R54,65	R57,31	R 2,67	-R 40,66	5%	-42%
Cremora	800g	R63,32	R61,99	R54,32	-R 7,67	-R 9,00	-12%	-14%
Tinned pilchards	400g x6	R169,94	R183,94	R175,94	-R 8,00	R 6,00	-4%	4%
Canned beans	410g x6	R101,94	R101,94	R95,94	-R 6,00	-R 6,00	-6%	-6%
Bananas	4kg	R65,29	R70,63	R71,96	R 1,33	R 6,67	2%	10%
Apples	3kg	R50,66	R53,32	R43,32	-R 10,00	-R 7,33	-19%	-14%
Oranges	7kg	R85,71	R104,97	R104,97	R 0,00	R 19,26	0%	22%
Margarine	1kg	R36,99	R40,66	R47,66	R 7,00	R 10,67	17%	29%
Peanut butter	400g x2	R73,31	R81,31	R99,98	R 18,67	R 26,67	23%	36%
Polony	2.5kg	R66,66	R66,66	R60,32	-R 6,33	-R 6,33	-10%	-10%
Apricot jam	900g	R36,99	R43,99	R45,99	R 2,00	R 9,00	5%	24%
White bread	25 loaves	R333,08	R349,75	R349,75	R 0,00	R 16,67	0%	5%
Brown bread	25 loaves	R312,33	R316,42	R324,75	R 8,33	R 12,42	3%	4%
Total household food basket		R 5 397,48	R 5 403,84	R 5 312,73	-R 91,11	-R 84,75	-1,7%	-1,6%

Month-on-month: The cost of the **Mtubatuba household food basket decreased** by **R91,11 (-1,7%)** from R5 403,84 in February 2026 to R5 312,73 in March 2026.

Year-on-year: The cost of the **Mtubatuba household food basket decreased** by **R84,75 (-1,6%)** from R5 397,48 in March 2025 to R5 312,73 in March 2026.

15. MARCH 2026 Household Food Index: Mthatha*

Foods tracked	Quantity tracked	Index 2025/26			change in Rands		change in %	
		Feb_2025	Feb_2026	Mar_2026	Feb 2026 vs. Mar 2026	Mar 2025 vs. Mar 2026	Feb 2026 vs. Mar 2026	Mar 2025 vs. Mar 2026
Maize meal	30kg	R350,97	R332,97	R337,97	R 5,00	-R 13,00	2%	-4%
Rice	10kg	R182,49	R151,66	R143,32	-R 8,33	-R 39,17	-5%	-21%
Cake Flour	10kg	R149,49	R124,99	R127,49	R 2,50	-R 22,00	2%	-15%
White sugar	10kg	R239,82	R247,49	R248,32	R 0,83	R 8,50	0%	4%
Sugar beans	5kg	R236,15	R192,58	R185,48	-R 7,10	-R 50,67	-4%	-21%
Samp	5kg	R77,32	R72,49	R73,32	R 0,83	-R 4,00	1%	-5%
Cooking oil	5L	R159,99	R142,49	R149,16	R 6,67	-R 10,83	5%	-7%
Salt	1kg	R17,82	R19,49	R19,49	R 0,00	R 1,67	0%	9%
Potatoes	10kg	R112,01	R79,63	R79,85	R 0,22	-R 32,17	0%	-29%
Onions	10kg	R94,41	R85,94	R95,94	R 10,00	R 1,52	12%	2%
Frozen chicken portions	10kg	R394,94	R424,94	R439,98	R 15,05	R 45,05	4%	11%
Curry powder	200g	R41,16	R38,99	R39,82	R 0,83	-R 1,33	2%	-3%
Stock cubes	24 cubes x2	R47,98	R46,98	R48,65	R 1,67	R 0,67	4%	1%
Soup	400g x2	R54,31	R57,65	R58,65	R 1,00	R 4,33	2%	8%
Tea	250g	R32,82	R37,99	R37,32	-R 0,67	R 4,50	-2%	14%
Full cream milk	6L	R92,49	R83,99	R89,99	R 6,00	-R 2,50	7%	-3%
Maas	4L	R60,82	R59,66	R61,66	R 2,00	R 0,83	3%	1%
Eggs	60 eggs	R160,98	R131,65	R135,81	R 4,17	-R 25,17	3%	-16%
Chicken feet	2kg	R84,46	R74,15	R72,17	-R 1,97	-R 12,29	-3%	-15%
Gizzards	2kg	R86,89	R107,92	R107,92	R 0,00	R 21,03	0%	24%
Chicken livers	2kg	R83,65	R87,94	R83,42	-R 4,52	-R 0,23	-5%	0%
Beef liver	2kg	R114,10	R122,44	R119,94	-R 2,50	R 5,83	-2%	5%
Beef	2kg	R169,94	R205,94	R199,94	-R 6,00	R 30,00	-3%	18%
Wors	2kg	R165,94	R189,94	R169,98	-R 19,96	R 4,04	-11%	2%
Beef tripe	2kg	R72,44	R96,44	R97,44	R 1,00	R 25,00	1%	35%
Fish	2kg	R147,18	R155,93	R155,93	R 0,00	R 8,75	0%	6%
Tomatoes	6kg	R165,83	R167,83	R181,83	R 14,00	R 16,00	8%	10%
Carrots	5kg	R51,21	R41,32	R48,72	R 7,40	-R 2,49	18%	-5%
Butternut	10kg	R86,65	R82,05	R88,67	R 6,63	R 2,02	8%	2%
Spinach	8 bunches	R125,25	R117,92	R123,92	R 6,00	-R 1,33	5%	-1%
Cabbage	2 heads	R45,98	R48,31	R52,65	R 4,33	R 6,67	9%	14%
Green pepper	2kg	R49,31	R60,51	R68,48	R 7,97	R 19,17	13%	39%
Cremora	800g	R60,99	R63,49	R55,82	-R 7,67	-R 5,17	-12%	-8%
Tinned pilchards	400g x6	R163,94	R165,94	R164,94	-R 1,00	R 1,00	-1%	1%
Canned beans	410g x6	R108,44	R103,94	R103,94	R 0,00	-R 4,50	0%	-4%
Bananas	4kg	R80,76	R78,63	R78,76	R 0,13	-R 2,00	0%	-2%
Apples	3kg	R50,82	R49,99	R46,49	-R 3,50	-R 4,33	-7%	-9%
Oranges	7kg	R66,91	R66,99	R66,99	R 0,00	R 0,08	0%	0%
Margarine	1kg	R48,49	R45,32	R46,99	R 1,67	-R 1,50	4%	-3%
Peanut butter	400g x2	R94,65	R74,98	R79,98	R 5,00	-R 14,67	7%	-15%
Polony	2.5kg	R72,99	R58,99	R60,99	R 2,00	-R 12,00	3%	-16%
Apricot jam	900g	R45,66	R43,99	R41,16	-R 2,83	-R 4,50	-6%	-10%
White bread	25 loaves	R414,33	R403,50	R412,25	R 8,75	-R 2,08	2%	-1%
Brown bread	25 loaves	R399,75	R372,67	R381,00	R 8,33	-R 18,75	2%	-5%
Total household food basket		R 5 562,53	R 5 418,59	R 5 482,52	R 63,93	-R 80,00	1,2%	-1,4%

Month-on-month: The cost of the **Mthatha household food basket** *increased* by **R63,93 (1,2%)** from R5 418,59 in February 2026 to R5 482,52 in March 2026.

Year-on-year: The cost of the **Mthatha household food basket** *decreased* by **R80,00 (-1,4%)** from R5 562,53 in March 2025 to R5 482,52 in March 2026.

* Note: Mthatha is not included in the Average Household Food Basket Data. It will be included at a future date.

16. 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.

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 6 areas: Joburg, Durban, Cape Town, Pietermaritzburg, Springbok and Mtubatuba), it is important to note that whilst the new basket reflects the core foods in the trollies across the six 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 47 supermarkets and 32 butcheries.

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.

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.

Summary of the 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), Pietermaritzburg, Mtubatuba (in Northern KwaZulu-Natal), and Springbok (in the Northern Cape). 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 47 supermarkets and 32 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 the first week 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 6 areas. Weighting is as follows: 25,5% for Joburg, Durban & Cape Town; 10,6% Pietermaritzburg, and 6,4% for Springbok, and Mtubatuba.

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