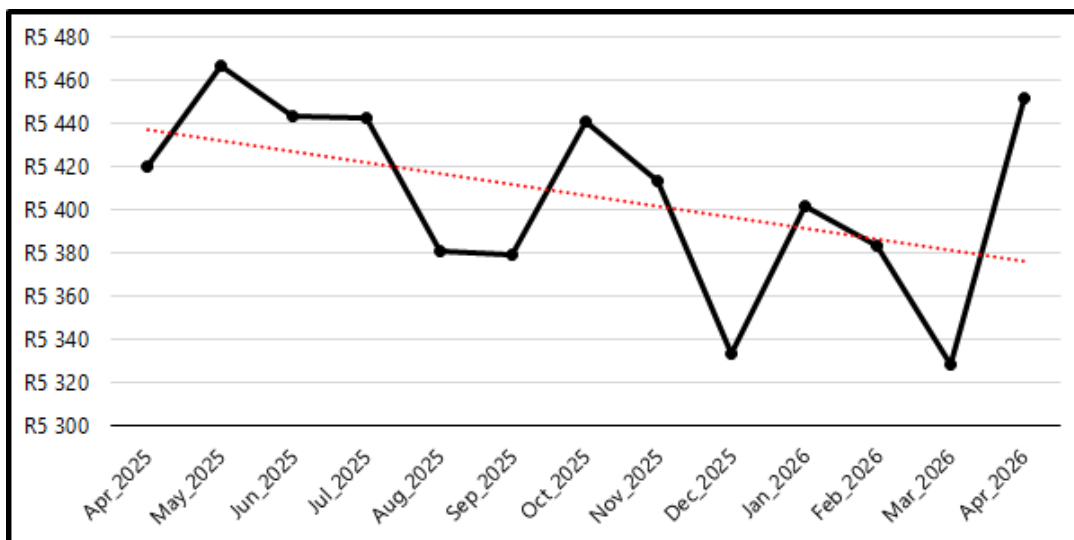




## **PMBEJD's April Household Food Basket shows early impact of rising fuel prices.**

Whilst food price inflation has been easing over the past several months; the April Household Food Basket shows a distinct shift upwards. **PMBEJD's April Household Food Basket increased by R123,56 (2,3%) month-on-month to R5 452,09.** Whilst our historical data shows moderate increases between March and April of each year (1,2% in 2023, 1,1% in 2024; 1,7% in 2025), driven primarily by seasonal price fluctuations on some vegetables and fruit, meat and dairy; this month's Household Food Basket increase of 2,3% suggests an early impact of increases in fuel prices on local food prices, resulting from the USA and Israel war on Iran. See Table 1.

**Table 1:** Total Household Food Basket from April 2025 to April 2026.



The South African economy (and food value chains) is highly exposed to fuel and energy price increases; and South African citizens carry the burden of these increases through higher costs of goods and services.

1. The South African economy runs primarily on diesel fuel as an input. South Africa imports around 70-80% of its fuels: **66-67% of the diesel consumed in South African is imported, as a finished product.** Since 2020, South Africa's domestic refinery capacity has declined substantially with only 2 of the original 6 crude oil refineries operational – NATREF (Sasolburg) and Astron Energy (Cape Town). Diesel prices at the pump are not regulated, and may bring in unpredictability and instability for the economy.
2. South Africa's highly **consolidated food manufacturers, producers and retailers** operate on internal efficiencies with centralised operational processing and packaging hubs. Most of our foods are transported considerable distances from these hubs to supermarkets along our country's vast national highways and roads. These internal company efficiencies may become a liability if exposed to spikes in fuel and electricity prices; and transportation disruption. Major farming/agriculture companies and food manufacturers can apply for a 100% refund on the General Fuel Levy and Road Accident Fund Levy, via the Diesel Refund Scheme, which lowers costs somewhat. However, increases on the basic fuel price of diesel and annual electricity tariffs are still significant company expenses, with these higher costs passed onto consumers.
3. **South Africans buy most of our food from supermarkets.** We are "just in time buyers," we do not have stores of food in pantries waiting for us to use when we run out of food; we have barely enough food in our homes for a few weeks and then when we get money we go to the supermarket and buy again. A surge in the cost of basic food prices is unlikely to be absorbed by the majority of South African households as our

*unemployment levels are too high, and our social security reforms and minimum wage floors are not adequate to enable households to secure sufficient food for the month, nor to have a savings buffer in times of crises. A sharp escalation of prices on basic foods could result in a severe food security crisis; which could quickly spiral into a National Security threat – something we have experienced during the July 2021 Unrest.*

*Given South Africa's structural vulnerabilities, and with our April household food price data suggesting an early impact of higher fuel costs and electricity on the prices of foods on our supermarket shelves, we advise that cautionary steps continue, and that the situation be monitored carefully, including opportunistic price increases by producers and retailers; with additional plans put into place to mitigate potential risks to South Africa's food availability, access and affordability, and National Security. **The temporary relief offered by reducing the general fuel levy by R3/litre should remain in place for May and plans to extend it for longer should start being considered and worked out.***

*We now live in an age of multiple crises: wars and geopolitical tensions, pandemics, climate change, and local political and social dissatisfaction and unrest. In the long term we need to start dealing with our structural vulnerabilities and build resilience as we should be expecting more crises going forward. This requires a balance between economic and National Security needs versus the need for cost efficiency, because, come a crisis, it will mean that we are not hit as hard.*

### **1. Key data from the April 2026 Household Affordability Index**

The April 2026 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 April 2026:** The average cost of the Household Food Basket is **R5 452,09**.
- **Month-on-month:** The average cost of the Household Food Basket **increased** by **R123,56 (2,3%)**, from R5 328,53 in March 2026 to R5 452,09 in April 2026.
- **Year-on-year:** The average cost of the Household Food Basket **increased** by **R31,79 (0,6%)**, from R5 420,30 in April 2025 to R5 452,09 in April 2026.

### **2. Food pricing trends in April 2026.**

In April, of the 44 foods tracked in the basket: 30 foods increased in price, and 14 foods decreased in price (See page 2 of April 2026, Household Affordability Index).

*Below are the month-on-month price movements of individual foods in the average household food basket:*

**Foods in the basket which increased in price in April 2026 by 5% or more**, include: onions (23%), chicken feet (7%), fish (8%), tomatoes (10%), carrots (5%), green pepper (12%), and bananas (13%).

**Foods in the basket which increased in price in April 2026 by 2% or more**, include: rice (4%), sugar beans (4%), cooking oil (2%), salt (3%), potatoes (4%), frozen chicken portions (2%), soup (4%), full cream milk (3%), Maas (4%), chicken gizzards (2%), chicken livers (2%), beef liver (3%), beef (3%), beef tripe (4%), butternut (2%), tinned pilchards (4%), and white bread (2%).

**Foods in the basket which decreased in price in April 2026, by 5% or more**, include: oranges (-8%).

**Foods in the basket which decreased in price in April 2026, by 2% or more**, include: maize meal (-2%), curry powder (-2%), tea (-2%), apples (-3%), and peanut butter (-3%).

### **3. Inflation on the food baskets per area tracked.**

*In April 2026, all food baskets increased in price: Joburg (R79,28), Durban (R159,98), Cape Town (R11,08), Springbok (R172,44), Pietermaritzburg (R248,25), Mtubatuba (R108,17), and Mthatha (R170,82).*

*(See pages 8-15 for area specific data, in the April 2026, Household Affordability Index).*

#### 4. **Statistics South Africa's Consumer Price Index and Producer Price Index.**

Statistics South Africa's latest *Consumer Price Index* for March 2026<sup>1</sup> shows that **Headline inflation was 3,1%**, and for the **lowest expenditure quintiles 1-3 it is 2,2%, 2,3%, and 2,6%** respectively. **CPI Food & non-alcoholic beverages inflation was 3,6%**. STATS SA's *Producer Price Index* for February 2026<sup>2</sup> shows **Agriculture was -7,1%**, of which, *Products of crops and horticulture* was **-21,2%**, and *Live animals and animal products* was **16,9%**.

#### 5. **Workers and The National Minimum Wage**

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.**

In April 2026, with **19 working-days**, the maximum National Minimum Wage for a General Worker is **R4 594,96**. 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 people**. The maximum wage of **R4 594,96** when disbursed in a **family of four persons is R1 148,74**. 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).<sup>3</sup>

On our calculations, electricity, and transport will take up **R2 701,85 (58,8%)** of a worker's wage in April 2026 (R1520,00 for transport and R1 181,85 for electricity).

After paying for transport and electricity, workers are left with **R1 893,11**.

Food is bought after monies for transport and electricity have been paid for or set aside.

The April 2026 average cost of a basic nutritional food basket for a family of four persons is **R3 787,34** (See page 5 of April 2026, *Household Affordability Index*).

The minimum shortfall on food for a workers' family in April 2026 is **50,0%** (a shortfall of R1 894,23 on a basket of nutritional food costing R3 787,34). **If all the remaining money (R1 893,11) went to buy food, then for a family of 4, it would provide R473,28 per person per month. This is 45% 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. (See page 7 of April 2026, *Household Affordability Index*).

#### 6. **Women and children: the Child Support Grant**

In April 2026, the average monthly cost to feed a child a basic nutritious diet was **R964,94**. Over the past month, the average cost to feed a child a basic nutritious diet **increased by R30,02 (3,2%)**. Year-on-year, the average cost to feed a child a basic nutritious diet **decreased by R8,30 (-0,9%)**. See page 5 of April 2026, *Household Affordability Index*.

**In April 2026 the Child Support Grant was increased by R20, from R560 per child per month, to R580 per child per month.**

*The additional R20 on the Child Support Grant for the 2026/7 term has not made a dent in the substantial deficit faced by caregivers in trying to ensure that their children are properly fed. The Child Support Grant value is still far below the*

<sup>1</sup> STATSSA (2026). **Consumer Price Index March 2026**. Statistical release P0141. 22 April 2026. Statistics South Africa. Pretoria. P3, 6.

See Link: <https://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0141/P0141March2026.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> STATSSA (2026). **Producer Price Index February 2026**. Statistical release P0142.1. 26 March 2026. Statistics South Africa. Pretoria. P12. See Link: <https://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0141/P0141February2026.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> STATSSA (2026). **National Poverty Lines 2025**. Statistical Release P0310.1. 29 January 2026. Statistics South Africa. Pretoria. P3. See link: <https://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P03101/P031012025.pdf>

Food Poverty Line, and PMBEJD's data on the average cost of a nutritional food basket for young children of different ages. In April 2026, the average cost to feed a child a nutritional monthly diet increased by R30,02, with the Total Rand-value (R964,94) well above the Child Support Grant (R580,00). See Table 2.

**Table 2:** Average cost of feeding children of different ages a basic nutritional monthly diet (April 2026).

By age of child			change in Rands	change in %
	Mar_2026	Apr_2026	Mar 2026 vs. Apr 2026	Mar 2026 vs. Apr 2026
Small child aged 3-9 years	R825,09	R854,11	R 29,02	3,5%
Small child aged 10-13 years	R897,06	R926,55	R 29,49	3,3%
Girl child aged 14-18 years	R948,90	R978,55	R 29,65	3,1%
Boy child aged 14-18 years	R1 068,65	R1 100,56	R 31,91	3,0%
<b>Average for all children</b>	<b>R934,93</b>	<b>R964,94</b>	<b>R 30,02</b>	<b>3,2%</b>

In April 2026, the **Child Support Grant of R580 per month** is **32% below the National Food Poverty Line of R855 per month** (in May 2025 prices), and **40% below** the average monthly **cost to feed a child a basic nutritious diet (R964.94)**.

### 7. PMBEJD's Basic Nutritional Food Basket for families

As financial and economic circumstances worsen, so too does household health and nutrition. The gap between what women are able to buy for their families and what they need to buy for proper nutrition widens.

The *Basic Nutritional Food Basket*, is a basket designed by a Registered Dietician and includes foods *which does constitute proper and healthy nutrition, unlike the Household Food Basket, which does not.*<sup>4</sup> The Basic Nutritional Food Basket ensures that current food expenditure (severely limited by affordability constraints) is not conflated with the food expenditure required to secure proper nutrition. Read together with the *Household Food Basket*, the *Basic Nutritional Food Basket* assists to provide a more comprehensive picture of the economic situation and food crisis South African households face. Table 3.

**Table 3:** April 2026: The Basic Nutritional Food Index: household sizes 4, 5 &7.

By number of family members	Index 2025/26			change in Rands		change in %	
	Apr_2025	Mar_2026	Apr_2026	Mar 2026 vs. Apr 2026	Apr 2025 vs. Apr 2026	Mar 2026 vs. Apr 2026	Apr 2025 vs. Apr 2026
Four (4)	R3 817,78	R3 667,72	R3 787,34	R 119,62	-R 30,44	3,3%	-0,8%
Five (5)	R4 823,38	R4 636,75	R4 786,33	R 149,58	-R 37,05	3,2%	-0,8%
Seven (7)	<b>R6 666,26</b>	<b>R6 410,74</b>	<b>R6 618,99</b>	<b>R 208,25</b>	<b>-R 47,27</b>	<b>3,2%</b>	<b>-0,7%</b>

**Month-on-month:** The cost of a **basic nutritional food basket for a family of 7 members increased** by **R208,25 (3,2%)** from R6 410,74 in March 2026 to R6 618,99 in April 2026.

**Year-on-year:** The cost of a **basic nutritional food basket for a family of 7 members decreased** by **R47,27 (-0,7%)** from R6 666,26 in April 2025 to R6 618,99 in April 2026.

In April 2026, *The Basic Nutritional Food Basket*, using the same household size (7) as tracked by the Household Food Basket, is **R6 618,99**. This shows that the difference in cost between the foods which families living on low incomes try and buy each month (a 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 166,90** (R5 452,09 vs. R6 618,99).

**It shows that as at April 2026, families living on low-incomes may underspend on basic nutritional food by a minimum of 18% (R1 166,90).** It means that the nutritional health and wellbeing of households is far worse than that shown by the Household Food Basket, and that the economic situation households face, with its attendant food crisis in homes is much deeper (See page 5 of April 2026, *Household Affordability Index*).

<sup>4</sup> The Basic Nutritional Food Basket includes a greater variety of better quality nutritionally-rich foods and in higher quantities to provide a family with a basic but nutritionally complete monthly diet. The basket can be amended to respond to families of various sizes, genders, ages and life stages through its connection to four "energy groups." Food price data for the Basic Nutritional Food Basket is collected with the Household Food Basket and conforms to the same methodology. See page 5 of April 2026, *Household Affordability Index*.