



Key data from the November 2024 Household Affordability Index

The November 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 November 2024:** The average cost of the Household Food Basket is **R5 361,04**.
- **Month-on-month:** The average cost of the Household Food Basket **increased** by **R12,39 (0,2%)**, from R5 348,65 in October 2024 to R5 361,04 in November 2024.
- **Year-on-year:** The average cost of the Household Food Basket **increased** by **R46,40 (0,9%)**, from R5 314,63 in November 2023 to R5 361,04 in November 2024.

The months of November and December are difficult ones for families. December is an important cultural/religious moment in the lives of most South Africans. It is a time to be together as families and it puts enormous amounts of financial pressure on adults to have something to contribute. Workers leaving their place of employ for the holidays must have enough to pay the sometimes-excessive transport fees to get home, and arriving home must be carrying packets of groceries, and new Christmas clothes for children, amongst other things. Workers with tenuous employment, relying on piece jobs, are out desperately looking for a few extra Hundred Rands to add to the family purse.

Most families run short of money just in an average month, and the low wages earned provide no room for savings. If there are savings, these are small, being that so many crises will have been faced during the year, and savings are only extracted from sacrifices during the year, borne mostly by women and which effect women's health. Attempts to get loans are also hard at this time of the year as families will have exhausted most avenues and are heavily indebted at year-end.

The December and January period are extraordinary months, where so much more money is needed. Children are home for close to a month and a half and more food is needed in the home. January with all the pressure of setting up children for the New School Year lays heavily on parents' shoulders. Managing to provide a dignified and happy restful family time, with the additional food and clothes required for this period, plus making sure that enough money is set aside for January's school requirements is hard, sometimes almost impossible, to achieve.

*Data from November indicates that while the household food basket is subdued, due mostly to lower vegetable prices, the basket on average continues to increase, albeit slowly. At a **total average cost of R5 361,04, the household food basket is still unaffordable for many, and with the additional volumes required to be bought, and the competition with Christmas clothes, and the January school opening, this period will be a hard one for most South African families.** At this time, families pray for lower prices at the tills, and shop around feverishly for cheaper prices, sales and bargains.*

Food pricing trends in November 2024.

In November 27 foods increased in price, and 17 foods decreased in price.

Foods in the basket which increased in price in November 2024 by 5% or more, include: stock cubes (6%), chicken feet (6%), chicken livers (5%), bananas (10%), and oranges (13%).

Foods in the basket which increased in price in November 2024 by 2% or more, include: maize meal (3%), white sugar (2%), onions (3%), frozen chicken portions (2%), tea (2%), full cream milk (2%), beef liver (2%), polony (3%), and brown bread (3%).

Foods in the basket which decreased in price in November 2024, by 5% or more, include: potatoes (-19%), rice (-5%), carrots (-5%), and butternut (-5%).

Foods in the basket which decreased in price in November 2024, by 2% or more, include: cake flour (-2%), eggs (-2%), wors (-3%), spinach (-3%), and apricot jam (-3%).

See page 2 of November 2024, Household Affordability Index.

Statistics South Africa's latest Consumer Price Index.

Statistics South Africa's latest *Consumer Price Index* for October 2024¹ shows that **Headline inflation was 2,8%**, and for the **lowest expenditure quintiles 1-3 it is 4,7%, 4,2%, and 3,7%** respectively. **CPI Food inflation was 2,8%** (for CPI Food & NAB it was 3,6%, we use the figure excluding non-alcoholic beverages). *STATS SA's Producer Price Index* for September 2024² shows **agriculture was 3,8%**.

Inflation on the food baskets per area tracked.

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

The Joburg basket **increased** by R69,57 (1,3%) month-on-month, and **increased** by R145,95 (2,7%) year-on-year, to **R5 556,44** in November 2024.

The Durban basket **increased** by R48,97 (0,9%) month-on-month, and **increased** by R36,68 (0,7%) year-on-year, to **R5 306,38** in November 2024.

The Cape Town basket **decreased** by R29,64 (-0,6%) month-on-month, and **increased** by R12,04 (0,2%) year-on-year, to **R5 260,43** in November 2024.

The Springbok basket **decreased** by R148,63 (-2,5%) month-on-month, and **increased** by R37,85 (0,7%) year-on-year, to **R5 789,39** in November 2024.

The Maritzburg basket **increased** by R1,62 (0,0%) month-on-month, and **decreased** by R61,06 (-1,2%) year-on-year, to **R5 004,28** in November 2024.

The Mtubatuba basket **increased** by R35,09 (0,7%) month-on-month, and **increased** by R70,12 (1,3%) year-on-year, to **R5 422,65** in November 2024.

¹ STATSSA (2024). **Consumer Price Index October 2024**. Statistical release P0141. 20 November 2024. Statistics South Africa. Pretoria. P4, 7. See Link: <https://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0141/P0141October2024.pdf>

² STATSSA (2024). **Producer Price Index September 2024**. Statistical release P0142.1. 31 October 2024. Statistics South Africa. Pretoria. P12. See Link: <https://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P01421/P01421September2024.pdf>

Workers

The National Minimum Wage is **R27,58** an hour and **R220,64** for an 8-hour day. In November 2024, with 21 working days, the maximum National Minimum Wage for a General Worker is **R4 633,44**. 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. Dispersed in a worker's family of 4 persons, the NMW, is R1 158,36 per person – this is below the upper-bound poverty line of R1 634 per person per month.**

The November 2024 average cost of a basic nutritional food basket for a family of four persons is **R3 791,26** (See page 6 of November 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 **58,8%** of a worker's wage (R2 722,97/R4 633,44). Food is bought after monies for transport and electricity have been paid for or set aside (leaving **R1 910,47** – for food and everything else), and so in November 2024, PMBEJD calculates that workers' families will **underspend on food by a minimum of 49,6% (having R1 910,47 left over after transport and electricity, and with food costing R3 791,26). In this scenario there is no possibility of a worker being able to afford enough nutritious food for her family. If the entire R1 910,47 all went to buy food, then for a family of 4 persons, it would provide R477,62 per person per month. This is below the food poverty line of R796** (See page 8 of November 2024, Household Affordability Index).

Women and children

In November 2024, the average cost to feed a child a basic nutritious diet was **R966,46**. Over the past month, the average cost to feed a child a basic nutritious diet **increased** by **R10,06** or **1,1%**. Year-on-year, the average cost to feed a child a basic nutritious diet **increased** by **R19,47** or **2,1%** (See page 6 of November 2024, Household Affordability Index).

In November 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 (R966,46)**.

Household domestic and personal hygiene products

The November 2024 Household Domestic & Personal Hygiene Index **decreased** by **R3,71 (-0,4%)** month-on-month. Year-on-year the household domestic and personal hygiene products index **increased** by **R27,22 (2,7%)** bringing the total average cost of basic household domestic and personal hygiene products to **R1 020,10** in November 2024 (See page 5 of November 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.