



FOOD BASKET PRICE MONTHLY



NAMC FOOD BASKET: 28 SELECTED FOOD ITEMS PRICES Issue 110 – January 2025



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Food Basket Price Monthly

January 2025

Important note

Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) will update the Consumer Price Index (CPI) basket of goods and services and the respective weights in the January 2025 CPI release. This update will mainly be based on the results of the income and expenditure survey which began fieldwork in December 2022.

The December 2024 official data is used in this report, as the official release of the January 2025 CPI data is scheduled for February 19, 2025 (see link below from the Stats SA website):

<https://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0141/P0141December2024.pdf>

Highlights

During December 2024, the nominal cost of the NAMC's 28-item urban food basket amounted to R1 294.42 compared to the R1 287.17 reported in November 2024. This represents a monthly increase of 0.6% and a year-on-year increase of 4.4%.

December 24 vs. December 23	Inflation bracket				
	12% or more	Between 6% and 11.99%	Between 3% and 5.99%	Between 2.99% and 1%	Inflation close to zero or deflation
Stats SA food groups:		Sugar, sweets & desserts (6.8%)	Fruit (4.9%) Fish (4.6%) Bread & cereals (3.7%) Processed food (3.2%)	Other food (2.4%) Oils & fats (2.3%) Milk, eggs & cheese (2.1%)	Vegetables (0.5%) Unprocessed food (0.4%) Meat (-0.4%)
Individual food items in NAMC food basket (listed in order of decreasing inflation rates):	Instant coffee (18.0%) Oranges (17.2%) Ceylon/black tea (15.9%) Cabbage (14.5%)	Dried beans (11.9%) Bananas (11.1%) Peanut butter (8.7%) Tomatoes (7.2%) Maize meal (6.7%) Rice (6.1%)	Beef offal (5.9%) Polony (5.2%) White sugar (4.7%) Tinned fish (3.8%) Apples (3.7%) Baked beans (3.5%) Brick margarine (3.3%)	Individually Quick Frozen (IQF) chicken portions (2.5%) White bread (2.3%) Full cream long life milk (2.2%) Eggs (1.7%) Brown bread (1.6%)	Beef mince (-0.5%) Sunflower oil (-0.9%) Chicken giblets (-1.1%) Cheddar cheese (-2.1%) Potatoes (-4.8%) Onions (-4.9%)

1. Overall inflation and food inflation

The global nominal food price index reported by the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), showed a slight decrease in December 2024, standing at 127 points down from 127.5 point in November. This was primarily due to decrease in price indices for sugar, dairy, vegetable oils and cereals which outweighed increases in meat price indices. Notably, the sugar price index decreased by 5.1% influenced by higher-than-expected production in Brazil and favourable prospects for upcoming harvests in major producing countries. The dairy price index decreased by 0.7% driven by lower quotations for butter, cheese, and skim milk powder, although whole milk powder prices increased due to strong demand. The vegetable oil price index decreased by 0.5% reflecting lower prices for soy, rapeseed, and sunflower oils, while palm oil prices rose slightly due to tight supplies. Meanwhile the cereal price index remains stable. In contrast, the meat price index increased by 0.4%, supported by higher bovine and ovine meat prices, while pig and poultry meat prices declined.

Figure 1 illustrates fluctuations in global food inflation across several countries, including the BRICS member nations (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), as well as Zambia, Botswana and Namibia, which maintain significant trade connections with South Africa. Comparing data from November 2024 to December 2024, majority of the reviewed countries experienced increases in their food inflation rates. Notably, Zambia's food inflation rose from 18.2% to 18.6%, Russia from 9.9% to 11.1%, Brazil from 7.6% to 7.7%, Namibia from 5.3% to 5.9% and South Africa from 2.3% to 3.6%. While India and Botswana's food inflation decreased from 9.0% to 8.4% and 4.3% to 4.7%, respectively. The United Kingdom's food inflation remained constant at 2.0% and China experienced a significant deflation from 1.0% to -0.5%.

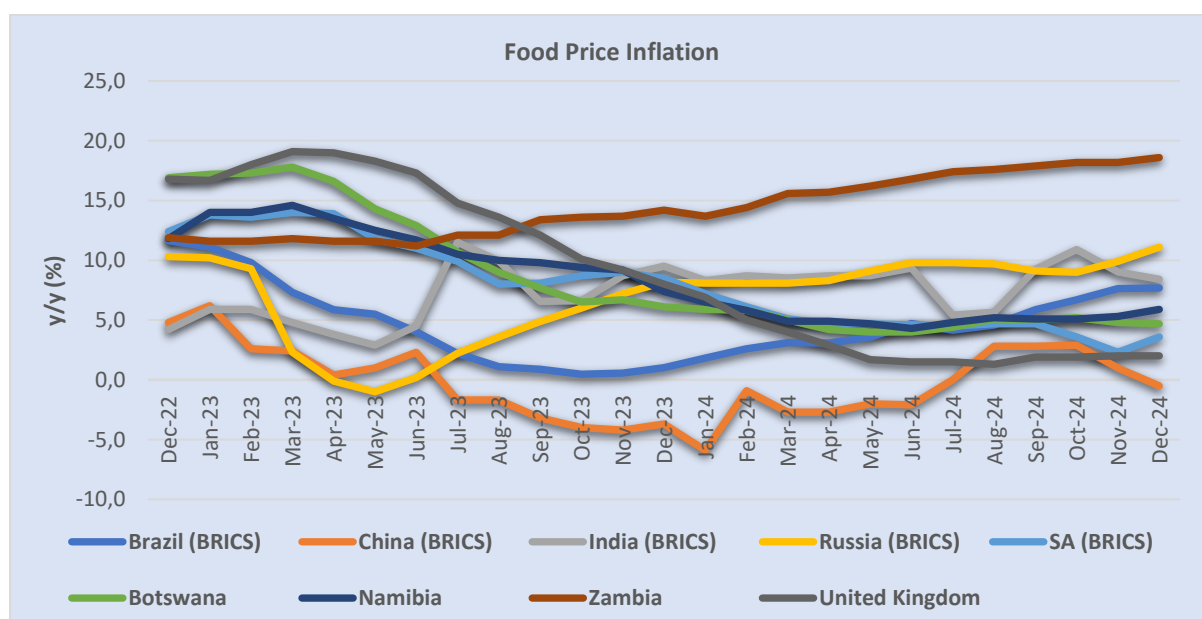


Figure 1: Global food inflation

Source: Trading Economics, 2025; Stats SA, 2025 & NAMC calculations

Figure 2 presents the trend in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for South Africa from December 2018 to December 2024, along with the inflation rate for food and non-alcoholic beverages (NAB). On 22 January 2025, the official release by Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) confirmed the CPI for December 2024. For December 2024, the annual headline CPI was reported at 3.0%, reflecting a slight increase from the 2.9% reported in November 2024. Similarly, the inflation rate for food and non-alcoholic beverages increased to 2.5% in December 2024 compared to the 2.3% reported in November 2024. Notably, the main drivers of the current inflation on food and NAB were sugar, sweets & desserts, which experienced a substantial increase of 6.8% in December 2024, followed by fruits (4.9%), fish (4.6%), bread & cereals (3.7%), processed food (3.2%), other foods (2.4%), oils & fats (2.3%), milk, eggs &

cheese (2.1%), vegetables (0.5%) and unprocessed foods (0.4%). During this period meat decreased by 0.4%, respectivelyⁱ.

South Africa's food inflation is expected to remain volatile in the coming months due to unstable global market trends. Notably, meat prices climbed due to end of year maintenance of processing plants in major processing countries, while sugar prices decreased due to larger than expected sugar production in Brazil (FAO, 2025). These global changes in prices are expected to have an impact on food prices in South Africa, especially in import-sensitive sectors. However, it is impressive to note that South Africa's inflation rate has consistently remained below the central bank's target of lower than 6% since June 2023.

Furthermore, as of December 2024, the local price of white maize averaged R6 530 per ton, marking a 7.8% increase from November 2024. Similarly, yellow maize averaged R5 243 per ton, reflecting a 7.9% increase compared to the previous month. Sunflower seed prices averaged R10 371 per ton, indicating a 4.6% decline from the preceding month's price.

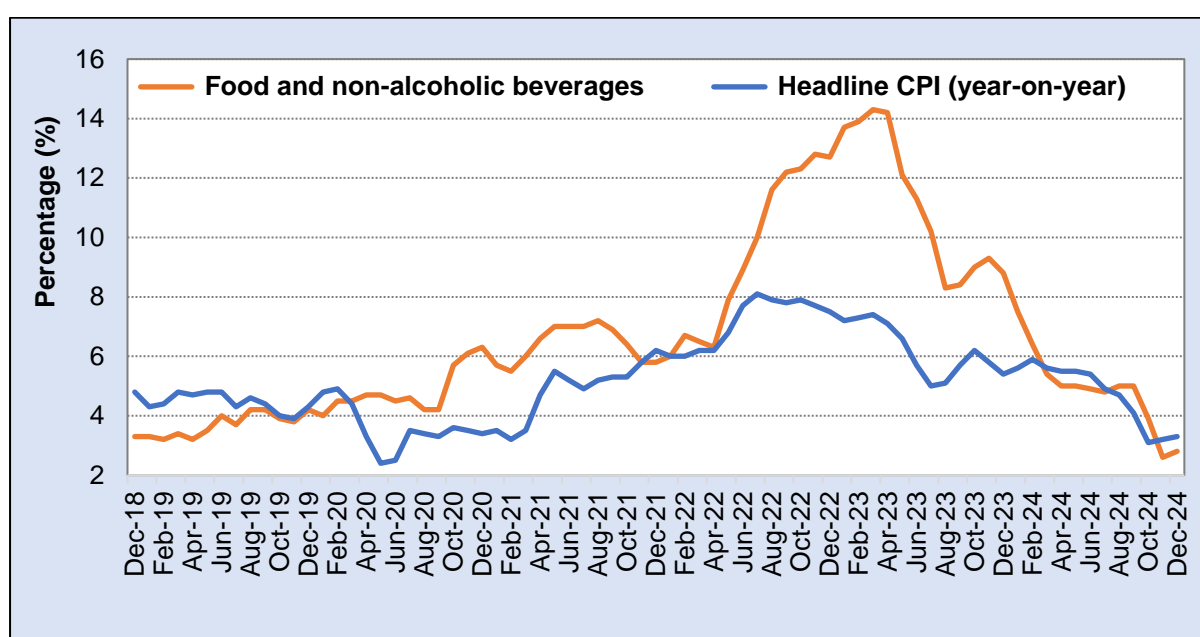


Figure 2: South Africa's headline CPI and Food & non-alcoholic beverages' CPI

Source: Stats SA, 2025; NAMC calculations

2. The NAMC food basket: December 2024 vs December 2023

In this section, the NAMC's 28-item urban food basket's cost is explained through a comparison of average food prices in December 2024 and December 2023. The cost of the NAMC's 28-item urban food basket increased by 4.4% in December 2024 compared to the same period last year, reaching R1 294.42. When compared to the R1 287.17 in November 2024, the basket increased by 0.6% monthly. **Table 1** presents the 28 food items composing the NAMC urban food basket in terms of their nominal prices. Between December 2024 and December 2023, among these 28 items, 10 witnessed price increases that exceeded the inflation target set by the South African Reserve Bank (SARB) of 6%. Notable products in this category include instant coffee which experienced a substantial price surge of 18.0%, followed by oranges (17.2%), Ceylon/black tea (15.9%), cabbage (14.5%), dried beans (11.9%), bananas (11.1%), peanut butter (8.7%), tomatoes (7.2%), maize meal (6.7%) and rice (6.1%).

Table 1: Percentage change in the price of a basic NAMC food basket (28-item)

Category	Product	December-23 R/unit	November-24 R/unit	December-24 R/unit	Change year-on-year (%)	Change month-on-month (%)
Beans	Baked beans - tinned 410g	15.87	16.36	16.42	3.5%	0.4%
	Beans - dried 500g	30.66	34.19	34.31	11.9%	0.4%
	Peanut butter 400g	44.10	47.32	47.95	8.7%	1.3%
Coffee & Tea	Ceylon/black tea 250g	51.87	61.19	60.12	15.9%	-1.7%
	Instant coffee 250g	58.55	68.50	69.07	18.0%	0.8%
Dairy & Eggs	Cheddar cheese per kg	143.04	139.99	139.99	-2.1%	0.0%
	Eggs 1.5 dozen	68.49	69.13	69.65	1.7%	0.8%
	Full cream milk - long life 1ℓ	19.43	19.90	19.86	2.2%	-0.2%
Fats & Oils	Brick margarine 500g	28.97	29.50	29.93	3.3%	1.5%
	Sunflower oil 750ml	35.82	35.15	35.49	-0.9%	1.0%
Fruit	Apples per kg	23.76	24.35	24.65	3.7%	1.2%
	Bananas per kg	22.05	23.29	24.49	11.1%	5.2%
	Oranges per kg	24.20	23.96	28.37	17.2%	18.4%
Animal Protein	Beef mince per kg	104.37	102.37	103.83	-0.5%	1.4%
	Beef offal per kg	49.01	52.45	51.92	5.9%	-1.0%
	Chicken giblets per kg	47.16	46.25	46.66	-1.1%	0.9%
	Fish (excl tuna) - tinned 400g	26.45	27.56	27.46	3.8%	-0.4%
	IQF chicken portions 2kg	93.63	95.45	95.98	2.5%	0.6%
	Polony 1kg	54.58	57.39	57.43	5.2%	0.1%
Bread & Cereals	Loaf of brown bread 700g	17.12	17.55	17.39	1.6%	-0.9%
	Loaf of white bread 700g	18.59	19.04	19.02	2.3%	-0.1%
	Rice 2kg	43.19	46.70	45.81	6.1%	-1.9%
	Maize meal 5kg	66.60	71.08	71.04	6.7%	-0.1%
Vegetables	Cabbage each	19.77	22.73	22.63	14.5%	-0.4%
	Onions per kg	21.99	21.73	20.92	-4.9%	-3.7%
	Potatoes per kg	22.46	21.56	21.38	-4.8%	-0.8%
	Tomatoes per kg	26.22	27.62	28.11	7.2%	1.8%
Sugary foods	White sugar 2.5kg	61.64	64.86	64.54	4.7%	-0.5%
Total Rand Value		1 239.59	1 287.17	1 294.42	4.4%	0.6%

Source: Stats SA & BFAP. 2025; NAMC calculations

Figure 3 provides an overview of the average nominal cost changes in different food groups within the NAMC's 28-item food basket, offering a comparative analysis of December 2024 with December 2023 (year-on-year) and December 2024 with November 2024 (month-on-month). When examining year-on-year price differences, the food group that contributed most significantly to observed food inflation was coffee & tea, experiencing a substantial increase of 17.0%. Following this was fruits which increased by 10.7%, bean products by 8.9%, bread & cereals by 5.3%, sugary foods by 4.7%, vegetables by 2.9%, animal protein by 2.2% and fats & oils by 1.0%. While dairy & eggs decreased by 0.6%. Reviewing the month-on-month basis, fruits showed the most significant escalation by 8.3%. This was followed by fats & oils which increased by 1.2%, bean products by 0.8%, animal products by 0.5%, dairy & eggs by 0.2%. During this period coffee & tea, sugary foods, vegetables and bread & cereals decreased by 0.4%, 0.5%, 0.6% and 0.7%, respectively.

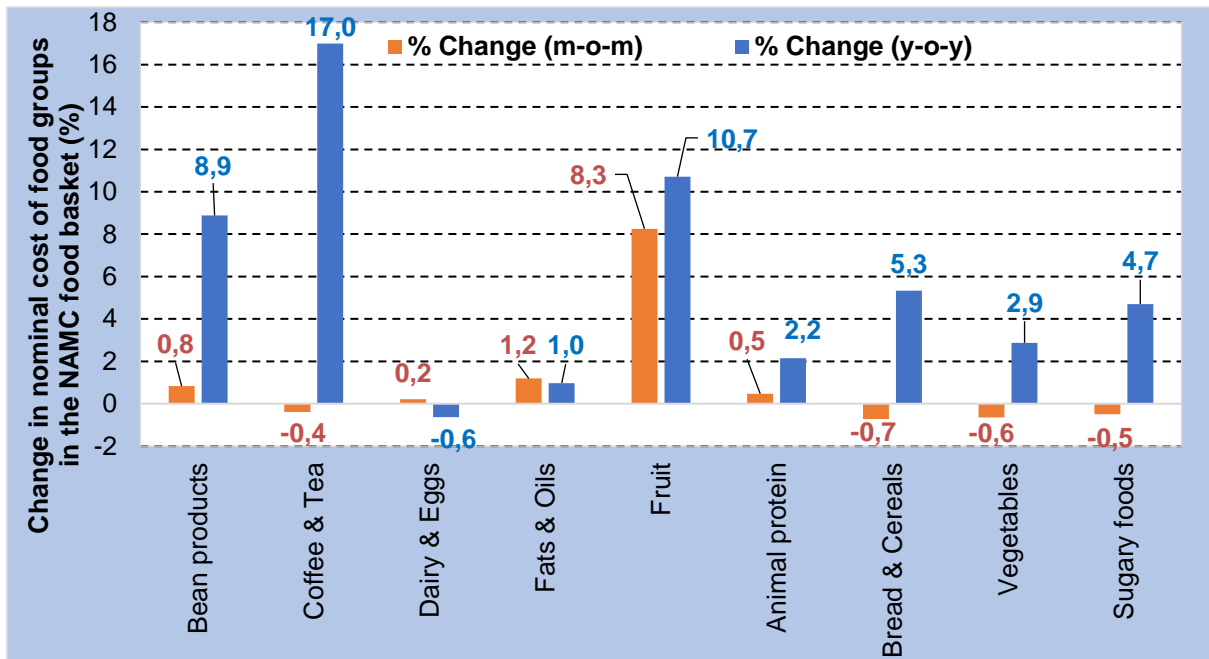


Figure 3: Nominal change in the cost of specific food groups within the NAMC's 28-item food basket, comparing December 2024 vs. December 2023 and December 2024 vs. November 2024
 Source: Stats SA data. 2025; NAMC calculations

Background Information:

The NAMC monitors food prices at retail level and releases regular authoritative reports. The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD), then known as the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) established the Food Price Monitoring Committee (FPMC) at the NAMC to track and report food price trends in South Africa; to provide explanations of the observed trends and to then advise the Department on any possible action that could be taken should national and household food security be threatened. The FPMC was established after the high food price episode of 2000/01 season. The functions of the FPMC were continued by the NAMC after the FPMC completed its work in September 2004. The NAMC issues four quarterly Food Price Monitoring reports annually and, since 2005, also publishes an annual Food Cost Review report, which documents the margins between farm and retail prices of the major food products, amongst other topics. In 2015, the NAMC began releasing a quarterly Farm-to-Retail-Price-Spread (FTRPS) publication, which seeks to provide more insight into the factors driving commodity and food price margins. This publication, the Food Basket Price Monthly report, came because of discussions with industry to keep a more frequent watch on the movements of food prices.

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ⁱ Note: Rural food item prices for December 2024 were not available for comparison.