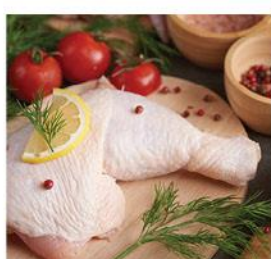




FOOD BASKET PRICE MONTHLY



NAMC FOOD BASKET: 28 SELECTED FOOD ITEMS PRICES Issue 112 – March 2025

Food Basket Price Monthly

March 2025

Important note

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

The February 2025 official data is used in this report, as the official release of the March 2025 CPI data is scheduled for April 23, 2025 (see link below from the Stats SA website):

<https://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0141/P0141February2025.pdf>

Highlights

During February 2025, the nominal cost of the NAMC's 28-item urban food basket amounted to R1 315.72 compared to the R1 307.85 reported in January 2025. This represents a monthly increase of 0.6% and a year-on-year increase of 4.7%.

February 25 vs. February24	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:		Fruit & nuts (6.8%)	Sugar, confectionery and desserts (5.5%) Fish & other seafood (4.8%) Cereal products (3.9%) Processed food (3.3%)	Oils & fats (2.3%) Other foods (2.3%) Vegetables (1.7%) Milk, other dairy products & eggs (1.3%)	Unprocessed food (0.7%) Meat (0.0%)
Individual food items in NAMC food basket (listed in order of decreasing inflation rates):	Instant coffee (20.4%) Cabbage (19.7%) Ceylon/black tea (13.8%) Apples (12.5%) Dried beans (12.1%)	Bananas (11.7%) Maize meal (9.4%) Polony (7.9%) Peanut butter (6.1%)	White sugar (5.6%) Tinned fish (5.5%) Cheddar cheese (4.6%) Onions (3.4%)	Individually Quick Frozen (IQF) chicken portions (2.7%) Brown bread (2.7%) Full cream long life milk (2.2%) White bread (2.0%) Sunflower oil (1.3%) Baked beans (1.2%) Beef offal (1.2%)	Rice (0.3%) Tomatoes (0.3%) Brick margarine (-0.2%) Eggs (-0.7%) Beef mince (-1.0%) Oranges (-1.0%) Chicken giblets (-3.6%) Potatoes (-4.2%)

1. Overall inflation and food inflation

The global nominal food price index reported by the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), averaged 127.1 points in February 2025, indicating a 1.8% increase from January 2025. The increase was primarily due to a rise in the sugar, vegetable oils, dairy products and cereal price indices, while the meat price index remained unchanged. Notably, the sugar price index increased by 6.6% influenced by concerns over tighter global supplies in the 2024/25 season. The dairy price index increased by 4.0% driven by higher prices across all major dairy products. The vegetable oil price index increased by 2.0% due to higher quotations across palm, rapeseed, soy and sunflower oils. The wheat price index increased by 0.7%, while the meat price index remained stable.

Figure 1 illustrates fluctuations in global food inflation across several countries that maintain significant trade connections with South Africa. These countries include the BRICS member nations (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), as well as Zambia, Botswana and Namibia. Comparing data from January 2025 to February 2025, some countries experienced increased food inflation rates while other experienced decreases. Notably, Zambia's food inflation increased from 19.2% to 20.6%, Russia's from 11.1% to 11.7%, Namibia's from 5.3% to 5.9%, Botswana's from 5.1% to 5.5% and South Africa's from 2.3% to 2.8%. While Brazil's food inflation decreased from 7.3% to 7.0%, India from 6.0% to 3.8% and China from 0.4% to -3.3%.

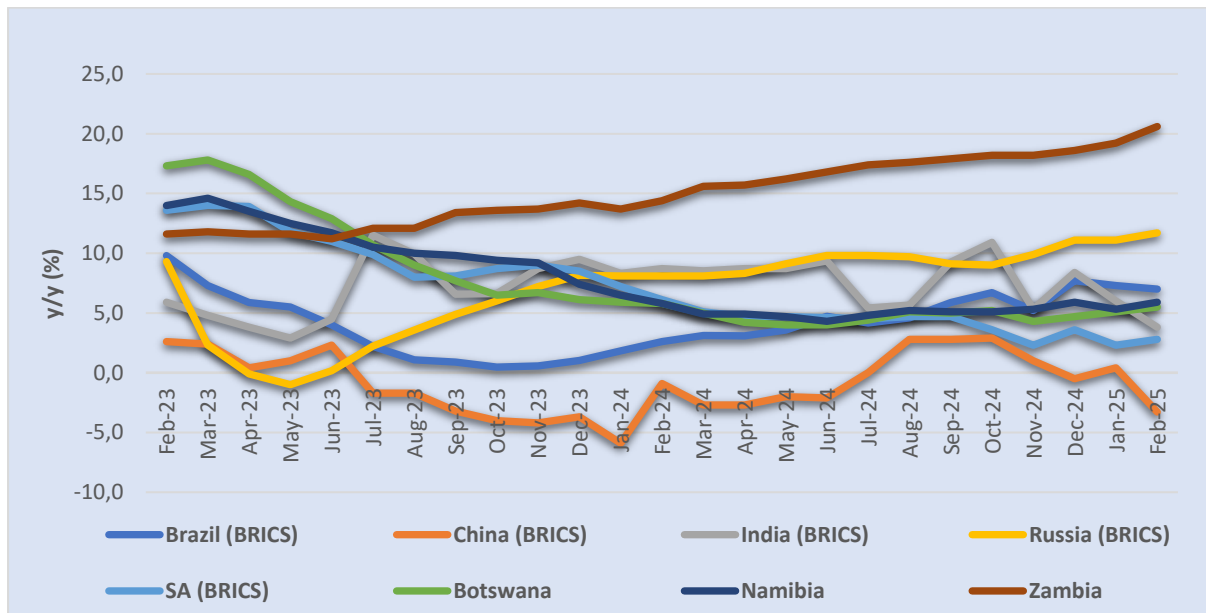


Figure 1: Global food inflation

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

Figure 2 presents trends in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for South Africa from February 2019 to February 2025, along with the inflation rate for food and non-alcoholic beverages (NAB). On 19 March 2025, the official release by Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) confirmed the CPI for February 2025. In February 2025, the annual headline CPI remained unchanged from January 2025 at 3.2%. In contrast, the inflation rate for food and non-alcoholic beverages increased to 2.8% in February 2025 from 2.3% reported in January 2025. Notably, the main drivers of the current inflation on food and NAB were fruits & nuts, which experienced a substantial increase of 6.8% in February 2025, followed by sugar, confectionery and desserts (5.5%), fish & other seafood (4.8%), cereal products (3.9%), processed food (3.3%), oils & fats (2.3%), other foods (2.3%), vegetables (1.7%), milk, other dairy products & eggs (1.3%) and unprocessed foods (0.70). During this period, the inflation rate for meat remained unchanged.

South Africa's food inflation is expected to remain volatile in the coming months due to instability in global markets and trading uncertainties. The observed monthly rise in global wheat export prices was

driven by tighter domestic supplies in Russia, which limited export volumes and shifted demand to alternative suppliers. These dynamics increased pressure on global prices. Further contributing to these price increases were concerns over poor crop conditions in parts of Europe, Russia, and the United States (U.S). Meanwhile, global maize prices continued to rise in February, mainly due to shrinking seasonal supplies in Brazil, deteriorating crop conditions in Argentina, and strong export demand for U.S. maize. Prices of other coarse grains, including barley and sorghum, also increased. These global price fluctuations are expected to affect food prices in South Africa, particularly in import-dependent sectors. However, despite these pressures, South Africa's inflation rate has consistently remained below the central bank's target of 6% since June 2023.

Furthermore, as of February 2025, the local price of white maize averaged at R5 797 per ton, marking a 15.0% decrease from January 2025. Similarly, yellow maize averaged at R5 063 per ton, reflecting a 9.6% decrease compared to the previous month. On the other hand, sunflower seed prices averaged at R9 501 per ton, indicating a 5.8% decline from the preceding month's price.

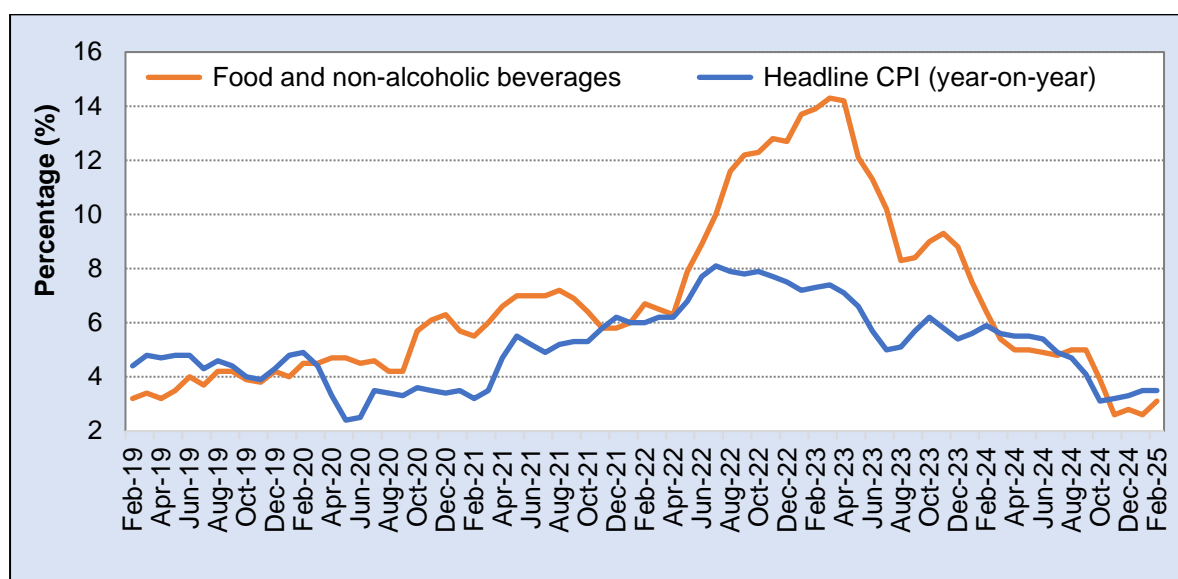


Figure 2: South Africa's headline CPI and Food & non-alcoholic beverages' CPI

Source: Stats SA, 2025; NAMC calculations

2. Monthly comparison of prices between urban and rural areas for February 2025

Table 1 presents a comparative analysis of expenses associated with selected food items in both urban and rural areas during February 2025. Recent data released by Statistics South Africa reveals variations in prices for certain products when purchased in urban versus rural regions. Urban consumers allocated more of their budget towards Ceylon/black tea, which exhibited the most substantial price difference of R8.85, followed by maize meal (R3.26), peanut butter (R2.59), sunflower oil (R1.20), margarine (R0.91), white bread (R0.38) and brown bread (R0.33) in comparison to their rural counterparts. On average, urban consumers paid R1.14 more for these 11 food items. This information highlights noteworthy variations in food item costs across different geographical areas.

Table 1: Comparison between urban and rural food prices (selected food items)

Product	Urban Food Prices February 2025 (R/unit)	Rural Food Prices February 2025 (R/unit)	The price difference (R/unit)
Full cream milk - long life 1ℓ	19.93	20.38	-0.45
Brown bread 700g	17.52	17.19	0.33
White bread 700g	18.95	18.57	0.38

Product	Urban Food Prices February 2025 (R/unit)	Rural Food Prices February 2025 (R/unit)	The price difference (R/unit)
Bananas per kg	20.13	20.74	-0.61
Maize meal 2.5kg	41.34	38.08	3.26
Margarine spread 500g	40.13	39.22	0.91
Peanut butter 400g	47.67	45.08	2.59
Rice 2kg	45.38	47.62	-2.24
Sunflower oil 750mℓ	35.83	34.63	1.20
Ceylon/black tea 250g	61.04	52.19	8.85
White sugar 2.5kg	65.73	67.37	-1.64
			1.14

Source: Stats SA. 2025; NAMC calculations

3. The NAMC food basket: February 2025 vs February 2024

In this section, the cost of NAMC's 28-item urban food basket is explained through a comparison of average food prices in February 2025 and February 2024. The cost of the NAMC's 28-item urban food basket increased by 4.7% in February 2025 when compared to the same period last year, reaching R1 315.72. When compared to the cost of R1 307.85 recorded in January 2025, the food basket increased by 0.6%. **Table 2** presents nominal prices of the 28 food items composing the NAMC urban food basket. Between February 2025 and February 2024, among these 28 items, nine witnessed price increases that exceeded the 6% inflation target set by the South African Reserve Bank (SARB). Notable products in this category include instant coffee which experienced a substantial price surge of 20.4%, followed by cabbage (19.7%), Ceylon/black tea (13.8%), apples (12.5%), dried beans (12.1%), bananas (11.7%), maize meal (9.4%), polony (7.9%) and peanut butter (6.1%).

Table 2: Percentage change in the price of a basic NAMC food basket (28-item)

Category	Product	February-24 R/unit	January-25 R/unit	February-25 R/unit	Change year-on- year (%)	Change month-on- month (%)
Beans	Baked beans - tinned 410g	16.04	16.26	16.24	1.2%	-0.1%
	Beans - dried 500g	31.20	34.93	34.96	12.1%	0.1%
	Peanut butter 400g	44.91	48.11	47.67	6.1%	-0.9%
Coffee & Tea	Ceylon/black tea 250g	53.65	60.02	61.04	13.8%	1.7%
	Instant coffee 250g	58.63	70.24	70.59	20.4%	0.5%
Dairy & Eggs	Cheddar cheese per /kg	141.74	146.66	148.32	4.6%	1.1%
	Eggs 1.5 dozen	68.74	68.48	68.27	-0.7%	-0.3%
	Full cream milk - long life 1ℓ	19.51	19.98	19.93	2.2%	-0.3%
Fats & Oils	Brick margarine 500g	29.62	29.73	29.55	-0.2%	-0.6%
	Sunflower oil 750mℓ	35.38	35.53	35.83	1.3%	0.8%
Fruit	Apples per kg	24.03	25.18	27.03	12.5%	7.3%
	Bananas per kg	18.02	21.51	20.13	11.7%	-6.4%
	Oranges per kg	36.87	33.57	36.51	-1.0%	8.8%
Animal Protein	Beef mince per kg	105.07	104.37	104.06	-1.0%	-0.3%
	Beef offal per kg	50.23	52.27	50.84	1.2%	-2.7%
	Chicken giblets / per kg	47.98	46.38	46.26	-3.6%	-0.3%
	Fish (excl tuna) - tinned 400g	26.46	27.83	27.91	5.5%	0.3%

Category	Product	February-24 R/unit	January-25 R/unit	February-25 R/unit	Change year-on-year (%)	Change month-on-month (%)
	IQF chicken portions 2kg	93.77	96.94	96.32	2.7%	-0.6%
	Polony 1kg	54.63	56.80	58.93	7.9%	3.8%
Bread & Cereals	Brown bread 700g	17.06	17.34	17.52	2.7%	1.0%
	White bread 700g	18.58	18.82	18.95	2.0%	0.7%
	Rice 2kg	45.26	44.80	45.38	0.3%	1.3%
	Maize meal 5kg	68.50	73.11	74.91	9.4%	2.5%
Vegetables	Cabbage each	19.69	23.31	23.56	19.7%	1.1%
	Onions per kg	19.78	20.78	20.46	3.4%	-1.5%
	Potatoes per kg	21.68	21.41	20.77	-4.2%	-3.0%
	Tomatoes per kg	27.98	28.10	28.05	0.3%	-0.2%
Sugary foods	White sugar 2.5kg	62.22	65.39	65.73	5.6%	0.5%
Total Rand Value		1 257.23	1 307.85	1 315.72	4.7%	0.6%

Source: Stats SA & BFAP. 2025; NAMC calculations

Figure 3 provides an overview of changes in the average nominal cost of the different food groups within the NAMC's 28-item food basket, offering a comparative analysis of February 2025 with February 2024 (year-on-year) and February 2025 with January 2025 (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 17.2%. Following this was bean products which increased by 7.3%, fruits by 6.0%, sugary foods by 5.6%, bread & cereals by 4.9%, vegetables by 4.2%, dairy & eggs by 2.8%, animal protein by 1.6% and fats & oils by 0.6%. Reviewing month-on-month changes, fruits showed the most significant increase of 4.2%. This was followed by bread & cereals which increased by 1.7%, then coffee & tea (1.1%), dairy & eggs (0.6%), sugary foods (0.5%) and fats & oils (0.2%). Conversely, animal products, bean products and vegetables decreased by 0.1%, 0.4% and 0.8%, respectively.

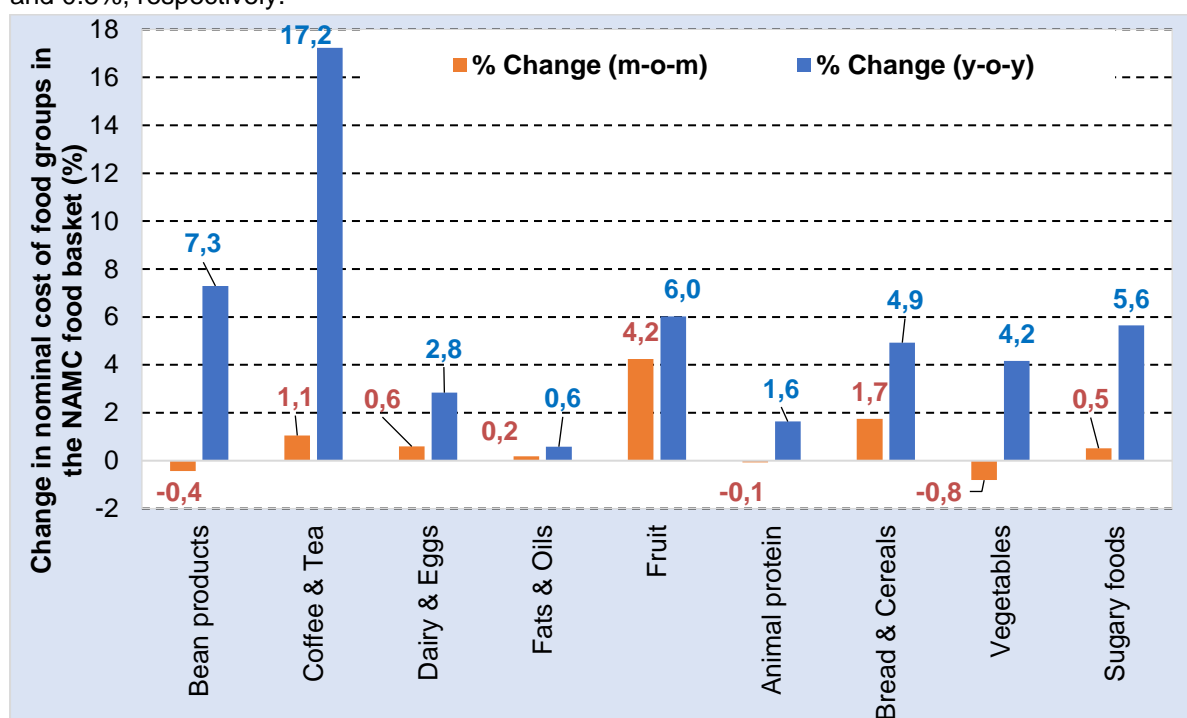


Figure 3: Nominal change in the cost of specific food groups within the NAMC's 28-item food basket, comparing February 2025 vs. February 2024 and February 2025 vs. January 2025

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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