

Food

BASKET PRICE MONTHLY

MERC
Markets & Economic Research
Centre

*28 Selected food
basket price items:*

*NAMC urban food
basket*





Food Basket Price Monthly January 2020

Highlights

- Food and non - alcoholic beverage inflation increased to 3.9% during December 2019 year-on-year (y-o-y), with Headline inflation increasing to 4%.
 - Fish and bread & cereals remained the highest food inflation contributors (y-o-y) with 8.2% and 8%, respectively, with meat price inflation 2% higher than a year ago.
- January 2020 fuel prices dropped by 4c/ℓ for 93ULP to reach R15.84/ℓ (-0.25%), and by 14c/ℓ for 95ULP to reach R16.16/ℓ (-0.86%). Diesel 500ppm increased by 9c/ℓ (+0.62%) to reach R14.62/ℓ during January 2020.
 - International Brent Crude oil prices increased from \$63 to \$66.71/barrel, while the Rand strengthened against the US dollar amid hopes of the US and China trade agreement. Nationwide blackouts also hit the currency as power utility Eskom battled to keep the lights on amid several operational failures.
 - February 2020 fuel prices are predicted to drop by 8c/ℓ for 95 Octane Unleaded petrol, while 93 Octane is expected to rise by 1c/ℓ. Diesel is expected to decrease by 13c/ℓ. If tensions between the US and Iran continue, local prices are expected to be affected given the vulnerability of oil fields in the Middle East.
- During December 2019, the nominal cost of the NAMC's 28-item urban food basket amounted to R872.76 compared to the R869.94 reported during November 2019, resulting in a monthly percentage increase of 0.3%. When compared to December 2018, an annual (y-o-y) percentage increase of 2.7% was reported.



Introduction

The NAMC monitors food prices at retail level and releases regular authoritative reports. 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 August 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 as a result of discussions with industry to keep a more frequent watch on the movements of food prices.

Overall inflation and food inflation

The December 2019 Consumer Price Index (CPI) released by Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) indicated that the headline CPI and the food and non-alcoholic beverage price indices reached 4% and 3.9% (y-o-y), respectively, from 3.6% and 3.5% reported during November 2019. **Figure 1** show the trends in the headline CPI and food and non-alcoholic beverage inflation rates on a monthly basis, from January 2012 to December 2019.

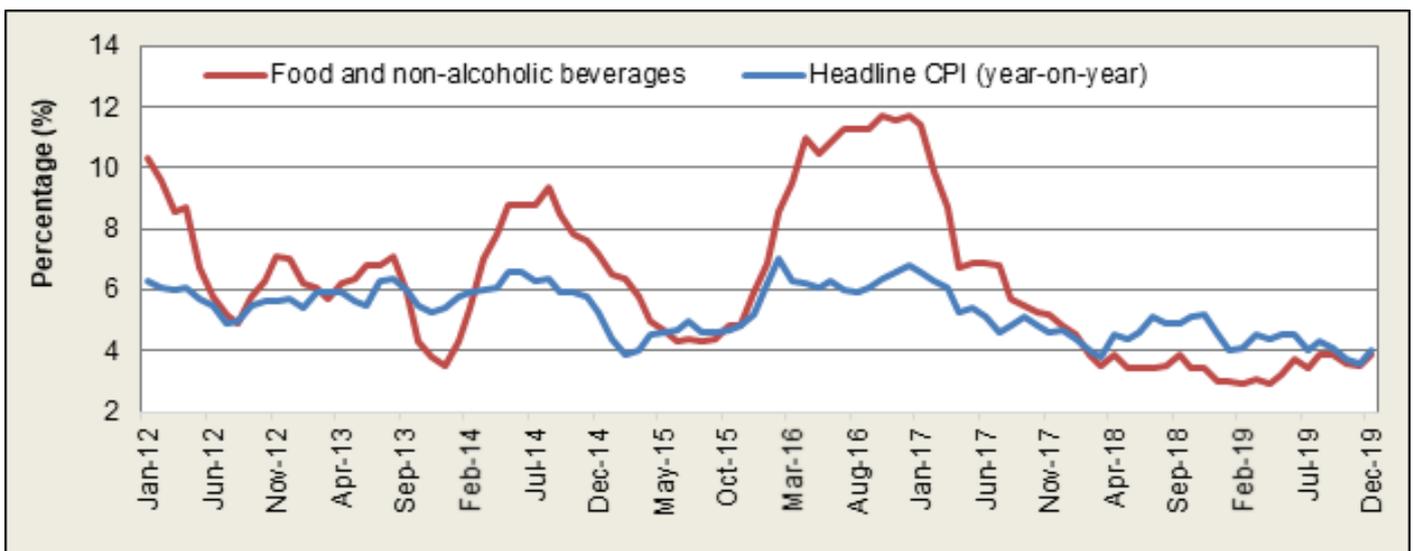


Figure 1: Headline CPI and food and non-alcoholic beverage CPI

Source: Stats SA (2019)

Comparison between urban and rural prices: December 2019

Table 1 compares prices of selected food items in rural and urban areas for December 2019. The food items which showed the largest price differences between urban and rural areas in December 2019 were: Ceylon/black tea (62.5g) at R3.34 difference, sunflower oil (750ml) at a difference of R3.14, and super maize meal (2.5kg) at a difference of R1.80. This indicates that urban consumers pay 50 cents more on average, for these 11 food items. In other cases, however, rural consumers paid more for certain products including: white sugar (2.5kg), full cream long life milk (1l) and peanut butter (400g), than their urban counterparts.

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

Product	Urban Food Prices December 2019 (R/unit)	Rural Food Prices December 2019 (R/unit)	Price difference (R/unit)
Full cream milk – long life 1l	14,59	15,47	-0,88
Loaf of brown bread 700g	12,42	12,47	-0,05
Loaf of white bread 700g	13,51	13,42	0,09
Special maize 2.5kg	21,70	20,63	1,07
Super maize 2.5kg	25,11	23,31	1,80
Margarine spread 500g	26,85	26,84	0,01
Peanut butter 400g	31,17	31,61	-0,44
Rice 2kg	27,10	27,39	-0,29
Sunflower oil 750ml	21,87	18,73	3,14
Ceylon/black tea 62.5g	16,47	13,13	3,34
White sugar 2.5kg	41,16	43,40	-2,24
Average			0.50

Source: Stats SA (2019)

The NAMC food basket

This section analyses the nominal cost of a basic 28-item NAMC urban food basket, based on average food price data for December 2019 vs. December 2018. Composition of the current food basket (revised in 2017) include: apples per kg, baked beans – tinned (410g), bananas per kg, beans – dried (500g), beef mince per kg, beef offal per kg, cabbage per kg, Ceylon/black tea (250g), cheddar cheese per kg, chicken giblets per kg, eggs (1.5 dozen), fish (excl. tuna) – tinned (400g), full cream milk – long life (1l), instant coffee (250g), IQF chicken portions (2kg), brown bread (700g), white bread (700g), margarine brick (500g), onions per kg, oranges per kg, peanut butter (400g), polony per kg, potatoes per kg, rice (2kg), sugar white (2.5kg), sunflower oil (750ml), super maize meal (5kg) and tomatoes per kg.

During December 2019, the nominal cost of the NAMC's 28-item urban food basket amounted to **R872.76** compared to the **R869.94** reported during November 2019, resulting in a monthly percentage increase of 0.3%. When compared to December 2018, an annual (y-o-y) percentage increase of 2.7% was reported.

The 28-item NAMC urban food basket products (in nominal terms) are highlighted in **Table 2**. Products exceeding the South African Reserve Bank's (SARB) upper annual inflation band of 6%, include the following: baked beans - tinned 410g (9.4%), peanut butter 400g (11.1%), oranges – fresh per kg (13.3%), fish (excl. tuna) – tinned 400g (7.8%), and super maize meal 5kg (22.4%).



Table 2: Percentage change in a basic NAMC food basket (28 item) prices

Category	Product	Dec-18	Nov-19	Dec-19	% change y-o-y	%change m-o-m
Beans	Baked beans - tinned 410g	9,94	10,84	10,87	9,4%	0,3%
Beans	Beans - dried 500g	19,28	18,71	18,62	-3,4%	-0,5%
Beans	Peanut butter 400g	28,06	31,46	31,17	11,1%	-0,9%
Coffee, Tea	Instant coffee 250g	35,64	35,76	36,18	1,5%	1,2%
Coffee, Tea	Ceylon/black tea 250g	34,39	35,94	36,16	5,1%	0,6%
Dairy, Eggs	Full cream milk - long life 1ℓ	13,94	14,57	14,59	4,7%	0,1%
Dairy, Eggs	Eggs 1.5 dozen	41,87	40,32	38,71	-7,5%	-4,0%
Dairy, Eggs	Cheddar cheese per kg	105,77	105,92	105,03	-0,7%	-0,8%
Fats, Oils	Brick margarine 500g	22,17	21,95	22,13	-0,2%	0,8%
Fats, Oils	Sunflower oil 750ml	22,88	21,68	21,87	-4,4%	0,9%
Fruit	Apples - fresh per kg	20,49	21,36	21,21	3,5%	-0,7%
Fruit	Bananas - fresh per kg	14,78	14,68	15,41	4,3%	5,0%
Fruit	Oranges - fresh per kg	14,99	15,38	16,99	13,3%	10,5%
Protein	Beef mince - fresh per kg	85,08	82,77	83,56	-1,8%	1,0%
Protein	Beef offal - fresh per kg	34,75	36,62	35,98	3,5%	-1,7%
Protein	Chicken giblets per kg	34,31	33,27	33,58	-2,1%	0,9%
Protein	IQF chicken portions - 2kg	63,62	66,96	66,98	5,3%	0,0%
Protein	Fish (excl. tuna) - tinned 400g	18,31	19,51	19,73	7,8%	1,1%
Protein	Polony per kg	45,24	45,87	45,87	1,4%	0,0%
Bread & Cereals	Loaf of brown bread 700g	11,82	12,48	12,42	5,1%	-0,5%
Bread & Cereals	Loaf of white bread 700g	13,29	13,62	13,51	1,7%	-0,8%
Bread & Cereals	Super maize meal 5kg	35,14	43,26	43,02	22,4%	-0,6%
Bread & Cereals	Rice 2kg	25,83	27,28	27,10	4,9%	-0,7%
Vegetables	Cabbage - fresh per kg	12,92	13,22	13,52	4,6%	2,3%
Vegetables	Onions - fresh per kg	14,55	15,01	15,13	4,0%	0,8%
Vegetables	Potatoes - fresh per kg	12,66	12,73	13,23	4,5%	3,9%
Vegetables	Tomatoes - fresh per kg	18,63	18,48	19,03	2,1%	3,0%
Sugary foods	White sugar 2.5kg	39,09	40,29	41,16	5,3%	2,2%
	Total Basket (Rand)	R849,44	R869,94	R872,76	2,7%	0,3%

Source: Stats SA and BFAP (2019)



To further explore the impact of inflation on consumers, **Figure 2** presents an illustration of the average nominal cost growth of specific food groups within the NAMC’s 28-item food basket, comparing the periods December 2019 vs. December 2018 (y-o-y) and December 2019 vs. November 2019 (m-o-m). Food categories in this 28-item food basket experiencing the highest annual inflation include: bread & cereals, fruit and bean products.

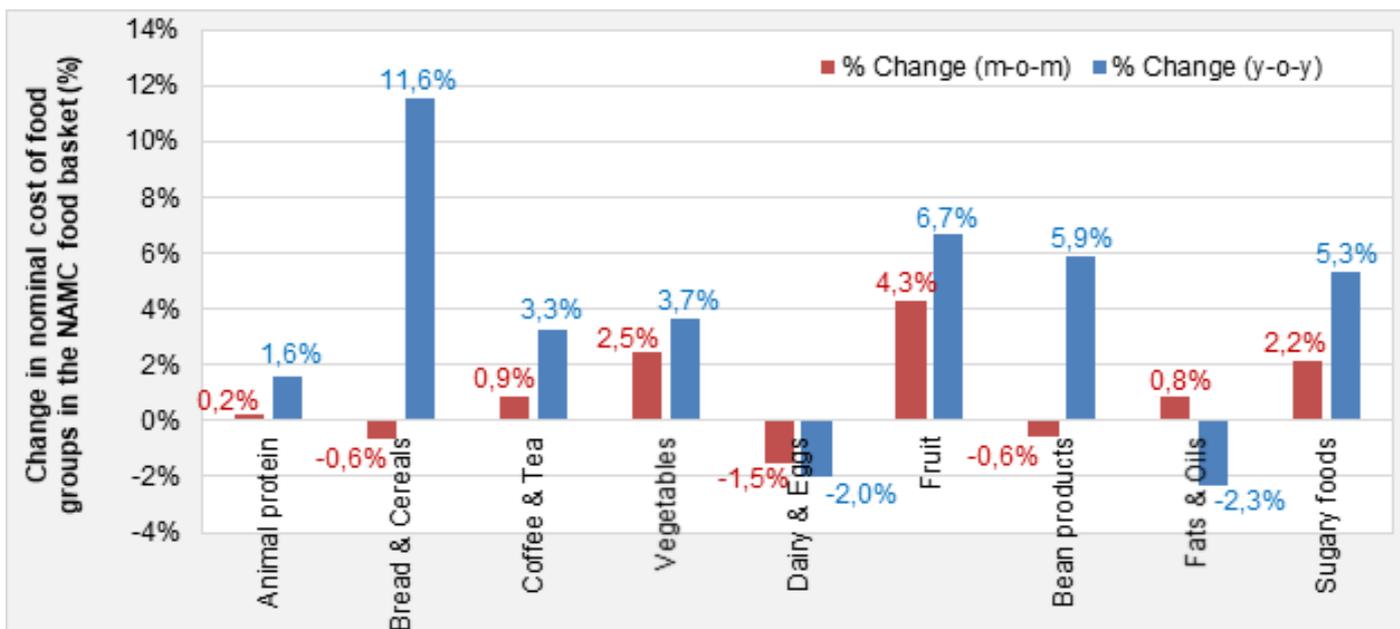


Figure 2: Nominal cost growth of specific food groups within the NAMC’s 28-item food basket, comparing December 2019 vs. December 2018 and December 2019 vs. November 2019

Source: BFAP & NAMC calculations, Stats SA data (2019)

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