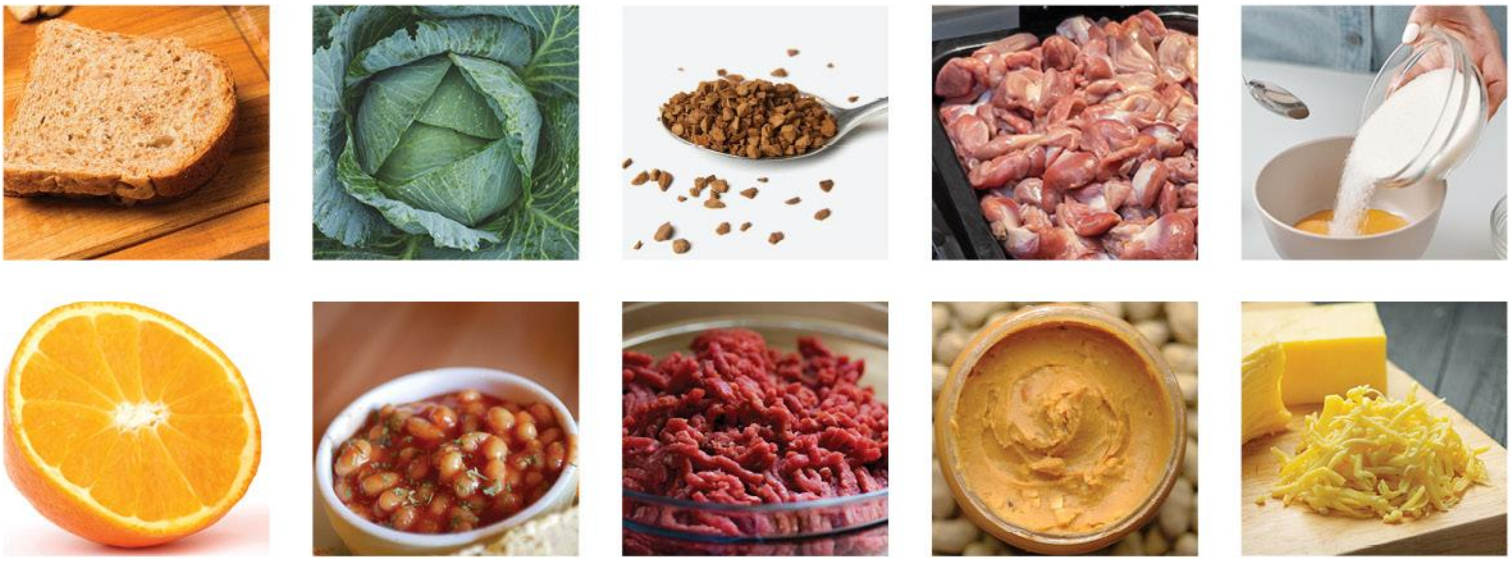
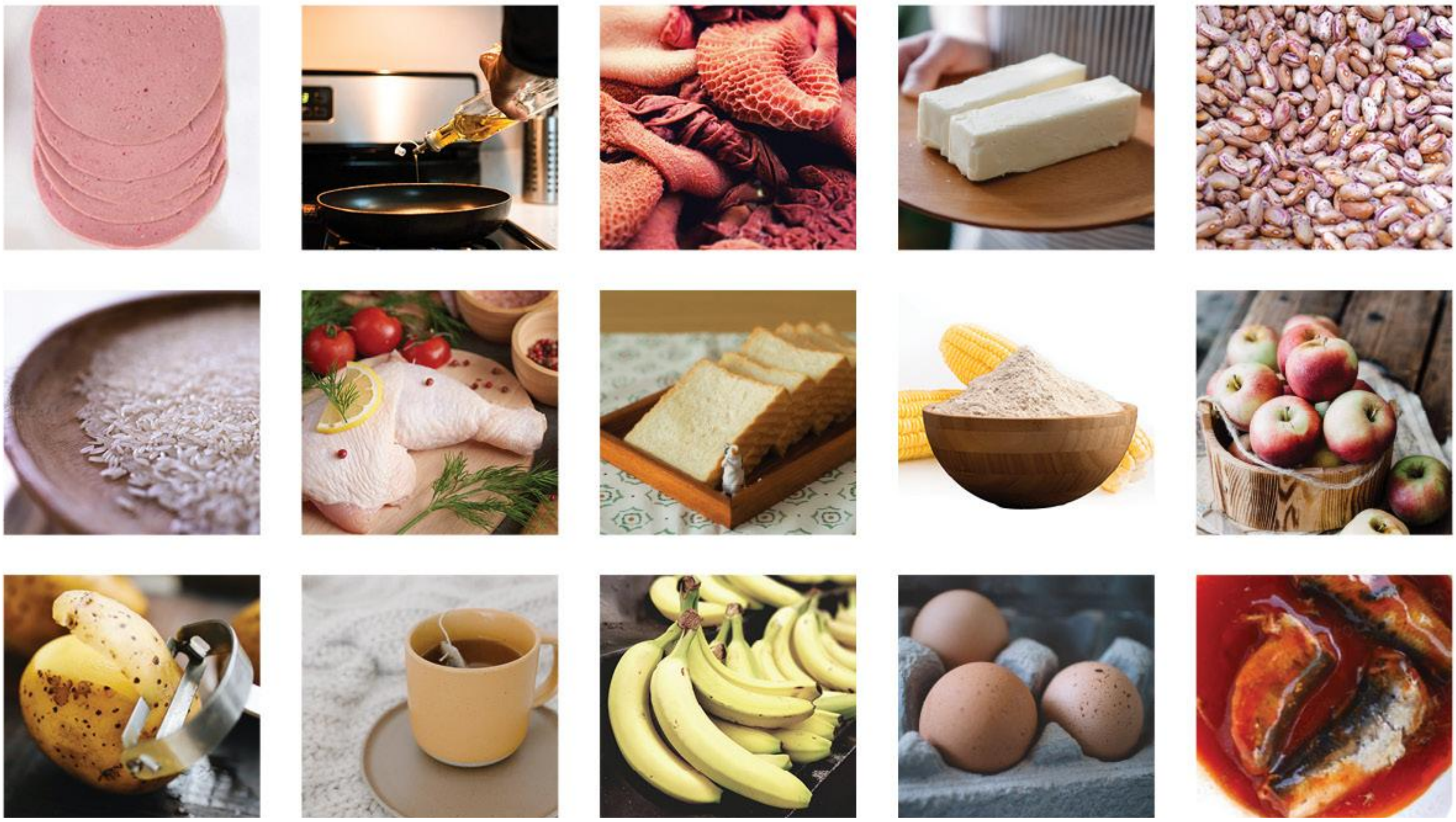


FOOD BASKET PRICE MONTHLY



NAMC FOOD BASKET: 28 SELECTED FOOD ITEMS PRICES

Issue 122 – January 2026

NAMC

Promoting market access for South African agriculture

www.namc.co.za

Food Basket Price Monthly

January 2026

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.

The December 2025 official data is used in this report, as the official release of the January 2026 CPI data is scheduled for February 18, 2026 (see link below from the Stats SA website):

https://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0141/P0141December2025.pdf

Highlights

During December 2025, the nominal cost of the NAMC's 28-item urban food basket amounted to R1 348.04 compared to the R1 350.06 reported in November 2025. This represents a monthly decrease of 0.1% and a year-on-year increase of 4.1%.

December 25 vs. December 24	Inflation bracket				
	12% or more	**Between 6% and 11.99%**	**Between 3% and 5.99%**	**Between 1% and 2.99%**	**Inflation close to zero or deflation**
Stats SA food groups:	Meat (12.6%)		Processed foods (4.6%) Oils & fats (4.6%) Unprocessed food (4.1%) Fish & other seafood (3.5%) Other foods (3.3%) Sugar, confectionery, and desserts (3.0%)	Cereal products (2.1%)	Milk, other dairy products & eggs (-1.1%) Vegetable (-2.8%) Fruit & nuts (-7.4%)
Individual food items in NAMC food basket (listed in order of decreasing inflation rates):	Beef mince (26.6%) Beef offal (13.2%) Instant coffee (12.9%)	Cheddar cheese (10.7%) Apples (9.9%) Brick margarine (9.0%)	Individually Quick Frozen (IQF) chicken portions (5.8%) Ceylon/black tea (4.7%) Sunflower oil (4.1%) Tinned fish (3.9%) Chicken giblets (3.7%) Maize meal (3.3%) Peanut butter (3.2%)	White sugar (2.5%) Polony (1.9%) Full cream long life milk (1.4%)	Brown bread (0.8%) White bread (0.7%) Dried beans (-1.0%) Tomatoes (-1.2%) Onions (-3.2%) Baked beans (-5.8%) Bananas (-10.1%) Rice (-10.2%) Eggs (-12.6%) Cabbage (-13.2%) Oranges (-16.3%) Potatoes (-17.5%)

1. Overall inflation and food inflation

Figure 1 presents trends in the global real food price index, reported by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). The FAO real food price index averaged at 124.3 points in December 2025, lower than the revised November figure of 125.1 points, marking its fourth monthly decline. The month-to-month decrease in global food inflation was driven by declines in the meat, vegetables, and dairy products indices, which outweighed an increase in the sugar and cereals indices. During this period, the price index for dairy recorded the highest decline of 4.4%, followed by meat (1.3%) and vegetable oil (0.2%). Butter prices decreased significantly, owing to seasonally higher cream supply in Europe and stock accumulation following substantial output earlier in the year. Similarly, whole milk powder prices also decreased, suggesting peak seasonal milk output in Oceania and low demand from major importing countries, contributing to the decline of the dairy price index. International meat prices decreased across all categories, with bovine and poultry meats declining the most. Reduced global bovine meat prices reflected poorer quotations in Australia, where seasonally dry circumstances led to herd reductions, boosting cattle available for slaughter and putting downward pressure on prices. Global poultry prices decreased due to an abundant exportable supply, which exceeded international import demand.

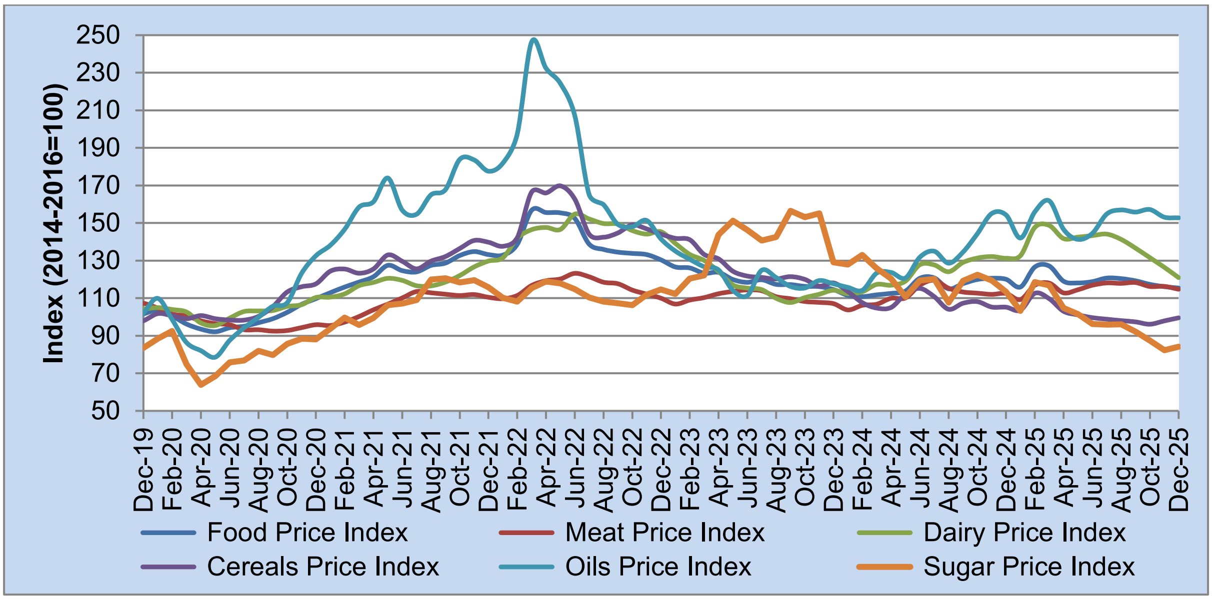


Figure 1: The FAO global real food price indices
Source: FAO, 2026

Ovine meat prices drpped slightly as increased seasonal supply entered the market, despite continued strong global import demand. Pig meat prices declined partially due to to lower quotations in the European Union and reduced global demand. The decline in vegetable oil prices was caused by decreasing global prices for sunflower, soy, and rapeseed oils, which substantially outweighed higher quotes for palm oil. Increased rapeseed production in Australia and Canada exerted downward pressure on rapeseed markets, while global soy oil prices decreased due to a substantial export supply from the Americas. For the second consecutive month in December, sunflower oil prices decreased due to decreasing price competitiveness and slow international import demand.

In contrast, after three consecutive monthly declines, the sugar price index averaged 90.7 points in December, increasing by 2.4% from November. The main reason for the increase in December was a significant decrease in sugar production in Brazil's major southern growing regions, which was attributed to less sugarcane being crushed to make sugar. Similarly, the cereal price index increased by 1.7%, averaging 107.3 points in December 2025.

Figure 2 illustrates fluctuations in global food inflation across selected countries with significant trade connections with South Africa. These countries include the BRICS member nations (namely, Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), as well as Zambia, Botswana, Namibia, and the United Kingdom (UK). Between November and December 2025, food inflation rates increased in some countries while declining in others. For instance, Russia's food inflation dropped from 7.5% to 5.2%, Namibia's from 3.9% to 2.6%, Zambia's from 13.9% to 12.9%, Botswana's from 5.5% to 5.4%, and Brazil's from 3.9% to 3.0%. The food inflation rate in South Africa remained unchanged from the previous month, at 4.4%. On the other hand, food inflation increased from 0.2% to 1.1% in China, from -3.9% to -2.7% for India and for the UK from 4.2% to 4.5%.

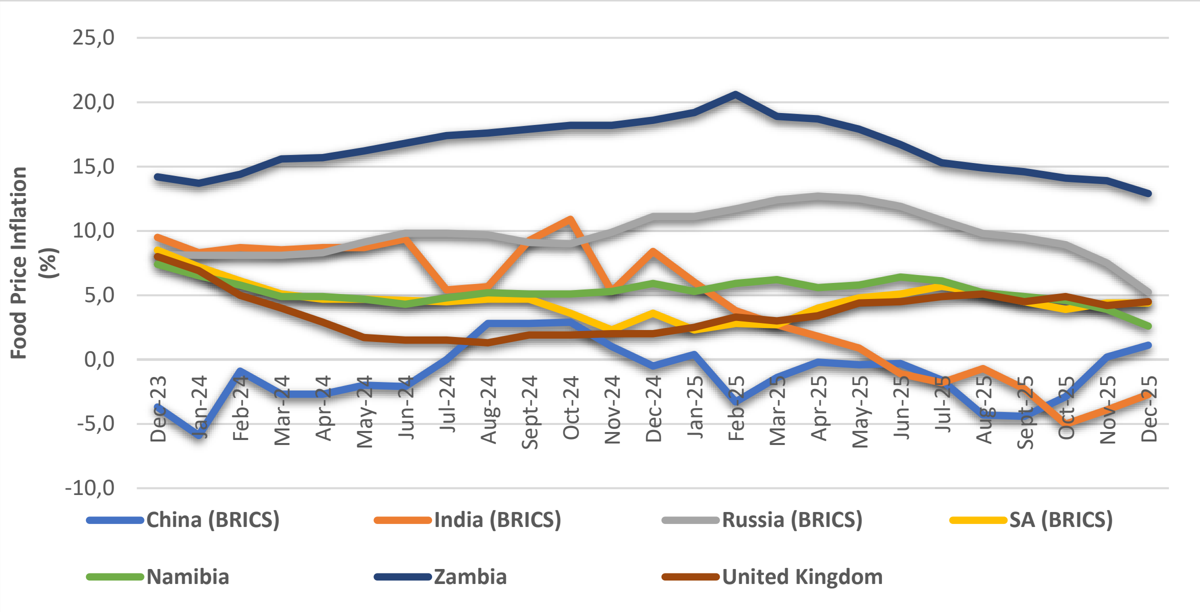


Figure 2: Global food inflation

Source: Trading Economics, 2026; Stats SA, 2026 & NAMC calculations

Figure 3 presents trends in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for South Africa from December 2019 to December 2025, along with the inflation rate for food and non-alcoholic beverages (NAB). In December 2025, Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) confirmed that the annual headline CPI was 3.6%, representing a 0.1% increase from the 3.5% reported in November 2025. In December 2025, the inflation rate for food and NAB remained at 4.4% unchanged from the 4.4% reported in November 2025. The main drivers of the observed inflation on food and NAB were fruit & nuts, which experienced a decline of 1.5% in November 2025, followed by vegetables (1%), other foods (0.6%), and milk & other dairy products and eggs (0.1%). On the other hand, meat products continued to exert pressure on food inflation as they further increased by 0.9% in December, followed by processed foods, cereal products, oils & fats all increasing by 0.2%, unprocessed foods by 0.1%, while fish & other seafood, and sugar, confectionary & deserts remained unchanged.

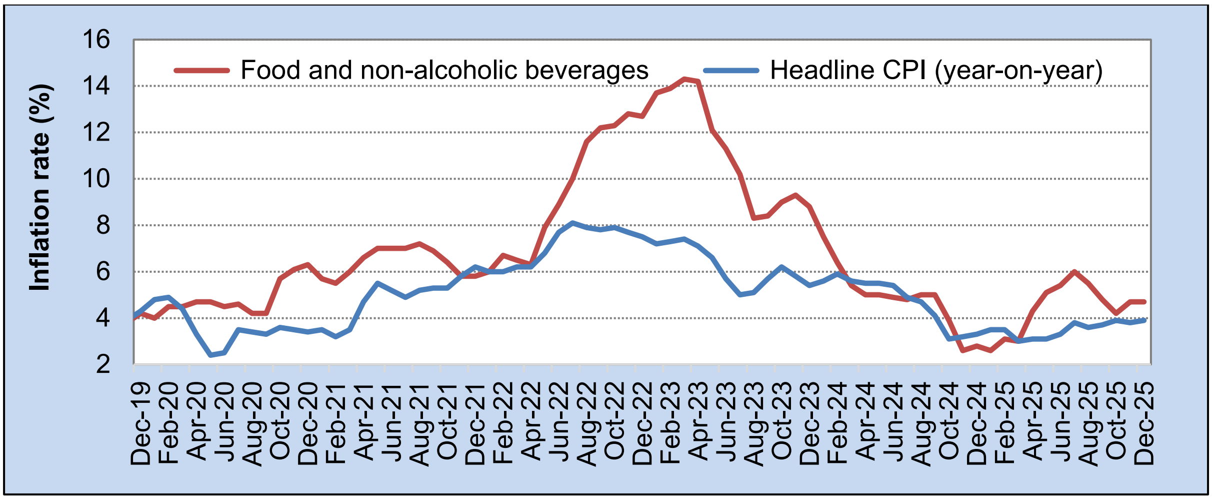


Figure 3: South Africa's headline CPI and Food & non-alcoholic beverages' CPI
Source: Stats SA, 2026; NAMC calculations

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

Table 1 presents a comparative analysis of expenses associated with selected food items in both urban and rural areas during December 2025. Recent data released by Stats SA reveals that there were variations in prices for certain products purchased in urban versus rural regions. Urban consumers paid more for Ceylon/black tea, which exhibited the most substantial price difference of R12.41, followed by peanut butter (R3.99), white sugar (R3.69), sunflower oil (R1.41), and white bread (R0.33), brown bread (R0.19), compared to rural consumers. On average, urban consumers paid R2.12 more for the nine (9) 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 December 2025 (R/unit)	Rural Food Prices December 2025 (R/unit)	The price difference (R/unit)
Full cream milk - long life 1ℓ	20.05	20.56	-0.51
Brown bread 700g	17.53	17.34	0.19
White bread 700g	19.16	18.83	0.33
Bananas per kg	22.02	22.66	-0.64
Maize meal 2.5kg*	42.35	n/a	n/a
Margarine spread 500g*	40.35	n/a	n/a
Peanut butter 400g	49.48	45.49	3.99
Rice 2kg	41.16	42.95	-1.79
Sunflower oil 750mℓ	36.93	35.52	1.41
Ceylon/black tea 250g	62.96	50.55	12.41
White sugar 2.5kg	66.13	62.44	3.69
			2.12

Source: Stats SA, 2026; NAMC calculations, * Rural prices for maize meal (2.5 kg) and margarine spread (500g) were not available (n/a) in the December 2025 data

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

In this section, the cost of NAMC's 28-item urban food basket is explained through a comparison of average food prices in December 2025 and December 2024. **Table 2** presents nominal prices of these 28 food items that comprise the NAMC's urban food basket. The analysis shows that the cost of the NAMC's 28-item urban food basket increased by 4.1% in December 2025 when compared to the same period last year, reaching R1348.06. This is equivalent to a 0.1% month-to-month decrease from the R1350.06 cost recorded in November 2025. Between December 2025 and December 2024, among these 28 items, only 8 items recorded price increases that exceeded the 3% to 6% tolerance bound inflation target set by the South African Reserve Bank (SARB). Notable products in this category include beef mince which experienced a substantial price surge of 26.6%, followed by beef offal (13.2%), instant coffee (12.9%), cheddar cheese (10.7%), apples (9.9%), brick margarine (9.0%), IQF chicken portions (5.8%) and Ceylon black tea (4.72%), and sunflower oil (4.06%).

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

Category	Product	December-24 R/unit	November-25 R/unit	December-25 R/unit	Change year-on-year (%)	Change month-on-month (%)
Beans	Baked beans - tinned 410g	16.42	15.43	15.46	-5.85	0.19
	Beans - dried 500g	34.31	34.14	33.95	-1.05	-0.56
	Peanut butter 400g	47.95	50.37	49.48	3.19	-1.77
Coffee & Tea	Ceylon/black tea 250g	60.12	63.19	62.96	4.72	-0.36
	Instant coffee 250g	69.07	77.21	77.99	12.91	1.01
Dairy & Eggs	Cheddar cheese per /kg	139.99	159.26	154.97	10.70	-2.69
	Eggs 1.5 dozen	69.65	61.62	60.85	-12.63	-1.25
	Full cream milk -long life 1ℓ	19.86	20.05	20.14	1.41	0.45
Fats & Oils	Brick margarine 500g	29.93	32.24	32.61	8.95	1.15
	Sunflower oil 750mℓ	35.49	37.00	36.93	4.06	-0.19
Fruit	Apples per kg	24.65	26.51	27.08	9.86	2.15
	Bananas per kg	24.49	21.30	22.02	-10.09	3.38
	Oranges per kg	28.37	22.73	23.74	-16.32	4.44
Animal Protein	Beef mince per kg	103.83	129.88	131.40	26.55	1.17
	Beef offal per kg	51.92	58.07	58.78	13.21	1.22
	Chicken giblets per kg	46.66	48.69	48.39	3.71	-0.62
	Fish (excl. tuna) 400g	27.46	28.41	28.52	3.86	0.39
	IQF chicken portions 2kg	95.98	101.05	101.56	5.81	0.50
	Polony 1kg	57.43	58.82	58.53	1.92	-0.49
Bread & Cereals	Brown bread 700g	17.39	17.57	17.53	0.81	-0.23
	White bread 700g	19.02	19.14	19.16	0.74	0.10
	Rice 2kg	45.81	40.68	41.16	-10.15	1.18
	Maize meal 5kg	71.04	73.16	73.37	3.28	0.29
Vegetables	Cabbage each	22.63	19.78	19.65	-13.17	-0.66
	Onions per kg	20.92	21.07	20.26	-3.15	-3.84
	Potatoes per kg	21.38	17.21	17.64	-17.49	2.50
	Tomatoes per kg	28.11	28.35	27.78	-1.17	-2.01
Sugary foods	White sugar 2.5kg	64.54	67.13	66.13	2.46	-1.49
Total Rand Value		**1 294.42**	**1 350.06**	**1 348.04**	**4.1%**	**-0.1%**

Source: Stats SA, 2026; NAMC calculations

Figure 4 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 November 2025 with December 2024 (year-on-year) and December 2025 with November 2025 (month-on-month). When examining year-on-year price differences, the food group that contributed most significantly to the observed food inflation was animal protein, with a substantial increase of 11.5%. Following this was coffee & tea, which increased by 9.1%, fats & oils (6.3%), dairy & eggs (2.8%), sugary foods (2.5%), and bean products (0.2%). In contrast, bread & cereals prices decreased by 1.3%, fruit by 6.0%, and vegetables by 8.3%. When reviewing month-on-month changes, fruits showed an increase of 3.3%, followed by animal protein (0.5%), bread & cereals (0.4%), fats & oils (0.4%), and coffee & tea (0.4%). In contrast, bean product prices decreased substantially by 1.1%, followed by vegetables (1.2%), sugary foods (1.5%), and dairy & eggs (2.1%).

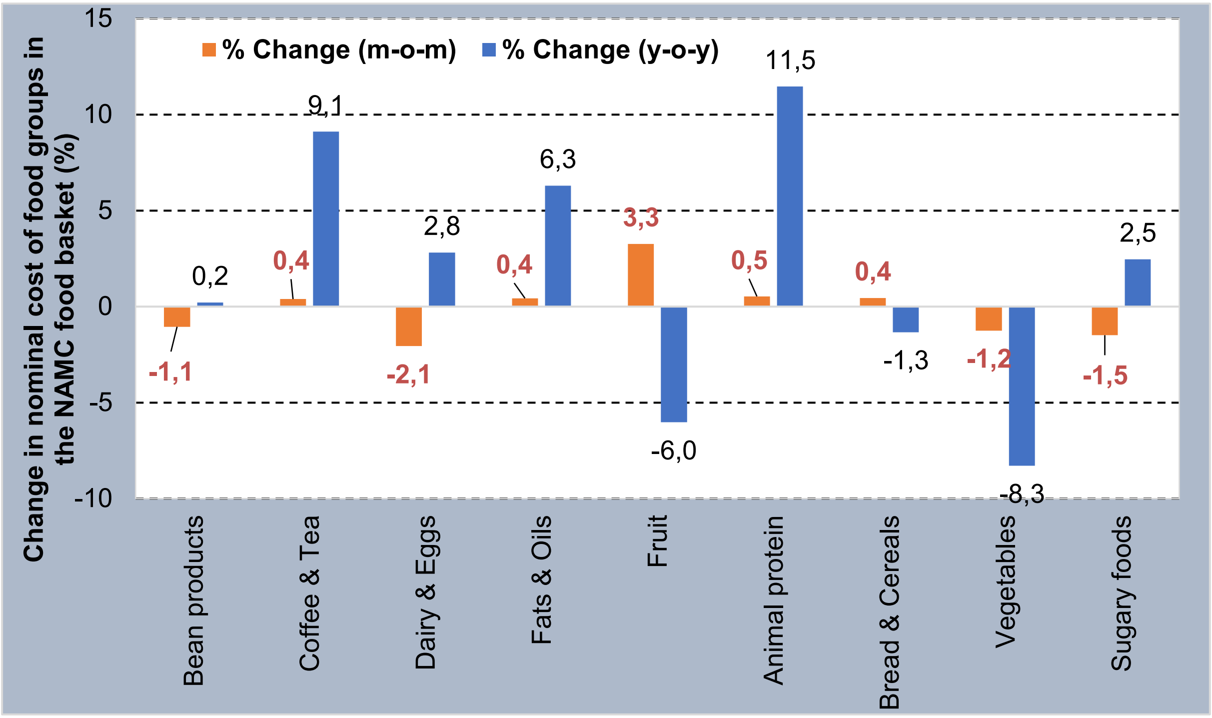


Figure 4: Nominal change in the cost of specific food groups within the NAMC's 28-item food basket, comparing December 2025 vs. December 2024 and December 2025 vs. November 2025

Source: Stats SA, 2026; NAMC calculations

In conclusion, food inflation in South Africa remained relatively stable in December 2025, while headline inflation increased marginally, reflecting continued pressure on household food expenditure. The main contributors to food and NAB inflation were meat, followed by processed foods, oils and fats, unprocessed foods, fish and other seafood, other foods, sugar, confectionery and desserts, and cereal products. These trends contrast with global developments, where food prices declined for a fourth consecutive month due to lower international prices for meat, dairy, and vegetable oils despite rising sugar and cereal prices. Domestically, these inflationary pressures were also mirrored in the NAMC's 28-item urban food basket, which recorded a modest year-on-year increase alongside a slight month-on-month decline. Furthermore, persistent spatial price disparities remain evident, with urban consumers continuing to pay higher prices than their rural counterparts, particularly for processed food items such as tea, peanut butter, and sugar.

Background Information:

The NAMC monitors food prices at the retail level and releases regular authoritative reports. The Department of Agriculture, 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 the 2000/01 season. The NAMC continued the functions of the FPMC 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, was initiated following discussions with the industry to maintain a more frequent monitoring of food prices.

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