Cost and Affordability of a Healthy Diet: monitoring food access in Malawi

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National Statistical Office
Food price data

- Retail food prices collected by NSO for measuring inflation with the Consumer Price Index (CPI)

- High-frequency data collected in 34 markets across the country

- Culturally acceptable, commonly consumed food items included

CoHD using NSO retail food prices, by region

- CoHD increased sharply in all regions beginning around July 2021
- National average CoHD ~ 960 MWK in 2022
- Latest data from Dec 2022; real-time monitoring needed
Food prices and CoHD increased more than all goods

• Indexed values to compare change since 2018

• Food CPI contains a larger number of items and accounts for preferences with expenditure weights

* All values rescaled (1/2018 = 100)
National average cost share by food group

- Animal-source foods account for 35% of the total cost
- Fruits and vegetables account for another 34%
- Fruits and starchy staples are food groups are similar in terms of cost share
  - Fruits due to cost per calorie
  - Starchy staples due to calories contributed
Meeting vegetable requirement is more costly in North.
Market results reveal more variation

Cost per food group per day (December 2022, MWK)

**Balaka**
- Starchy staples: 262
- Legumes nuts and seeds: 101
- Oils and fats: 71
- Fruits: 77
- Vegetables: 145
- Animal source foods: 153

**Blantyre**
- Starchy staples: 363
- Legumes nuts and seeds: 190
- Oils and fats: 153
- Fruits: 156
- Vegetables: 171
- Animal source foods: 498

**Chitakale**
- Starchy staples: 316
- Legumes nuts and seeds: 116
- Oils and fats: 120
- Fruits: 109
- Vegetables: 109
- Animal source foods: 145

**Lunzu**
- Starchy staples: 373
- Legumes nuts and seeds: 109
- Oils and fats: 71
- Fruits: 71
- Vegetables: 135
- Animal source foods: 153

**Mangochi**
- Starchy staples: 424
- Legumes nuts and seeds: 109
- Oils and fats: 70
- Fruits: 117
- Vegetables: 120
- Animal source foods: 314

**Mbulumbuzi**
- Starchy staples: 314
- Legumes nuts and seeds: 79
- Oils and fats: 187
- Fruits: 123
- Vegetables: 70
- Animal source foods: 192

**Mwanza**
- Starchy staples: 376
- Legumes nuts and seeds: 107
- Oils and fats: 120
- Fruits: 120
- Vegetables: 129
- Animal source foods: 329

**Nchalo**
- Starchy staples: 374
- Legumes nuts and seeds: 103
- Oils and fats: 107
- Fruits: 120
- Vegetables: 110
- Animal source foods: 358

**Nsanje**
- Starchy staples: 413
- Legumes nuts and seeds: 104
- Oils and fats: 104
- Fruits: 127
- Vegetables: 127
- Animal source foods: 413

**Thyolo**
- Starchy staples: 317
- Legumes nuts and seeds: 101
- Oils and fats: 81
- Fruits: 108
- Vegetables: 233
- Animal source foods: 183

**Zomba**
- Starchy staples: 298
- Legumes nuts and seeds: 109
- Oils and fats: 129
- Fruits: 129
- Vegetables: 129
- Animal source foods: 337

* High and medium SES markets.
# Least-cost diets in different markets, December 2022

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food group</th>
<th>Balaka</th>
<th>Chilumba</th>
<th>Kasungu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Least-cost item(s)</td>
<td>CoHD (MWK/day)</td>
<td>Least-cost item(s)</td>
<td>CoHD (MWK/day)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal source foods</td>
<td>Milk, Ching’ombe 193</td>
<td>Pork 170</td>
<td>Milk, Ching’ombe 201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal source foods</td>
<td>Pork 170</td>
<td>Powdered milk 162</td>
<td>Pork 170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruits</td>
<td>Avocado 38</td>
<td>Banana 127</td>
<td>Banana 71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruits</td>
<td>Mango 64</td>
<td></td>
<td>Guava 70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legumes nuts and seeds</td>
<td>Cowpea (khobwe) 90</td>
<td>Soyabeaness 99</td>
<td>Groundnut, flour 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oils and fats</td>
<td>Cooking oil, refill 109</td>
<td>Cooking oil, refill 109</td>
<td>Cooking oil, refill 112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Starchy staples</td>
<td>Finger millet (mawere) 215</td>
<td>Finger millet (mawere) 172</td>
<td>Maize, grain 32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Starchy staples</td>
<td>Maize, grain 48</td>
<td>Maize, grain 48</td>
<td>Potato, sweet 143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables</td>
<td>Cabbage 37</td>
<td>Cabbage 73</td>
<td>Cabbage 35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables</td>
<td>Nkhwani 43</td>
<td>Nkhwani 60</td>
<td>Onion 39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables</td>
<td>Tanaposi (rape) 44</td>
<td>Onion 55</td>
<td>Tanaposi (rape) 53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1049</td>
<td>1073</td>
<td>937</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Common least-cost items in each food group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Starchy staples</th>
<th>Legumes nut and seeds</th>
<th>Oils and fats</th>
<th>Fruits</th>
<th>Vegetables</th>
<th>Animal source foods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maize grain</td>
<td>Groundnuts flour or shelled</td>
<td>Cooking oil</td>
<td>Banana</td>
<td>Tanaposi (rape)</td>
<td>Pork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice</td>
<td>Soyabean</td>
<td>Margarine</td>
<td>Avocado</td>
<td>Cabbage</td>
<td>Liquid milk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweet potato</td>
<td>Pigeon pea</td>
<td>Mango</td>
<td>Mango</td>
<td>Nkhwani</td>
<td>Usipa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>