

The Market Basket

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January 2012

The Virginia Department of Agriculture's Market Basket has been designed to measure the price change in the retail cost of a fixed quantity of foods, the total cost of which is shown at the bottom of this page. The cost of the Market Basket is derived by multiplying the average retail price of each item by the quantity and totaling the entire group. This permits a comparison of prices on a month-to-month basis. The Market Basket combines 40 items priced during the same period of time each month at selected stores throughout the area. The Market Basket represents neither the cost of food for a family of one particular size or income group, nor every change in food prices, but only an increase or decrease in the total cost of items in the Market Basket.

Due to changes in data preparation for the Richmond and the Norfolk-VA Beach-Portsmouth-Metropolitan Areas comparison cannot be made with data prior to January, 1983. Certain items may no longer be available in the size referenced in the Market Basket. However, calculations have been made to convert the cost per unit to the size listed in the Market Basket. The 40 commodities included in this study are listed in the following table.

1 lb. Round Steak	2 cans Evaporated Milk	2 lbs. Bananas
1 lb. Carrots	2 lbs. Chicken	½ lb. Peanut Butter
5-½ Gals. Milk	1 can Tomatoes	10 lbs. Potatoes
1 lb. Bacon	1 lb. Margarine	4 lbs. Flour
1 stalk Celery	1 lb. Frozen Fish	1-10 oz. Jar jelly
1 pt. Ice Cream	1 can Peaches	1 box Soda Crackers
1 lb. Hamburger	1 lb. Shortening	2 lbs. Cabbage
1 can Tuna	1 doz. Oranges	1 carton Soft Drinks
2 doz. Eggs	1 can Soup	1 lb. Onions
1 lb. Frankfurters	16 oz. Coffee	1 head Lettuce
1 can Corn	1 lb. Apples	2 bxs. Ready-To-Eat Cereal
½ lb. Amer. Proc. Cheese	1 pkg. Frozen Green Beans	6 loaves Bread
1 can Peas	6 oz. orange juice concentrate	1 lb. center cut chops
5 lbs. granulated sugar		

Cost of the Market Basket

	December 2011	January 2012	% Change From Last Month	January 2011	% Change From Last Year
Richmond, VA	\$138.00	\$134.48	(2.6)	\$129.09	4.2
Norfolk, VA	\$146.47	\$140.61	(4.0)	\$131.82	6.7