

Highlights of the results of the 2022–2023 Nutritious and Affordable Food Basket – Montreal

For over 70 years, Alima, Perinatal Social Nutrition Centre (Alima), more recently known as the Montreal Diet Dispensary, has been observing and documenting food price variations in Montreal. Once again this year, Alima is putting its expertise to good use by producing data for its Nutritious and Affordable Food Basket (NAFB), the tool that estimates the minimum cost of a balanced grocery spend covering the nutritional needs of the population.

Over the last few decades, Alima has updated this tool several times to keep pace with the latest nutritional recommendations and people’s eating habits. The last update took place in 2021-2022 and included the development of a web application and the adoption of a new methodology.¹

This report presents the results of price surveys for four periods in Montreal^{II}. These surveys were carried out in October 2022, January 2023, April 2023 and July 2023.

Here are the 10 highlights of this report:

- 1. In October 2022, the minimum cost of a balanced grocery spend to feed a typical family^{III} was \$1,094.98 per month, or \$9.00 per person per day. In July 2023, this cost was \$1,178.11, or \$9.68 per person per day. In the space of around 10 months, this represents an increase of 8%. This means an additional cost of \$997.49 per year for the family. For the same family, if the 31 to 50-year-old woman is pregnant, the cost is \$1,226.79 per month for the family.
- 2. Between October 2021 and July 2023, a period of just under two years, the price of a typical family’s nutritious and affordable groceries increased by 25%, amounting to an additional cost of \$2,850 per year for the same food products. This rapid accumulation of food price increases will definitely have an impact, particularly on families in vulnerable situations.
- 3. The groceries discussed in this report are made up of 68 different foods divided into 11 categories:

Fruits	Fats
Starches	Grain products
Vegetables	Plant-based proteins
Dairy products and plant-based beverages	Commercial infant formula
Sugars	Baby cereal
Animal proteins	

¹See the Nutritious and Affordable Food Basket Update and Cost Report for more details: https://www.dispensaire.ca/wp-content/uploads/PPNE_RapportSynthese_final.pdf
^{II}For the past few years, grocery stores in Lachine have been chosen to represent Montreal’s median-income neighbourhood.
^{III}A typical family is made up of a man (aged 31–50), a woman (aged 31–50), a boy (aged 14–18) and a girl (aged 9–13).

4. Of the 11 categories, 3 saw their prices increase by more than 10%^{iv} between the first and last periods: grain products (+12%), vegetables (+17%) and baby cereal (+23%).
5. One of the categories that saw a significant increase (12%) during the period under review was grain products. It is the increase in the price of refined grains that is driving up this cost, since the increase between the two periods is 19% for this sub-category.
6. There was also an increase in the price of fresh vegetables (21%), which further boosted the vegetable category (+17%). Frozen or canned vegetable prices also increased, but moderately by 10%. Fresh fruit prices remained stable. Frozen fruit prices increased steadily by 12% from October 2022 to July 2023.
7. Animal protein (meat, fish and eggs) prices remained relatively stable (up < 10%). The average price of plant-based proteins was fairly stable. However, the legumes subcategory increased by 18% between October 2022 and July 2023. Canned legumes (+47%) and dried legumes (+34%) in particular contributed to this rise.
8. Prices in the dairy products and plant-based beverages category varied slightly (almost 0% variation). Plant-based protein sources and dairy products remain an affordable choice compared to animal proteins such as meat and fish, when looking at the price per kilogram (almost twice as expensive).
9. Baby cereal prices rose 23% between October 2022 and July 2023.
10. The results presented in this report highlight a significant increase in food costs over time, underlining the food insecurity to which low-income households are more and more exposed. The cost of groceries represents around 45% of the income of a family living on welfare. In addition to making more restrictive choices, more and more families might reduce the quantities of food they allow themselves. As a result, serious repercussions on physical and psychosocial health can occur, putting the health of women during pregnancy and their baby at risk. A portrait of food insecurity in Montreal reveals that, in 2020, nearly 300,000 people were already living in a household experiencing food insecurity.^v



To view the **Nutritious and Affordable Food Basket 2022-2023 – Montreal report**, [visit](#)

centrealima.ca

^{iv}10% is the threshold Alima uses to judge an increase worthy of mention.

^vDRSP CCSMTL (Direction régionale de santé publique, CIUSSS du Centre-Sud-de-l'Île-de Montréal). Portrait of food insecurity in Montreal in 2020.[forthcoming]