



NATIONAL BUREAU OF STATISTICS



# COST OF A HEALTHY DIET

(MAY 2024)



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Data Sources: National Bureau of Statistics (NBS)

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# INTRODUCTION

## HIGHLIGHTS

- ◆ The Cost of a Healthy Diet (CoHD) is the least expensive combination of locally available items that meets globally consistent food-based dietary guidelines. It is used as a measure of physical and economic access to healthy diets. This is a lower bound (or floor) of the cost per adult per day excluding the cost of transportation and meal preparation.
- ◆ The National average Cost of a Healthy Diet was N1,041 in May 2024. This is 1% higher than the amount recorded in the previous month (April 2024, was N1,035).
- ◆ In May 2024, the average CoHD was highest in the South East at N1,189 per adult per day, compared to N919 per adult per day in North West.
- ◆ In recent months, the CoHD has risen faster than general inflation and food inflation. However, the CoHD and the food CPI are not directly comparable; the CoHD includes fewer items and is measured in Naira per day, while the food CPI is a weighted index.

Food environments determine a household's physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food for an active and healthy life. A suite of indicators known as the Cost and Affordability of a Healthy Diet (CoAHD) have been developed to improve the measurement of food access and are now monitored globally by the United Nations and the World Bank as a metric of food security. The Cost of a Healthy Diet (CoHD) metric uses the availability, price, and nutritional composition of retail food items to identify the **least expensive** combination of items that meet requirements for a healthy diet. To compute the Cost of a Healthy Diet indicator, the following data are required: (a) Retail Food Prices, (b) Food Composition Data, and (c) Healthy Diet Standard.

### Retail Food Prices

The retail food price data used in this analysis is collected by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) monthly from 10,534 informants spread across the country, from urban and rural outlets in each State and FCT. NBS collects these prices routinely for monitoring inflation, including prices of over 200 retail food items. Nearly 150 of these food items are potentially included in a healthy diet and the price data for these items are used for the computation of the CoHD.

### Healthy Diet Standard

In Nigeria, CoHD is the minimum cost of foods needed to meet international recommendations defined in the Healthy Diet Basket (HDB), a globally relevant set of criteria that captures similarities across most national food-based dietary guidelines (FBDG) (Table 1). The HDB was created as a comparable standard to calculate and compare the cost and affordability of healthy diets across countries; the HDB is most relevant for countries where there is not yet a quantified national FBDG, like Nigeria.

**Table 1. Description of the Healthy Diet Basket (HDB)**

Food Group	Number of food items selected	Energy content (kilocalories)	Share of total calories (%)	Typical weights of example foods (g)
Starchy Staples	2	1,160	50	322 g dry rice
Oils and Fats	1	300	13	34 g oil
Fruits	2	160	7	230-300 g
Vegetables	3	110	5	270-400 g
Legumes Nuts and Seeds	1	300	13	85 g dry bean
Animal Source Foods	2	300	13	210 g egg
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>2,330</b>	<b>100</b>	

## Average Cost of a Healthy Diet (National, State & Zonal Levels)

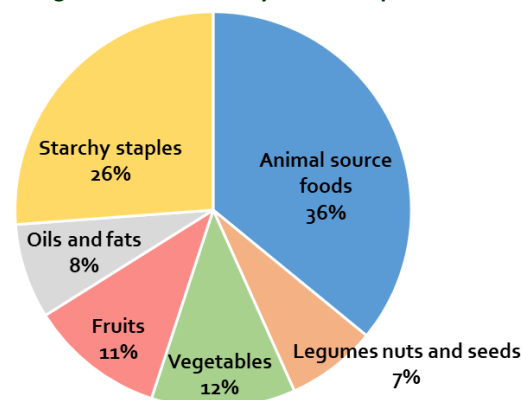
The National average Cost of a Healthy Diet was N1,041 per adult per day in May 2024. At the State level Ebonyi, Abia and Anambra States recorded the highest cost with N1,225, N1,215, and N1,205 respectively. Kano accounted for the lowest costs with N898, followed by Jigawa with N899 while Yobe and Katsina accounted for N906.

At the Zonal level, the average CoHD was highest in the South East Zone at N1,189 per day, followed by South West Zone with N1,160 per day. The lowest average Cost of a Healthy diet was recorded in North West Zone with N919 per day. **(Please see Appendix for full graphic representation)**

## Cost Share by Food Group

Animal Source foods were the most expensive food group recommendation to meet in May, accounting for 36% of the total CoHD to provide 13% of the total calories. Fruits and vegetables were the most expensive food groups in terms of price per calorie; they accounted for 11% and 12%, respectively, of total CoHD while providing only 7% and 5% of total calories in the Healthy Diet Basket. Legumes, Nuts and Seeds were the least-expensive food group on average, at 7% of the total cost.

Figure 3 - Cost Share by Food Group



## Trends in the Cost of a Healthy Diet

The Cost of Healthy Diet (CoHD) has been steadily rising over the past six (6) months, since December 2023. In May 2024, the CoHD was 32% higher than it was in December 2023 (N786). It was also 1% higher than the cost in April 2024 (N1,035). The main drivers of this increase in CoHD are Starchy Staples, Legumes, Nuts and Seeds, and Animal Source foods. Vegetables and Fruits, on the other hand, saw the smallest increase in price month-on-month.

Table 2. Changes in the Cost of Healthy Diet Over Time

Food Group	Percent Change in Price (Dec 2023 – May 2024)	Percent Change in Price (May 2024 – April 2024)
Animal source foods	23%	1%
Legumes nuts and seeds	60%	15%
Vegetables	12%	-27%
Fruits	19%	-1%
Oils and fats	19%	4%
Starchy staples	68%	14%
<b>Total</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>1%</b>

## General and Food Inflation Relative to the Cost of a Healthy Diet

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is a measure of inflation, the average change over time in the prices of goods and services consumed by people for day-to-day living, while the Food index is a subset of the CPI which reflects changes in prices that households pay for food. CPI records the development of market prices of agricultural commodities and foodstuffs. Figure 4a (*Please see Appendix*) compares the general CPI and the Food CPI (indices with 2009 as the base year) with the nominal Naira value of the Cost of a Healthy Diet, to understand whether the least-cost items needed for a healthy diet are rising in cost at a rate like that of the rest of the goods and services in Nigeria. Food prices and the Cost of a Healthy Diet are both expected to rise over time; here we focus on the relative rate of that inflation.

The Food CPI includes a larger number of items, and more packaged and value-added items than the Cost of a Healthy Diet, as least-cost items are often unprocessed. In the past year, the CoHD and the cost of all other goods and services increased at roughly the same rate, until July 2023, when CoHD increased at a faster rate than all goods and services (general CPI) and more than all foods for which retail prices are collected.

## Least-Cost Diets and Frequently Selected Least-Cost Items

Table 3, (*Please see Appendix*) demonstrates a complete least-cost diet in the most and least expensive locations in May 2024. In May 2024, Ebonyi (Urban) topped the chart with the most expensive Cost of a Healthy Diet at N1,274 per adult per day. Conversely, Kwara (Rural) offered the most affordable option at CoHD at N849. Interestingly, some of the least-cost food items remained consistent across both locations. These included Corn Flour, Avocado Pear, Coconut, Kuka dried leaf, bitter leaf, Dried Okra, and Soyabeans. However, price variations between these locations resulted in different costs per item. Also, some unique least-cost options emerged. For instance, Ebonyi (Urban) favored Minced Pork as the most affordable animal source food, whereas Kwara (Rural) opted for White Fried Shrimps.

Finally, Table 4 (*Please see Appendix*) shows frequently selected least-cost items in each food group across all state-sector combinations. This table demonstrates that some items are commonly the least-cost across different locations. For example, in the Oils and Fats Food group, Palm Oil was the least expensive item in 93% of State-Sectors, and Groundnuts (shelled) was the least-expensive item in the Legumes, Nuts and Seeds Food Group in 49% of all the State-Sectors. Coconuts were selected as a least-cost item for the Fruits Food Group in 43% of State-Sectors.

# POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The Cost of a Healthy Diet provides important information about food access, a key aspect of food security, which is useful for government, civil society and development partners, private sector, and researchers.

For instance, where the Cost of a Healthy Diet is high, it is possible to identify which least-cost items and food groups are driving the high cost. Stakeholders can identify supply challenges in specific foods or food groups to be addressed, for example with improved production, distribution, or market access.

The Cost of a Healthy Diet can also inform:

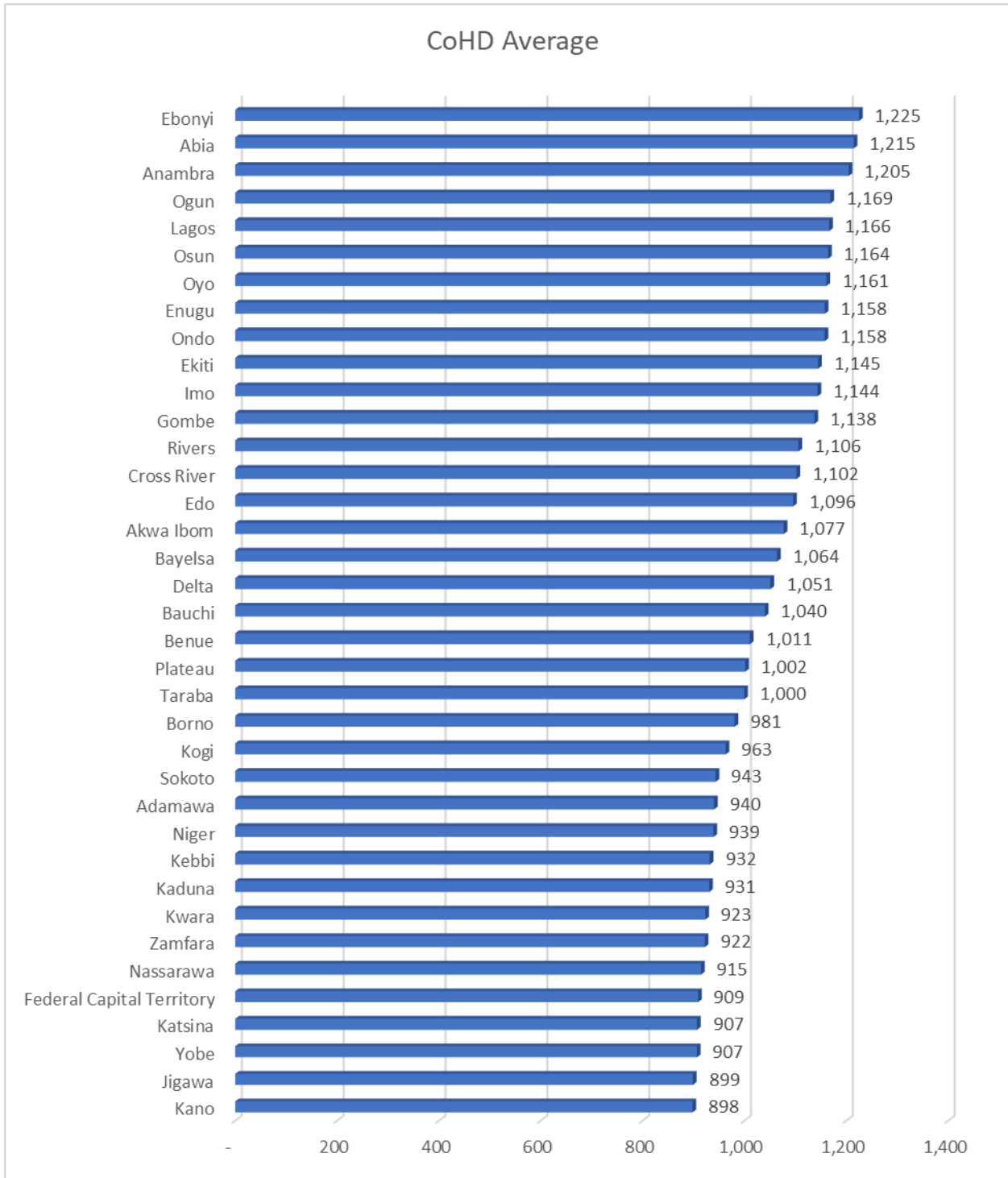
- ◆ The minimum income needed by households to access a healthy diet, and social protection and transfer amounts for vulnerable populations.
- ◆ Prioritization of commodities for agricultural production and trade policy interventions.
- ◆ Targeting interventions, including nutrition education, to populations with the most potential to benefit; nutrition education is only effective when people can afford to comply with the recommendations.
- ◆ Research on the relationship between food access and other food system factors and outcomes.

These results can also foster collaboration among a wide range of stakeholders, such as policymakers, researchers and civil society actors that focus on food security, to devise strategies that tackle access, availability, and affordability of healthy diet effectively. Future research incorporating income can also be used to determine the proportion and number of the population that are unable to afford a healthy diet.

*This bulletin was produced by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), Nigeria in collaboration with Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) and technically supported by the Food Prices for Nutrition project, led by the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University, in partnership with International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and the World Bank. This bulletin aims to inform decision-makers from government agencies, UN agencies and NGOs to improve access to healthy diets. The bulletin is available online at <https://nigerianstat.gov.ng/elibrary>. Answers to frequently asked questions about the Cost of a Healthy Diet are also available online <https://nigerianstat.gov.ng/elibrary/read/1241452>.*

# APPENDIX

Figure 1. Average Cost of a Healthy Diet by State



# APPENDIX

Figure 2. Zonal Average CoHD

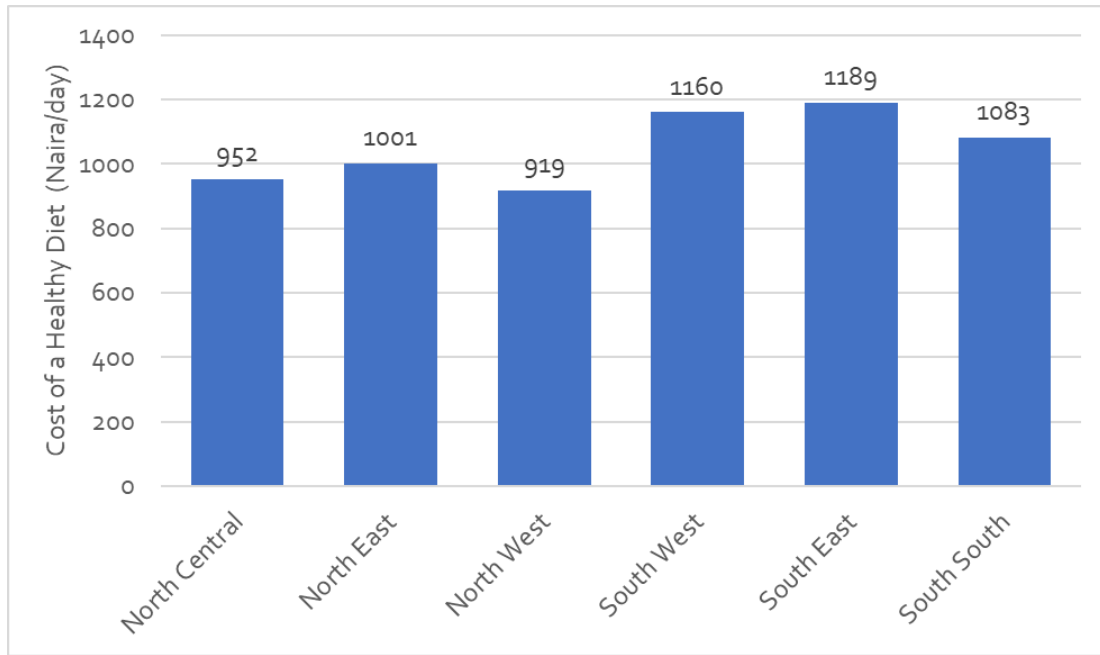


Figure 4a. National Average CoHD (Naira/day) and Consumer Price Indexes (2009=100)

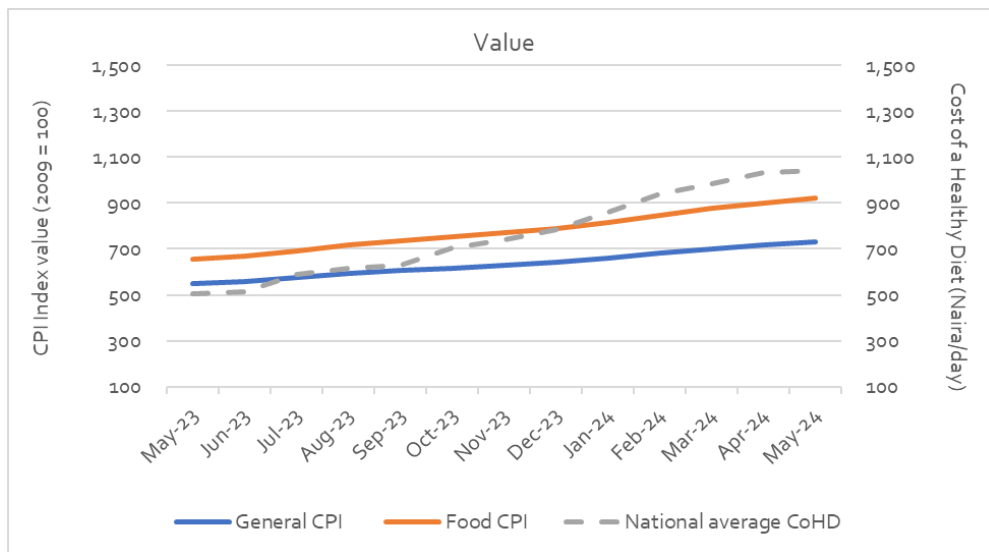
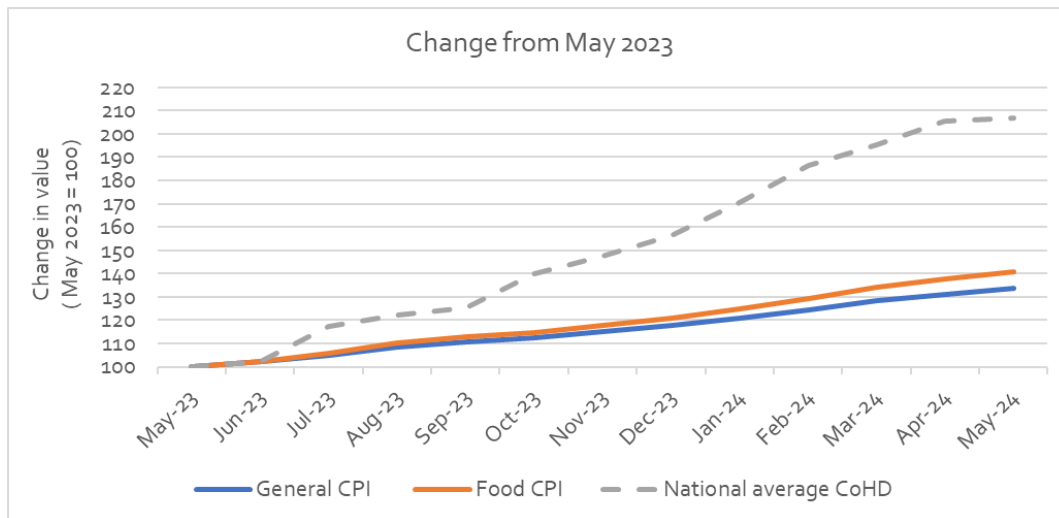


Figure 4b. National Average CoHD and Consumer Price Indexes (May 2023= 100)





# APPENDIX

**Table 3. States with Least and Most expensive cost of items**

	Most expensive:		Least expensive:	
March 2024	Ebonyi Urban		Kwara Rural	
	Least-cost item	Cost (N)	Least-cost item	Cost (N)
Starchy staples	Corn Flour 2kg	166	Corn Flour 2kg	113
	Millet Whole Grain	160	Cassava Flour (Sold Loose)	127
Oils and fats	Vegetable Oil	89	Palm Oil	62
Fruits	Avocado Pear	77	Avocado Pear	62
	Coconut	55	Coconut	49
Vegetables	Kuka Dried	134	Kuka Dried	17
	Bitter Leaf	131	Bitter Leaf	66
	Dried Okra	145	Dried Okra	12
Legumes Nuts seeds	Soya Beans	87	Soya Beans	79
Animal source foods	Minced Pork	248	Shrimps White-Dried	140
	Agric Eggs (One Piece)	275	Sirloin Steak	158
<b>Total (CoHD)</b>		<b>1,274</b>		<b>849</b>

**Table 4. Top 3 most frequently selected least-cost items by Food Group**

Food Group	Item Name	Selected as least-cost % of possible selection
Starchy staples	Cassava Flour (Sold Loose)	17%
	Millet Whole Grain	16%
	Corn Flour 2kg	14%
Oils and fats	Palm Oil	93%
	Vegetable Oil	5%
	Groundnut Oil	1%
Fruits	Coconut	43%
	Avocado Pear	36%
	Date Palm fruit (Debenu)	19%
Vegetables	Dried Okra	33%
	Kuka Dried	33%
	Bitter Leaf	27%
Legumes nuts and seeds	Groundnut (Shelled)	49%
	Soya Beans	41%
	Cashew Nut	9%
Animal source foods	Shrimps white dried	28%
	Crayfish (small white)	17%
	Fresh Milk (Industrial)	15%

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