



NATIONAL BUREAU OF STATISTICS

COST OF A HEALTHY DIET

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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 N1,589 in April 2026. This shows an increase of 3.12% when compared to the amount recorded in previous month (March 2026 was N1,541).
- ◆ In April 2026, the average CoHD was highest in the South-east at N1,830 per adult per day, compared to N1,415 per adult per day in North-east.
- ◆ 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.

Note:

kulikuli (Groundnut Cake), Akara (Beans Cake), and Locust Beans (Dawadawa, Iru) have been excluded from the list of possible least-cost items in Cost of a Healthy Diet (CoHD) baskets, though they were sometimes selected in 2025. Kulikuli (Groundnut Cake) and Akara (Beans Cake) were removed because they are mixed items containing significant amounts of more than one food group (Pulses, Oil), while Locust Beans (Dawadawa, Iru) were excluded as they are typically used as a condiment and consumed in small amounts.

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) a healthy diet standard.

Retail Food Prices

The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) gathers retail food price data every month from 10,534 sources in both urban and rural areas across all Nigerian states. This data helps the NBS track inflation and includes prices for over 300 food items. These items are commonly part of a healthy diet, and their price data is used to calculate the Cost of a Healthy Diet (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
Total	11	2,330	100	

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

The national average Cost of a Healthy Diet was N1,589 per adult per day in April 2026. At the State level Ekiti, Imo and Bayelsa States recorded the highest cost at N2,036, N2,018, and N1,909 respectively. Adamawa, Federal Capital Territory and Akwa Ibom State accounted for the lowest costs at N1,143, N1,278 and N1,314 respectively.

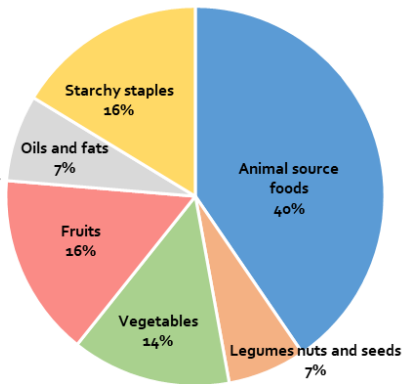
At the Zonal level, the average CoHD was highest in the South-East Zone at N1,830 per day, followed by South-West Zone at N1,753 per day. The lowest average Cost of a Healthy diet was recorded in North-east Zone at N1,415 per day.

(Please see Appendix for full graphic representation)

Cost Share by Food Group

Animal Source Foods were the most expensive food group recommendations to meet in April, accounting for 40% 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 16% and 14% 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 1 - Cost Share by Food Group



Trends in the Cost of a Healthy Diet

The Cost of a Healthy Diet (CoHD) has been rising steadily over the past year. As of April 2026, the CoHD was 4.74% higher than in April 2025, increasing from N1,518 to N1,589. While the price of Starchy staples and Oil and Fats decreased, all other food groups experienced price increases. On a month-on-month basis, the cost increased by 3.12% compared to March 2026 (N1,541). The increase was driven by the rise in prices across all food groups except Starchy Staples.

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

Food Group	Percent Change in CoHD	
	Month-on-Month	Year-on-Year
Starchy Staples	-0.17%	-31.95%
Oils and Fats	1.93%	-9.69%
Fruits	0.04%	7.71%
Vegetables	3.70%	5.55%
Legumes Nuts and Seeds	1.42%	9.38%
Animal Source Foods	6.11%	35.36%

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 compares the general CPI and the food CPI 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.

Least-Cost Diets and Frequently Selected Least-Cost Items

Table 2, *(Please see Appendix)* showcases the most and least expensive places to buy a healthy diet in April 2026. Ekiti (Urban) topped the chart with the highest Cost of a Healthy Diet (CoHD) at N2,218 per adult per day. Conversely, Adamawa (Urban) offered the most affordable option at N1,039 for CoHD. Interestingly, some of the least-cost food items remained consistent across both locations. These items include Maize (White) Grains, Beans White and, Shrimps White Dried. However, price variations across these locations resulted in different costs per item. Also, some unique least-cost options emerged. For instance, in Ekiti (Urban), Maize (White) Grains was the most affordable in the Starchy Staple food group, whereas in Adamawa (Urban) it was Garri White. In terms of the Fats and Oils Food group, Ekiti (Urban) recorded Palm oil as the most affordable, while Adamawa (Urban) went for Vegetable oil.

Table 3, *(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 costly across different locations. For example, in Legumes Nuts and Seeds Food group, Beans White was the least expensive item in 65% of state-sectors, and Palm oil was the least-expensive item in the Oil and Fats Food group in 62% of all the state-sectors. Garri White and Maize (White) Grains were both selected as the least expensive items in the Starchy Staple food group, each accounting for 32%.

Finally, Table 4 *(Please see Appendix)* offers a granular look at the most budget-friendly food choices consistently found across different Nigerian states, carefully chosen to represent each of the country's geopolitical zones. The analysis within this table illustrates that certain food items repeatedly stand out as the least expensive options, regardless of their geographical location. For example, aside from Bauchi (North East), Garri White has consistently been the least expensive option in Starchy Staple food group across various states. When it comes to Fruits, Lagos (South-West), Rivers (South-South), Bauchi (North-East), Kano (North-West), and the Federal Capital Territory (North-Central) have chosen Avocado pears, while Anambra (South-East) opted for fresh oranges.

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:

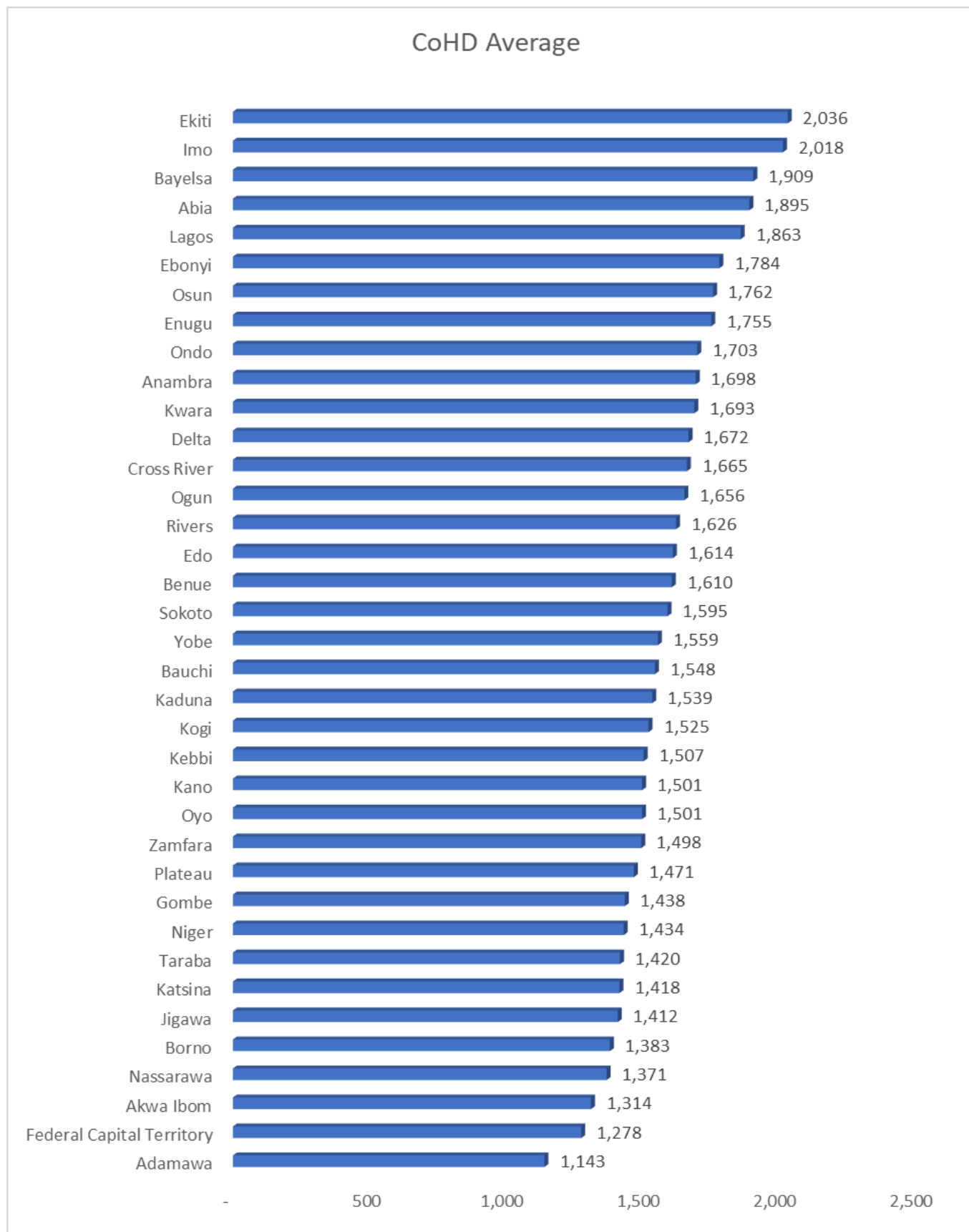
- ◆ The minimum income needed by households to access a healthy diet, and social protection and transfer amounts for vulnerable populations.
- ◆ Prioritization of commodities for agricultural production and trade policy interventions.
- ◆ Targeting interventions, including nutrition education, to populations 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. It 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://microdata.nigerianstat.gov.ng/index.php/catalog/146>. Answers to frequently asked questions about the Cost of a Healthy Diet are also available online <https://nigerianstat.gov.ng/elibrary/>

APPENDIX

Figure 2. Average Cost of a Healthy Diet by State



APPENDIX

Figure 3. Zonal Average CoHD

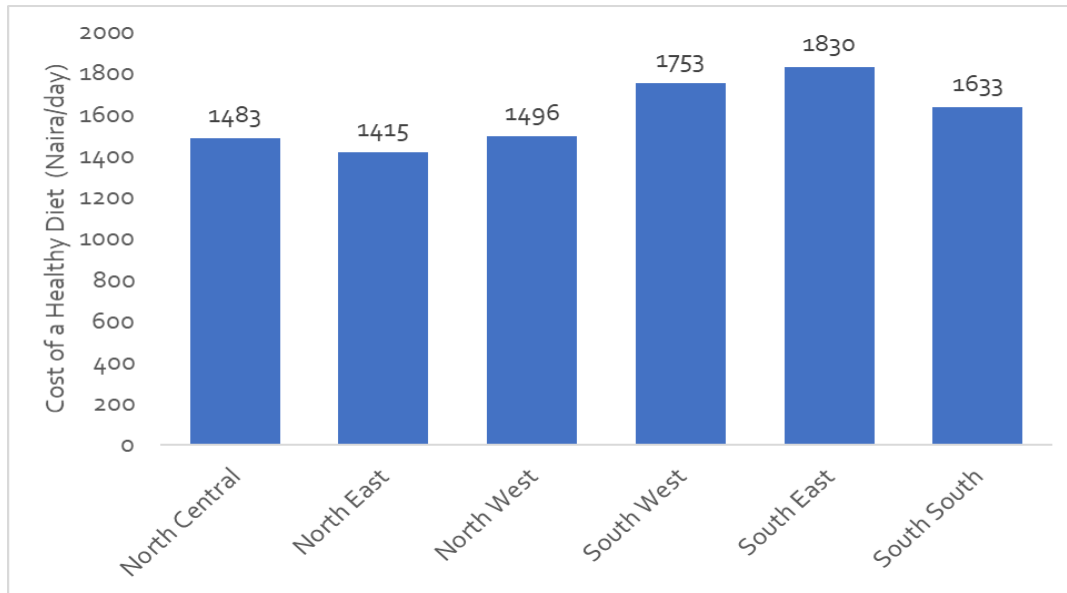


Figure 4a. National average CoHD (Naira/day) and Consumer Price Indexes (2024=100)

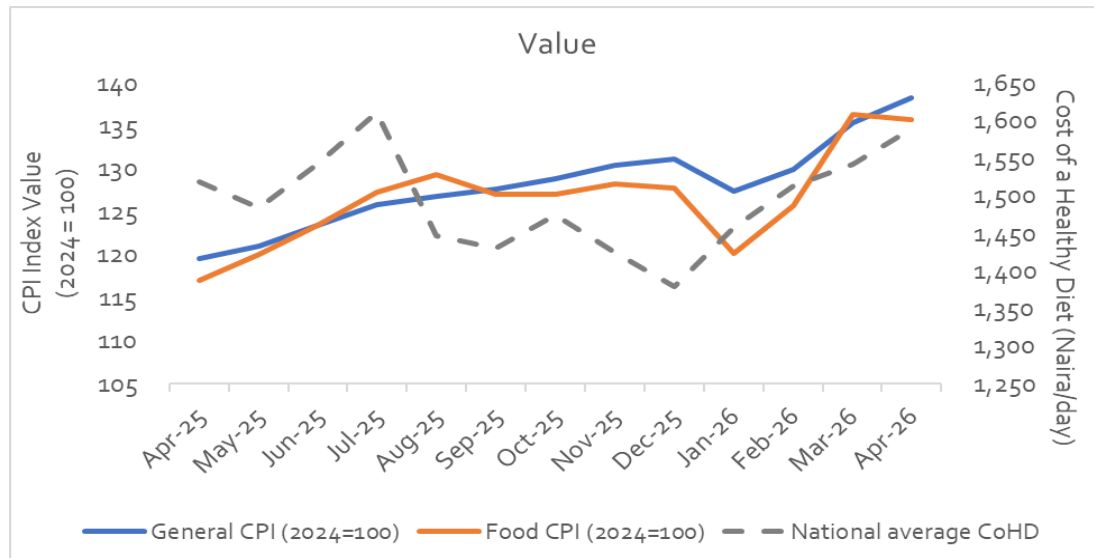
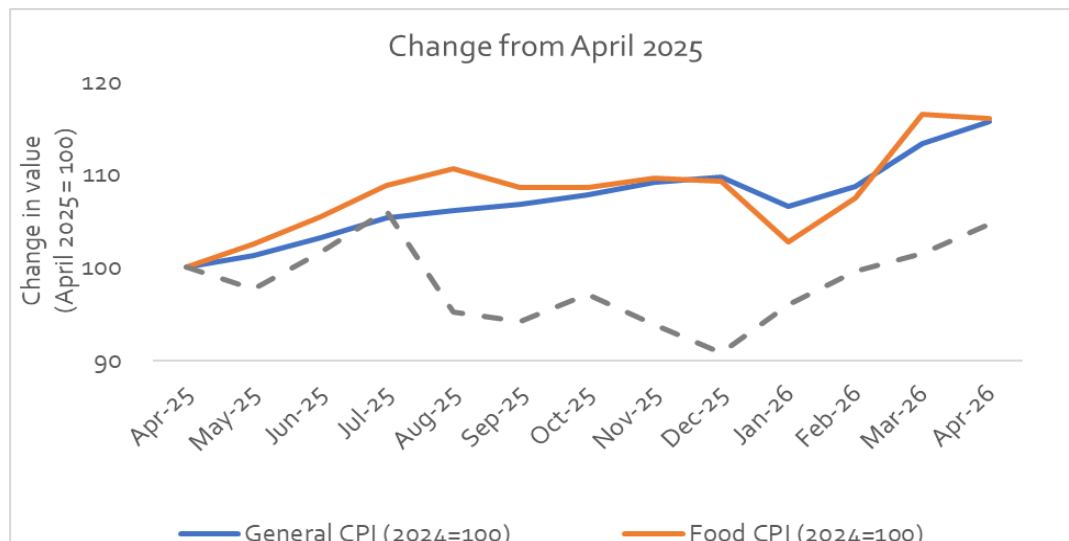


Figure 4b. National average CoHD and Consumer Price Indexes (2024 = 100)



APPENDIX

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

Apr-2026	Most expensive:		Least expensive:	
	Ekiti (Urban)		Adamawa (Urban)	
	Least-cost item	Cost	Least-cost item	Cost
Starchy Staples	Maize (white) Grains	128	Garri White	81
	Millet Whole Grain	134	Maize (white) Grains	62
Oils and Fats	Palm Oil, 75cl	129	Vegetable Oil, 75cl	81
Fruits	Oranges, fresh	235	Dates Palm fruits/Debunu	114
	Tangerine	106	Pears/Ube	123
Vegetables	Cabbages, fresh or chilled	259	Baobab Leaves Powder (Kuka)	18
	Geen Leaf/tete	217	Okra (Dried)	34
	Onion, fresh	130	Tomatoes (Dried)	54
Legumes Nuts & Seeds	Beans White	130	Beans White	108
Animal Source Foods	Agric hen eggs, (a Crate of 30 pieces)	367	Fresh Milk/Nono, 75cl	247
	Shrimps white dried	382	Shrimps white dried	116
Total (CoHD)		2,218		1,039

Table 4. Top Three (3) most frequently selected least-cost items by Food Group

Food Group	Item Name	Selected as least-cost % of possible selection
Starchy staples	Garri White	32%
	Maize Grains White	32%
	Garri Yellow	9%
Oils and fats	Palm oil, 75cl	62%
	Vegetable Oil, 75cl	15%
	Soya bean oil, 75cl	11%
Fruits	Avocado Pear	37%
	Dates Palm fruits/ Debinu	26%
	Desert Date Fruit /Aduwa	12%
Vegetables	Tomatoes Dried	25%
	Okra, Dried	21%
	Oha leaves	14%
Legumes nuts and seeds	Beans White	65%
	Soya Beans	12%
	Cow Peas (brown)	8%
Animal source foods	Crayfish small white	23%
	Agric hen eggs (a Crate of 30 pieces)	18%
	Powdered Milk Three Crown,350g	14%

APPENDIX

Table 5: Top most frequently selected least-cost items by food group in some State

Item Name			
Food Group	Lagos	Rivers	Anambra
Starchy staples	Garri White	Garri White	Garri White
	Maize Grains White	Guinea corn flour, sold loose	Maize Grains White
Oils and fats	Palm oil, 75cl	Palm oil, 75cl	Palm oil, 75cl
Fruits	Avocado Pear	Avocado Pear	Oranges, fresh
	Dates Palm fruits/ Debinu	Dates Palm fruits/ Debinu	Pears /Ube
Vegetables	Grean Leaf /tete	Baobab Leaves Powder /Kuka	Oha leaves
	Oha leaves	Oha leaves	Onions, fresh
Legumes nuts and seeds	Beans White	Cow Peas (brown)	Beans White
			Cow Peas (brown)
Animal source foods	Agric hen eggs, (a Crate of 30 pieces)	Cray fish small white	Cray fish small white
	Cray fish small white	Powdered Milk Three Crown,350g	Liquid Yoghurt, 1 liter
Item Name			
Food Group	Federal Capital Territory	Bauchi	Kano
Starchy staples	Garri White	Garri Yellow	Garri White
	Maize Flour White , sold loose	Maize Grains White	Maize Grains White
Oils and fats	Soya bean oil, 75cl	Vegetable Oil, 75cl	Soya bean oil, 75cl
	Vegetable Oil, 75cl		
Fruits	Avocado Pear	Avocado Pear	Avocado Pear
	Desert Date Fruit /Aduwa	Watermelon whole, medium size fresh	Desert Date Fruit /Aduwa
Vegetables	Kuka Dried	Baobab Leaves Powder /Kuka	Baobab Leaves Powder /Kuka
	Oha leaves	Kuka Dried	Okra, Dried
Legumes nuts and seeds	Beans white	Beans White	Beans White
Animal source foods	Cray fish small white	Agric hen eggs, (a Crate of 30 pieces)	Agric hen eggs, (a Crate of 30 pieces)
	Fresh Milk /Nono, 75cl	Chicken Wings	Fresh Milk /Nono, 75cl

CONTACT



National Bureau of Statistics
Head Office

#1 Wole Olanipekun St,
Central Business District,
Federal Capital Territory
Abuja

Bonaventure Nwosu
Information Desk

Head, Communication and Public
Relation Department (C&PRD)
Phone: +2348033109882
bnwosu@nigerianstat.gov.ng

Mrs Musa Nkem
Head Prices Division

Phone: +2348130286147
nmusa@nigerianstat.gov.ng

Moses Mathew
Statistical Information Officer

Phone: +2347069071157
matmoses@nigerianstat.gov.ng



@NBS_Nigeria



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@nbs_nigeria

