



NATIONAL BUREAU OF STATISTICS



Global Alliance for
Improved Nutrition

COST OF A HEALTHY DIET (MARCH 2025)

(MARCH 2025)



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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.
- ◆ National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) recently rebased the Consumer Price Index (CPI), which is the source for the Cost of Healthy Diet (CoHD) basket. This rebasing replaced the previous 2009 reference period to align the CPI with the current economic landscape. The process involved updating the types of goods and services included, revising their weightings, adding new items to reflect evolving consumption patterns and removing obsolete items.
- ◆ The updated CPI now encompasses 934 product varieties categorized under the COICOP 2018 framework, with over 300 food varieties specifically used to calculate the CoHD. It's important to note that due to these changes in the basket, item specifications, and the addition of new items. The CoHD from January 2025 onwards cannot be compared with previous bulletins.
- ◆ The national average Cost of a Healthy Diet was N1,498 in March 2025. This shows an increase of 11.3% when compared to the amount recorded in previous month (February 2025 was N1,346).
- ◆ In March 2025, the average CoHD was highest in the South-east at N1,938 per adult per day, compared to N1,165 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.

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 N1,498 per adult per day in March 2025. At the State level, Imo, Bayelsa, and Ekiti States recorded the highest cost with N2,170, N2,148, and N2,132 respectively. Yobe, Kaduna, and Katsina accounted for the lowest costs with N1,013, N1,041 and N1,043 respectively.

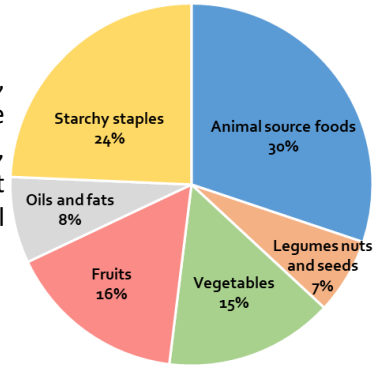
At the Zonal level, the average CoHD was highest in the South-East Zone at N1,938 per day, followed by South-South and South-West Zone with N1,745 each per day. The lowest average Cost of a Healthy diet was recorded in North East Zone with N1,165 per day.

(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 March, accounting for 30% 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 15%, 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) continued its upward trend in March 2025, rising by 11.3% month-on-month. This pushed the CoHD from N1,346 in February 2025 to N1,498 in March 2025. The key drivers of the increase are starchy staples, fruits, vegetables, and legumes, nuts, and seeds.

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

Food Group	Percent Change in CoHD Month-on-month
Starchy staples	13%
Oils and fats	10%
Fruits	13%
Vegetables	11%
Legumes nuts and seeds	11%
Animal source foods	10%

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 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 find a healthy diet in March 2025. Enugu State (Urban) topped the chart with the highest Cost of a Healthy (CoHD) at N2,579 per adult per day. Conversely, Kaduna State (Rural) offered most affordable option at N985 for CoHD. Interestingly, some of the least-cost food items remained consistent across both locations. These items included millet whole grain. However, price variations between these locations resulted in different costs per item. Also, some unique least-cost options emerged. For instance, in Enugu Urban, melon (egusi) shelled in as the most affordable legume nuts and seeds, whereas in Kaduna State (Rural), it was Locust beans (Dawadawa, Iru).

Table 3, *(Please see Appendix)* shows frequently selected least-cost items in each food group across all state-sector combinations. For example, in Legumes, Nuts and Seeds food group, Soya Beans was the least expensive item in 28% of State-sectors and Millet whole grain was the least-expensive item in the Starchy Staple food group in 23% of all the state-sectors. Cray fish small white and Cheese (Local-wara) were selected as the least-cost item in the animal source food with 20% of State-sectors.

Finally, Table 4 *(Please see Appendix)* offers a granular look at the most least-cost food items 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 instance, garri yellow consistently proved to be the least expensive items within the starchy staples category in states like Lagos (southwest) and Rivers (South-south) while in Anambra (South-East), Bauchi (North-East), and Kano (North-West) it was cassava flour, sold loose.

For fruits, avocado pear was frequently the most affordable in Lagos, Anambra, Bauchi and Kano States. Interestingly, in Rivers State it was the African star apple (cherry, agbalumo, udara, ehya) as its least expensive fruit, whereas in the Federal Capital Territory it was the desert date fruit/aduwa.

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:

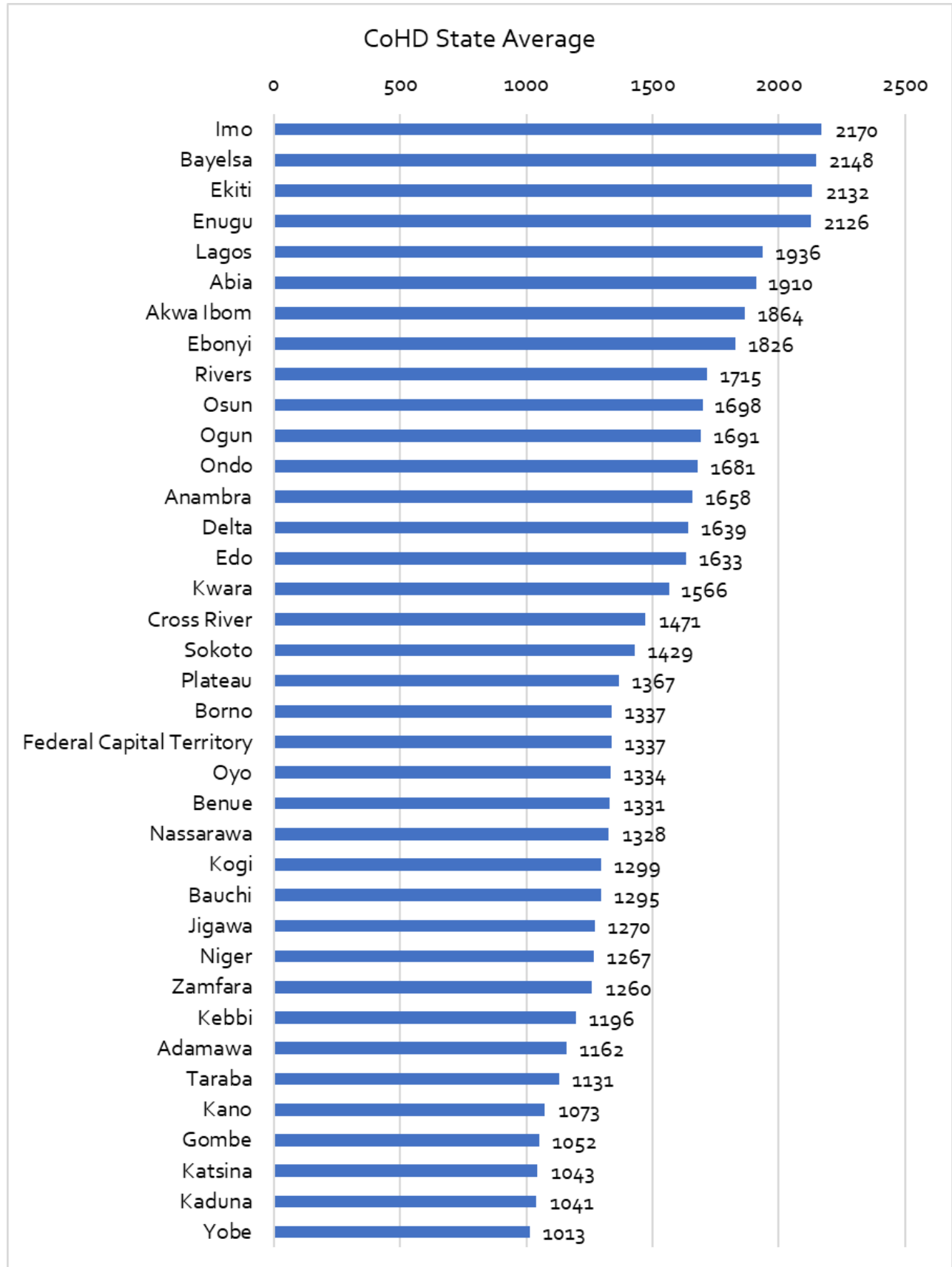
- ◆ The minimum income needed by households to access a healthy diet, and social protection and transfer amounts for vulnerable populations.
- ◆ Prioritization of commodities for agricultural production and trade policy interventions.
- ◆ Targeting interventions, including nutrition education, to populations 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://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

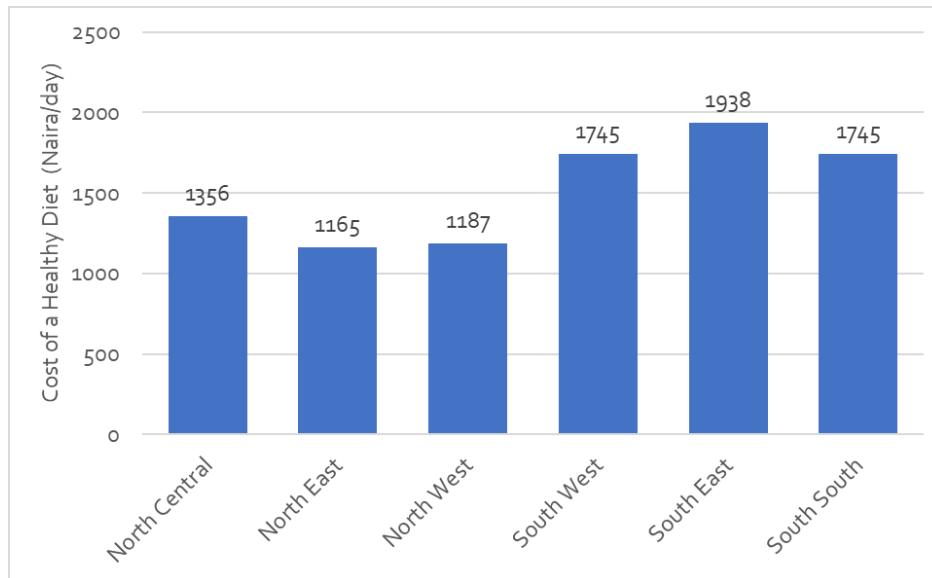


Figure 4a. National average CoHD (Naira/day) and Consumer Price Indexes (2024=100)

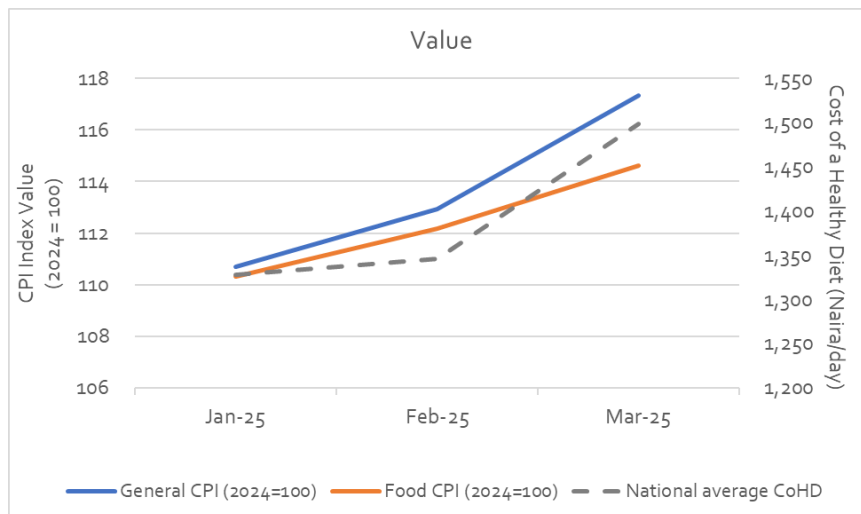
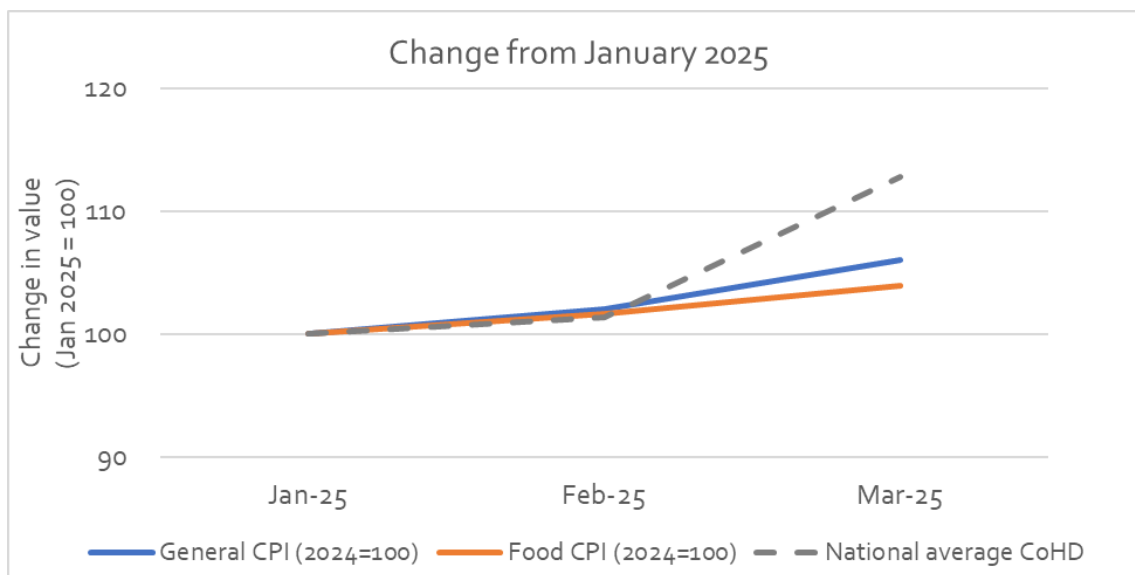


Figure 4b. National average CoHD and Consumer Price Indexes (2024 = 100)



APPENDIX

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

	Most expensive:		Least expensive:	
Mar-25	Enugu Urban		Kaduna Rural	
	Least-cost item	Cost	Least-cost item	Cost
Starchy staples	Maize Grains White	189	Millet Whole grain	142
	Millet Whole grain	249	Plantain Flour, Sold loose	75
Oils and fats	Vegetable Oil, 75cl	153	Palm oil, 75cl	124
Fruits	Oranges, fresh	138	Desert Date Fruit /Aduwa	101
	Plum fruit	177	Mangoes, fresh	127
Vegetables	Cucumbers, fresh	177	Kuka Dried	24
	Green Leaf /tete	207	Okra, Dried	32
	Oha leaves	106	Tomatoes Dried	24
Legumes Nuts seeds	Melon, (Egusi) shelled	175	Locust Beans (Dawadawa, Iru)	130
Animal source foods	Live Local Chicken, (medium size)	498	Cheese (local - wara)	134
	Tin Milk-Evaporated, Three Crown Milk, 160g	511	Shrimps white dried	74
Total (CoHD)		2,579		985

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	Millet Whole grain	23%
	Maize Grains White	19%
	Garri White	16%
Oils and fats	Palm oil, 75cl	57%
	Vegetable Oil, 75cl	14%
	Soya bean oil, 75cl	12%
Fruits	Dates Palm fruits/ Debinu	27%
	Avocado Pear	20%
	Desert Date Fruit /Aduwa	11%
Vegetables	Tomatoes Dried	22%
	Okra, Dried	22%
	Oha leaves	13%
Legumes nuts and seeds	Soya Beans	28%
	Kulikuli /Groundnut Cake	23%
	Groundnuts, shelled	16%
Animal source foods	Cray fish small white	20%
	Cheese (local - wara)	20%
	Fresh Milk /Nono, 75cl	11%

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 Yellow	Garri Yellow	Cassava Flour, Sold loose
	Millet Flour, sold loose	Guinea corn flour, sold loose	Maize Grains White
Oils and fats	Palm Kernel Oil, 75cl	Palm oil, 75cl	Palm oil, 75cl
		Soya bean oil, 75cl	Soya bean oil, 75cl
Fruits	Avocado Pear	African Star Apple (Cherry, Agbalumo, Udara, Ehya)	Avocado Pear
	Dates Palm fruits/ Debinu	Dates Palm fruits/ Debinu	Oranges, fresh
Vegetables	Grean Leaf /tete	Baobab Leaves Powder/ Kuka	Cucumbers, fresh
	Oha leaves	Carrots, fresh	Grean Leaf /tete
Legumes nuts and seeds	Groundnuts, shelled	Pigeon Beans (Broad Bean)	Kulikuli /Groundnut Cake
		Soya Beans	
Animal source foods	Cray fish small white	Cheese (local - wara)	Agric hen eggs, (a Crate of 30 pieces)
	Shrimps white dried	Cray fish small white	Powdered Milk Three Crown,350g
	Item Name		
Food Group	Federal Capital Territory	Bauchi	Kano
Starchy staples	Maize Grains White	Cassava Flour, Sold loose	Cassava Flour, Sold loose
	Millet Whole grain	Maize Grains White	Maize Grains White
Oils and fats	Groundnut oil, 75cl	Palm oil, 75cl	Soya bean oil, 75cl
	Soya bean oil, 75cl		
Fruits	Desert Date Fruit/ Aduwa	Avocado Pear	Avocado Pear
	Guavas, fresh	Bananas	Dates Palm fruits/ Debinu
Vegetables	Kuka Dried	Baobab Leaves Powder/ Kuka	Baobab Leaves Powder /Kuka
	Okra, Dried	Okra, Dried	Okra, Dried
Legumes nuts and seeds	Soya Beans	Kulikuli /Groundnut Cake Melon, (Egusi) shelled	Groundnuts, unshelled
Animal source foods	Cray fish small white	Chicken Wings	Cheese (local - wara)
	Fresh Milk /Nono, 75cl	Cray fish small white	Oxtail (Cow Tail)



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