

Food Cost Survey: December 2001

Dates of Publication

Surveys are conducted quarterly:

March, June, September and December

Cost of Food at Home for a Week in Alaska
December 2001

20 Communities Surveyed

Up to three stores in each of 20 communities were surveyed during December of 2001 for the cost of a specific set of food and non-food items. The 104 food items selected were taken, with some modification, from the USDA Low-cost Food Plan which is itself based on a nationwide survey of eating habits of Americans, conducted in 1977-78. In addition, the costs of such items as water, propane and electricity were collected. All costs were adjusted to reflect local sales tax where applicable.

The estimated prices of unavailable food items in various communities were calculated as the expected cost as judged from the prices of all available items relative to the price of those items in Anchorage. The percent of foods unavailable in each community are shown in the survey.

Weekly food consumption rates for a family of 4, children 6 - 11 years, form the basis of the expressed food costs. All other costs

are ratios of that cost as calculated from the USDA Cost of Food at Home survey issued October 2001. The cost for this family of 4 can be calculated from the table by summing the individual members. For smaller families such a sum would be too low and should be adjusted up by 20%, 10% or 5% for families of 1, 2 or 3 persons respectively. Similarly, the sum for larger families would be too high and downward adjustments of 5% and 10% are suggested for 6 and 7 or more member families. These adjustments reflect that some economies may be realized when preparing foods for larger families.

Rows 19 through 23 represent historical food costs. The Anchorage column is a comparison of present to previous Anchorage costs. Similarly the U.S. Average column represents changes in U.S. average prices. A one (1) appearing in the Anchorage column indicates that the current Anchorage cost is 1% higher now than at that date. Therefore, rising food costs are indicated by positive values. The remaining columns are each community's cost relative to Anchorage at that date. For instance, a cell containing a one (1) indicates a community that was experiencing a food cost 1% higher than Anchorage at that date.

Vitamin B6

Vitamin B6 is the only B vitamin retaining its letter designation in common usage. This vitamin, first identified in 1938, exists in three forms (pyridoxal, pyridoxine, pyridoxamine), pyridoxine being the form found in vitamin supplements.

Vitamin B6 has a role as a coenzyme in more than 100 biochemical reactions involving nitrogen-containing compounds such as amino acids and neurotransmitters. It is now known that vitamin B6 mediates the effect of steroid hormones on protein

synthesis, which has led to the development of chemotherapeutic agents. The vitamin taken at daily requirement levels either as a supplement or from food has also been shown to reduce blood homocysteine levels, homocysteine being a known risk factor in cardiovascular disease.

Deficiency of this vitamin is not common, usually associated with chronic disease, and leads to a characteristic dermatitis, muscle weakness and behavioral changes, the latter presumably due to interruption in neurotransmitter synthesis. Toxicity for vitamin B6 has been noted when used therapeutically, which has been the basis for an upper intake limit of 100 mg/day. The recommended intake of the vitamin is far lower and depends on dietary composition, primarily nitrogen intake, but amounts to 2.1 mg per day during pregnancy and lactation, 2.0 mg/day in males, about 1.6 mg/d in females, and 1.0 to 1.4 mg/day in children. The vitamin is found throughout the food supply; particularly good sources are meat, cereals, legumes, nuts, fruits and vegetables.

Sources:

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