



Family Food 2012: UK household food and drink purchases and derived nutrient intakes

Today Defra published [Family Food 2012](#), a report on the 2012 Family Food Module of the Living Costs and Food Survey. The report provides statistics on food purchases by type of food and includes estimates of nutrient content. The Family Food Survey covers around 6,000 households across the United Kingdom each year. Foods are reported at a detailed level and demographic patterns and trends are identified.

[Family Spending](#) is a separate report on the Living Costs and Food Survey published by the Office for National Statistics. It covers all forms of household expenditure but without as much detail on food and without quantities and nutrient content of food purchases.

Overview

- In 2012 average household expenditure on all food and drink rose 3.6 per cent to £41.37 per person per week. Taking inflation into account, this was 0.9 per cent more than 2011 but 3.9 per cent less than 2009.
- In the UK an average 11.6 per cent of all household spend went on food in 2012. For the lowest 20 per cent of households by equivalised income it was 16.6 per cent.
- Household purchases of a number of food types are on clear short term downward trends since 2009, including milk and cream, carcass meat, fish, potatoes, bread and 'biscuits and crispbreads'. Purchases of eggs are on a short term upwards trend in this period.
- The amount of food eaten out has been declining since 2001, with decreases in many categories.
- Total energy intake from all food and drink is on a long term downward trend. Intake is still around 5 per cent higher than the Estimated Average Requirement for adult intakes.
- All vitamin and mineral intakes except potassium reached at least 100 per cent of the recommended minimum Reference Nutrient Intake, where one is set.
- The average intake of sodium is on a downward trend but was still 82 per cent above the recommended maximum Reference Nutrient Intake of 2.4 grams per day in 2012.

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Expenditure

- In real terms, between 2009 and 2012 household spending on food and drink fell by 3.1 per cent and eating out expenditure by 5.6 per cent. Household spending on alcoholic drinks increased by 1.3 per cent over the same period, whilst that bought for consumption outside the home fell by 9.8 per cent.
- The percentage of spend on food continues to be highest for low income households, at 16.6 per cent in 2012, 1.4 percentage points above the 2007 level. Food is the largest item of household expenditure for low income households, after housing, fuel and power costs.
- On average, UK households purchased 4.7 per cent less food in 2012 than in 2007 while spending 17 per cent more. They saved 5.6 per cent by trading down to cheaper products.
- Households in income decile 1 (lowest income group) spent 22 per cent more on food in 2012 than in 2007 and purchased 5.7 per cent less. Trading down (switching to purchases of cheaper products of the same food type) saved these households 1.0 per cent.

Table 1: Main consumer reaction to high food prices between 2007 and 2012

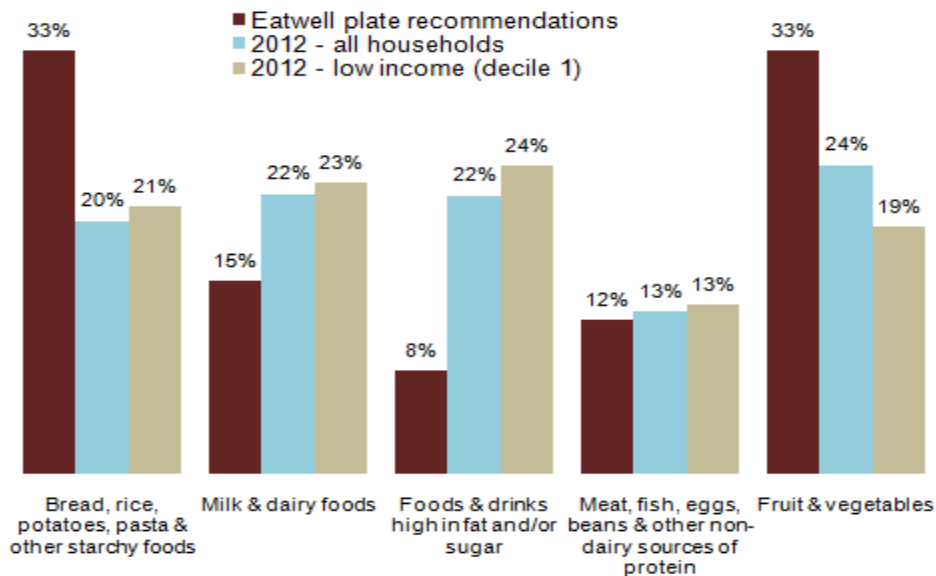
	Trading down	Buying more	Buying less	Spending less	Spending more
All households	Cereals	Eggs	Beef		Bread
Trading down (-5.6%)	Pork		Lamb		Cereals
Buying less (-4.7%)	Fish		Fish		Biscuits and cakes
Spending more (+17%)	Butter		Tea		Bacon
	Sweets & chocolates		Potatoes		Poultry
	Potatoes		Fruit		Butter
			Alcoholic drinks		Eggs
					Coffee & hot drinks
					Sugar & preserves
	Trading down ^(a)	Buying more	Buying less	Spending less	Spending more
Income decile 1 households	Pork	Pork	Biscuits & cakes		Cereals
Trading down (-1.0%)	Sweets & chocolates	Poultry	Beef		Pork
Buying less (-5.7%)	Potatoes	Eggs	Bacon		Poultry
Spending more (+22%)	Eggs		Fish		Eggs
	Biscuits & cakes		Butter		Coffee & hot drinks
	Poultry (+18%)		Tea		Soft drinks
	Alcoholic drinks (+31%)		Fruit		Sugar & preserves
					Alcoholic drinks

(a) a positive value indicates trading up

Purchases

- Household food purchases do not generally match the Government recommended Eatwell plate proportions of the types of food that make up a well balanced diet. Both low income households and all households have a relatively similar diet in terms of the Eatwell plate categories, with the exception of fruit and vegetables.

Chart 1: Eatwell plate comparison for low income and all households

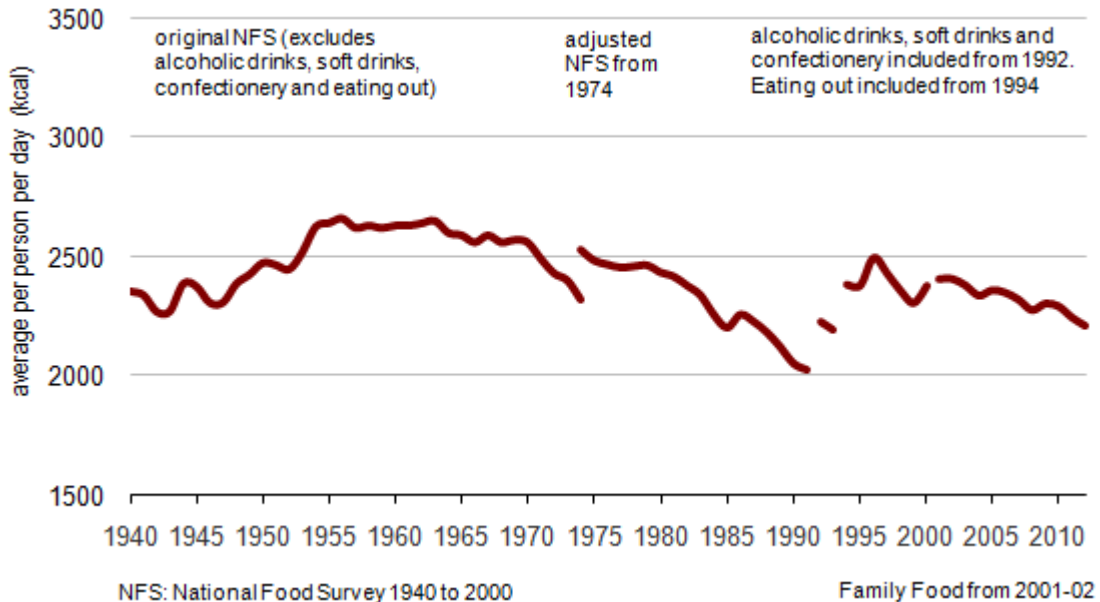


- Rural areas tended to purchase larger quantities of food and drink than urban areas, therefore the energy and nutrient intakes derived from these purchases was greater in rural areas.
- Household purchases of fresh and processed vegetables (excluding potatoes) have generally been declining since 2005, with a 6.1 per cent fall from 1,156g to 1,086g average weekly consumption per person. This has mainly been due to a decrease in purchases of fresh vegetables, which account for roughly 70 per cent of all vegetable purchases.
- There is a significant long term downward trend in purchases of milk, driven by reductions in whole milk. Whole milk purchases were 29 per cent lower in 2012 than in 2009, equivalent to a reduction of 124 mls per person per week. Purchases of semi skimmed milk, which overtook whole milk in the early 1990s and fully skimmed milk, have been generally stable in the last 10 years.
- Purchases of raw carcass meat have been on a downward trend since 2009, falling by 7.7 per cent. This follows the period prior to 2008 where purchases had been around 10 per cent higher.
- There is a significant downward trend in household purchases of fish and fish products, which fell 8.4 per cent between 2009 and 2012 to 144 grams per person per week.

Dietary Trends

- Total energy intake per person was an average of 2209 kcal per person per day in 2012, 4.1 per cent lower than in 2009. This is a statistically significant downward trend that confirms the longer term downward trend already apparent since the mid 1960s. Intake is still around 5 per cent higher than the Estimated Average Requirement.

Chart 2: Average energy intake from food and drink since 1940



- Energy intake from eating out was 219 kcal per person per day in 2012, 12.5 per cent lower than in 2009. Average energy intake from eating out accounted for 10 per cent of total energy intake.
- Total intake of non-milk extrinsic sugars is on a downward trend since 2009 having fallen 8.8 per cent between 2009 and 2012.
- Over the four years 2009 to 2012, intake of unsaturated fatty acids showed a downward trend. Monounsaturated fatty acids declined by 1.3 per cent, while intakes of polyunsaturates fell by 4.7 per cent.
- Alcohol intake fell 7.5 per cent in 2012 to 9.4 grams per person per day. Since 2009 intake has been on a downward trend. Eating out purchases accounted for 23 per cent of total alcohol intake in 2012. Eating out intakes of alcohol were 22 per cent lower in 2012 than in 2009 and showing a significant downward trend.

Further information

- 1) The statistics in this Notice are supported by comprehensive Excel datasets available on the Defra website [here](#).
- 2) Method notes explaining the survey design are available on the Defra website [here](#).
- 3) Family Spending is a related report produced by the Office for National Statistics covering all household expenditure as collected in the Living Costs and Food Survey. It is available [here](#).

Notes for editors

- 1) The estimates are derived from the Family Food Module of the Living Costs and Food Survey run in Great Britain by the Office for National Statistics and Defra and in Northern Ireland by the Central Survey Unit of the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA).
- 2) Historical estimates are derived from the National Food Survey run by Defra, which terminated in 2000.
- 3) Energy and nutrient intakes are derived from purchases of food and drink assuming no waste. Nutrient profiles are established by Public Health England for each of about 500 categories of food and drink based on the edible content.
- 4) Under-reporting is a problem with all dietary surveys but is considered to be lower in the Family Food Module. Its focus on all expenditure, with most food items collected from till receipts reduces the scope for under-reporting of household purchases.
- 5) Household food covers all food and drink purchases brought into the home. Items are recorded in the form they are purchased; for example, eggs purchased and later used to make a cake will be recorded under eggs and not under cakes. However, if a ready-made cake is purchased, it is recorded under cakes.
- 6) From time to time modifications are made to the coding framework and the nutrient profiles for food and drink items and to procedures used in assigning foods and drinks to codes. In 2012 changes were made to the codes for filled chocolate bars; fresh and baking potatoes; carrots; onions; broccoli; mushrooms; cabbage; cauliflower; French beans; cherry tomatoes and other tomatoes; lettuce; cucumber; bananas; apples; pears; grapes; strawberries; tangerines/clementines; oranges; melon; frozen peas; canned and bottled tomatoes; tomato puree; canned baked beans; orange juice; apple juice. These changes are not backdated and can appear as anomalous changes in purchases or intakes.
- 7) Income deciles divide the UK household population into ten equally sized groups based on the magnitude of their equivalised income. Equivalised income is calculated using the OECD-modified equivalence scale which assigns a value of 1 to the first household member, of 0.5 to each additional adult and of 0.3 to each child. Equivalised income is gross household income divided by the OECD scale value.