

Inflation slows slightly, but surging food prices still pinching SA wallets

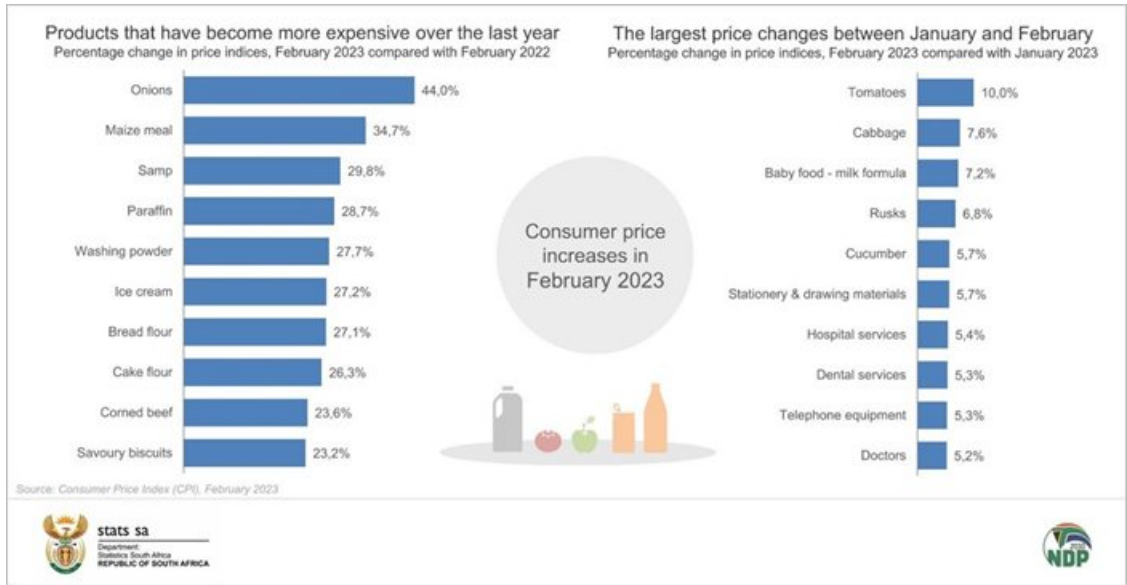
While South Africa's annual food inflation has eased slightly, consumers are still forking out significantly more cash for products like vegetables, maize meal, milk, flour and coffee than they did a year ago.



Source: [Pxabay](#)

Statistics South Africa has announced that annual consumer inflation slowed to [6.8% in April](#) from 7.1% in March, making it the lowest reading since May 2022 when the rate was 6.5%. The monthly change in the consumer price index (CPI) was 0.4% in April 2023.

Annual inflation for food and non-alcoholic beverages – which hit a 14-year high in March – eased very slightly to 13.9%, down from 14%.



Source: Stats SA

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Vegetable prices soar

Stats SA said the bread & cereals price index increased by 20.8% in the 12 months to April, slightly higher than March's reading of 20.3%, but lower than the recent peak of 21.8% recorded in January.

On average, vegetables were 23.1% more expensive in April 2023 compared with April 2022. The agency noted that this is the highest annual rate since November 2007 – more than 15 years ago. Products pushing up the rate include onions (up 52.8%), carrots (up 29.8%), peppers (up 25.0%) and potatoes (up 24.4%).

The milk, eggs & cheese product group recorded an annual price increase of 14.5% – the largest rise in 14 years (since January 2009). The average price of a 2-litre carton of fresh full-cream milk increased from R30.14 to R35.88 in the 12 months to April. Over the same period, the average price of a kilogram of cheddar cheese climbed from R118.24 to R135.11 and a tray of six eggs from R20.38 to R21.59.



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29 Mar 2023



Coffee lovers are feeling the pinch too. Annual inflation for non-alcoholic beverages was 10.4% in April, the highest rate since January 2010. Products that registered higher than average price changes were ground coffee or beans (up 17.8%), instant coffee (up 14.8%), dairy blends (up 19.2%) and fruit juices (up 16.5%).

Meat and oils & fats are bucking the trend. Those who enjoy their steak will be glad to know that meat inflation slowed for a second consecutive month, cooling to 9.5% from 10.6% in March. Inflation for oils & fats slowed for an eighth consecutive month, tumbling from 16.0% in March to 9.9% in April. The last time this rate was in single-digit territory was November 2020, Stats SA said.

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