

Good news at last for shoppers

By [Nico Gous](#)

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Food is getting cheaper - but you probably haven't noticed. Data released on Wednesday show prices of vegetables, oils, fats, bread, cereals, fruit and fuel have fallen since the start of the year.



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StatsSA compared the consumer price index scores for January and August and found that the price of vegetables had dropped by 3.6%, of oils and fats by 3.9%, of bread and cereals by 4% and of fruit by 8.4%. The CPI is calculated on the prices of a basket of goods and services.

Stellenbosch University dietician Irene Labuschagne suspects most people are unaware of these decreases. "It is not as if they are going to start buying more [vegetables], they buy the products they are used to buying." Lettuce, tomatoes, pumpkin and potatoes, in particular, contributed to the price decreases.

Economist Dawie Roodt is not surprised by the drop in prices after last year's drought had caused them to spike. "Maize is a lot cheaper this year, which has a knock-on effect on other things, such as chicken and beef."

Economist Mike Schussler said South Africa had had "a bit of good luck" with the drop in fuel and food prices. "Our stock market is up and our house prices did not implode as they did in the US. There are a few things that have improved."

According to StatsSA the fuel price has decreased by 1.6% since the start of the year.

The Discovery Vitality ObeCity Index released on Wednesday estimated that the cost to the economy of obesity is about R701-billion a year.

The compilers of the index tallied the food purchases of about 500,000 Vitality members over the age of 18 in Johannesburg, Pretoria, Cape Town, Durban, Bloemfontein and Port Elizabeth. According to Vitality, scheme members who purchased "healthy food" had a 10% lower body-mass index than those who did not.

StatsSA said the price decreases were due to crops recovering from the recent severe drought.

Recent StatsSA figures showed South Africans spend more money on beer than on vegetables. Beer accounted for 2.1% of household spending whereas only 1.5% was spent on vegetables.

Source: The Times

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