

# What is the Cost of a Healthy Food Basket in Ireland in 2024?



## Low-income households:




- Eat less well
- Higher level of diet-related disease



## Research to find out the cost of a food basket that is:

- Realistic and acceptable
- Nutritionally adequate

## Cost of the basket per household: Amount (€) and percentage of income

 <b>Household type</b>	 <b>Total basket cost per week</b>	 <b>% of take home income</b>	
		Dependent on State Benefits	One adult employed (earning the National Minimum Wage)
<b>Two-parent, two-child</b> Pre-school and primary school	<b>€162</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>23%</b>
<b>Two-parent, two-child</b> Primary and secondary school	<b>€198</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>28%</b>
<b>One-parent, two-child</b> Pre-school and primary school	<b>€122</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>16%</b>
<b>Single adult</b>	<b>€61</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>14%</b>
Dependent on State Pension			
<b>Female pensioner living alone</b>	<b>€72</b>	<b>21%</b>	
<b>Pensioner couple</b>	<b>€90</b>	<b>18%</b>	

<sup>1</sup> Costs were determined for both rural and urban households. The costs presented here are the costs for the household that needed to spend the most. Full details are available at [www.safefood.net](http://www.safefood.net)

## Objectives

To estimate the cost of a Minimum Essential Standard of Living (MESL) Healthy Food Basket for 2024 and to present the cost as a proportion of take-home income for six household types in Ireland.

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## Methodology

The food basket is part of a minimum essential standard of living and identifies a food basket that everyone should be able to afford. It represents a socially acceptable and nutritious food basket. The 2022 food basket costs were updated in 2024 by applying the Republic of Ireland Consumer Price Index (CPI).

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## Key Conclusions

- The cost of a minimum healthy food basket represents a larger proportion of household income from social welfare, as compared to household income from minimum wage employment. Households reliant on social welfare spend a larger percentage of their household income on food compared to households with an employed adult.
- The cost of the food basket depends on household composition. Food costs rise as children grow older, so food is a significant cost for households with an older child. The cost of feeding a teenager is more than double the cost of feeding a pre-school child.
- Households that include a teenager and rely on social welfare would need to spend 33% of their income to meet the cost of an MESL healthy food basket. Households that have younger children and rely on social welfare would need to spend 27% of their income to meet the cost of an MESL healthy food basket. When the household has an adult in minimum wage employment, this proportion improves to 27% and 15% of income, respectively.
- Low-income families may sacrifice a healthy diet, given other competing budget demands. This research highlights the challenge of trying to balance the cost of a healthy food basket against the cost of meeting other needs and expenses on a low income.
- Meat, breads and cereals, milk, cheese, eggs, fruit, and vegetables account for the largest share of the food basket.
- Spending on social eating (providing for visitors, an occasional takeaway or visit to a café, and extra for Christmas) is an important part of the food basket. This reflects the social and cultural aspects of food. It aims to ensure that the minimum standard still enables households to take part in activities that are a normal part of everyday life.

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