

The Food Price Monitor: Kenya is a monthly report developed for the Food Security Portal (FSP), facilitated by IFPRI, with the goal of providing clear and accurate information on commodity price trends and variations in selected markets throughout Kenya. The reports are intended as a resource for those interested in agricultural commodity markets in Kenya, namely producers, traders, consumers, or other agricultural stakeholders.

Highlights

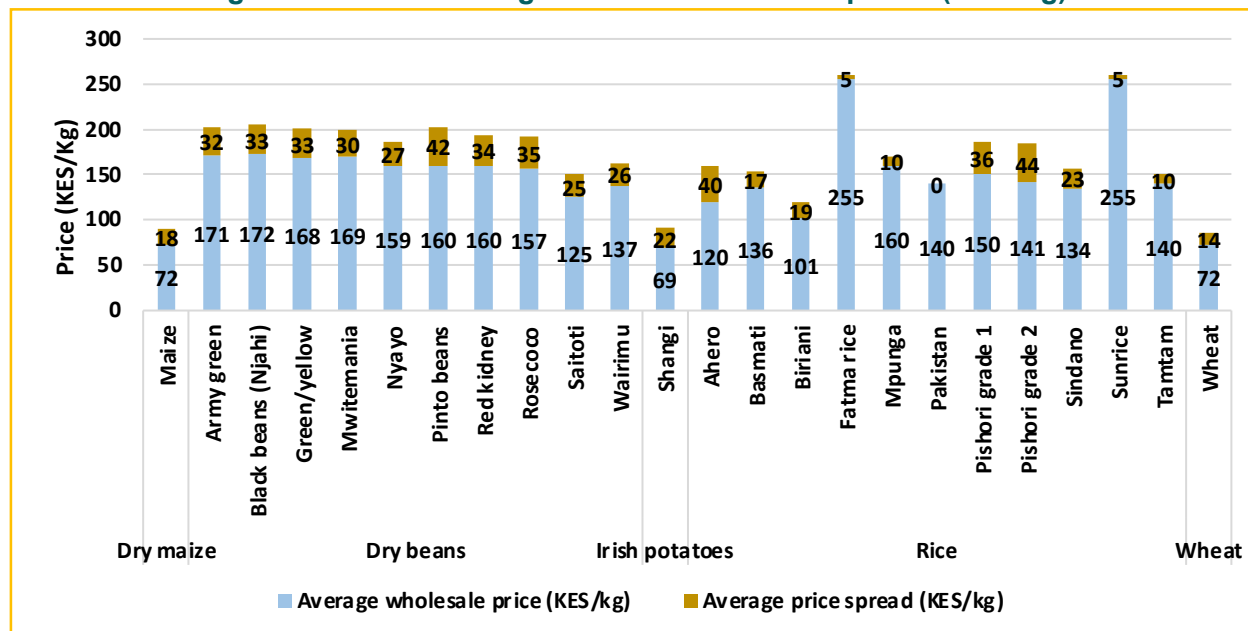
- ▶ Several variables affect wholesale and retail price margins, including the historically high cost of staple foods in most markets because of a constrained local food supply due to below-average harvests, increased demand, and high fuel costs.
- ▶ The observed price variance for beans in most regions can be ascribed to seasonality, transportation expenses, and supply chain interruptions.
- ▶ Maize prices are high in Kisumu owing to the region's placement as a significant market in a deficit area with low agricultural yield.
- ▶ Despite availability of Irish potatoes due to seasonality, price increases in populated places of Nairobi and Kisumu can be ascribed to strong demand and scarcity of the product due to its perishable nature.
- ▶ High wheat and rice prices in non-producing and populated locations are mostly due to market dynamics, increased import cost and weakening of the Kenyan shilling against the US dollar.

Overall Wholesale and Retail Prices for May

Figure 1 depicts the average wholesale and retail prices for maize, beans, potatoes, rice, and wheat in key Kenyan food markets in May 2023. A few commodities recorded lower price margins ranging from 2% to 13%; these included most rice varieties; [Basmati (13%), Fatma (2%), Mpunga 6%, Sunrice (2%), and Tamtam (7%)]. Most commodities showed price margins ranging from 17% to 24% comprising most dry beans [Army green (19%), Njahi (19%), green/yellow (20%), Mwitemania (18%), Nyayo (17%), Red Kidney (21%), Rosecoco (22%), and Wairimu (19%)], some rice varieties; [Biriani (19%), Pishori grade 1 (24%), and

Sindano (17%)], and dry wheat (19%). A few commodities recorded slightly higher price margins of between 25% and 33% including; dry maize (25%), Irish potatoes (32%), Pishori grade 2 rice (31%), Pinto beans (26%) and Ahero rice (33%). The observed differences in wholesale and retail pricing margins can be attributable to several reasons, including staple food costs in most marketplaces remain historically high due to limited local food supply following consecutive below-average harvests, rising demand, and high fuel expenses. Long-term drought and reliance on imports have resulted in high food costs in the country (The East African Newspaper, May 2023).

Figure 1: Overall average wholesale and retail prices (KES/Kg)



Source: Daily Market Survey for the month of May 2023

Wholesale and Retail Commodity Prices

Several dry bean types have been observed across regions, but only green/yellow, black beans (Njahi), and Wairimu beans were common in all the explored regions (Table 1). Except for Kisumu, army green beans were widespread in other locations. Apart from the Saitoti bean variety, which was only found in the Mombasa region, Eldoret and Nairobi reported the highest number of bean types in May. All bean varieties had higher retail prices than wholesale prices, as expected. Except for Rosecoco, all beans in Eldoret had higher wholesale prices than the national average. All accessible bean varieties in the Kisumu area had high retail costs compared to the national average retail prices, whereas Mombasa, Nairobi, and Nakuru had lower average retail prices for all available bean types compared to the national average retail prices. The observed price variance can be ascribed to seasonality, transportation expenses, and supply chain interruptions.

Dry maize recorded higher wholesale and retail prices in Eldoret (76KES/kg), Mombasa (70KES/kg) and Nairobi (70KES/kg) compared to the national average wholesale prices of 69 KES/kg. Wholesale prices in Kisumu was significantly high (176KES/Kg) compared to the national average wholesale prices of 97KES/Kg. Kisumu's high prices are due to its placement as a significant market in a deficit area with low agricultural yield.

Irish potatoes sold for much more in Nairobi (93KES/kg) than the national average wholesale price of 65KES/kg.

Similarly, Kisumu and Nairobi had significantly higher retail costs of 104KES/kg and 143KES/kg, respectively, than the national average of 90KES/kg. Price increases in populated places can be ascribed to strong demand and scarcity of the product due to its perishable nature. Irish potatoes are in great demand in most cities and towns since they are regarded as a high-quality and renowned culinary item.

Pishori rice was found in all regions, Ahero rice in Kisumu, and Tamtam, Fatma, Pakistan, Sunrice, and Mpunga rice in Mombasa. Except for Kisumu and Mombasa, all areas consumed basmati rice (nonaromatic rice). Except for Nakuru, all regions saw increased wholesale prices for Pishori grade 1 rice types. High rice prices are caused by changes in the climate and costs associated with production. This is due to little rainfall and the high cost of fertilizers and agricultural chemical products.

Dry wheat wholesale prices in Kisumu (83KES/kg), Nairobi (69KES/kg), and Nyeri (74KES/kg) were higher than the national average of 68KES/kg. Similarly, Nairobi and Nyeri had considerably higher retail costs of 100KES/kg and 112KES/kg, respectively, than the national average of 82KES/kg. High wheat prices in non-producing and populated locations are mostly due to market dynamics in which demand exceeds supply.

Table 1: Average wholesale and retail prices (kes/kg) by region for May

Product	Variety	Average wholesale price (KES/ kg)						Average retail price (KES/kg)						Total average wholesale price (KES/kg)	Total average retail price (KES/kg)
		Eldoret	Kisumu	Mombasa	Nairobi	Nakuru	Nyeri	Eldoret	Kisumu	Mombasa	Nairobi	Nakuru	Nyeri		
Dry beans	Army green	173		180	154	159	185	200		185	170	176	257	170	198
	Black beans(Njahi)	206	150	160	175	167	160	235	220	170	200	175	204	169	201
	Green/yellow	173	179	180	152	154	174	200	251	185	182	157	245	169	203
	Mwitmania	219			137	150	146	255			170	160	179	163	191
	Nyayo	200	140	150	141	136		220	200	155	170	137		154	176
	Pinto beans	170	173		139		145	200	220		160		180	158	192
	Red kidney	200	146		144			210	219		167	160		164	188
	Rosecoco	160	158		161	160	162	180	210		180	161	223	160	188
	Saitoti			125						150				125	150
	Wairimu	136	138	125	115	131	146	150	193	130	130	146	186	132	156
Dry maize	Maize	76	66	70	70	68	67	93	176	70	88	71	86	69	97
Irish potatoes	Shangi	52	61	65	93	49	68	64	143	75	104	83	79	65	90
Rice	Ahero		114						159					114	159
	Basmati	108			145	148	142	130			160	150	170	136	153
	Biriani			100	101	102				110	120	130		101	120
	Fatma rice			255						260				255	260
	Mpunga			160						170				160	170
	Pakistan		140						145					140	145
	Pishori grade 1	175		175	175	98	171	200		180	200	170	197	149	186
	Pishori grade 2	128	151					150	215					139	183
	Sindano	122		145		147	142	130		150		170	163	141	156
	Sunrice			255						260				255	260
	Tamtam			140						150				140	150
Wheat	Wheat	62	83	60	69	64	74	65	93	75	100	66	112	68	82

Source: Daily Market Survey for the month of May 2023

Wholesale and Retail Price Trends by Region

Weekly pricing variations were seen across areas during week one and weeks two through five. Eldoret had a combination of rising, decreased, and steady prices, with most food commodities displaying steady prices. Most dry beans including Army green, Green yellow, Black beans, Mwitmania, Nyayo, Pinto and Red Kidney beans portrayed stable wholesale and retail prices. When comparing week 1 pricing to week 5 prices, Wairimu beans showed increases in wholesale and retail prices of 10% and 7%, respectively, whereas Rosecoco saw increases in wholesale and retail prices of 7% to 11%, respectively. When week 1 prices were compared to week 5 pricing, dry maize exhibited a rise in both wholesale (6%) and retail (10%) prices. Increased maize prices is attributable to scarcity in the region due to prolonged drought. When wholesale and retail prices for Irish potatoes were compared from week 5 to week 1, they were reduced by 8% and 12%, respectively. The decrease in potato costs is due to availability in the primary producing regions; for example, the Eldoret region obtained Irish potatoes from Elgeyo Marakwet County. Most rice types showed constant wholesale and retail prices, except for Sindano rice, which witnessed 10% and 23% increases in wholesale and retail prices, respectively. Prices have fallen due to continued harvests in Kenya and the availability of Tanzanian imports. When comparing week 1 pricing to week 2 through week 5 prices, wheat showed an 8% and 12% decrease in wholesale and retail prices, respectively. Wheat prices have fallen due to increased supply of the product since wheat harvesting began in October to November, and Narok County, a region around Eldoret, is a key wheat growing area.

Kisumu saw similarly varied findings, with most food items showing steady retail prices and a few showing increases and decreases. A comparison of retail pricing between weeks 5 and 1 revealed that prices for dry maize, all rice types and all dry beans were consistent, apart from Rosecoco beans, which saw a 1% decline. Price stability and decreases are due to commodity availability in nearby producing countries. Irish potatoes and wheat witnessed 4% and 7% increases in retail prices, respectively. These increases might be attributed to seasonality, the presence of intermediaries, and high demand, given Kisumu is a low agriculture producing location.

A study of wholesale and retail pricing in Mombasa between weeks 1 and 5 revealed that most items remained steady, with only a handful exhibiting price increases. Green yellow (3%), Nyayo (10%), and Wairimu (8%) bean types witnessed increases in wholesale and retail prices ranging from 3% to 8%, while maize had a 7% increase in wholesale and retail prices. Price stability and decreases are due to the availability of goods from adjacent producing regions as well as imports from other countries such as Tanzania, Uganda, and Pakistan.

FOCUS ON BEANS ACROSS SELECTED REGIONS

Bean is a primary food crop in Kenya, ranking second only to maize. Almost every area of Kenya grows the crop. However, the largest bean growing regions are Eastern, Nyanza, Central, Western, and Rift Valley. Because of the high demand for various sorts of meals in the area, many local retailers have beans on their shelves. Due to extensive adaptability, cheap input needs, quick growth, nitrogen fixing, and weed smothering abilities, common dry beans are well adapted to many habitats and fit in numerous cropping systems.

Bean growing in Kenya is a profitable business since beans are one of the plant sources of protein, they are consumed in big amounts, and there is always a strong demand for them. Beans thrive with little effort and contribute nitrogen to the soil. Although a major amount of output happens in places with somewhat low populations, production tends to be more intense when human population density is high. Among the several bean cropping systems in Kenya, sole crop, maize-bean, banana-beans, and root or tuber crop-bean intercroops are important, and the crop's early maturation and shade tolerance make it particularly ideal. Kenya grows a broad variety of bean cultivars, including Rosecoco, Mwitmania, Wairimu, Mwezi Moja, and Canadian Wonder, amongst others. Beans are a versatile legume that may be cooked, fried, or baked in a variety of ways. Beans are farmed for several purposes, including their nutritional and economical value.

Various bean types had various prices were recorded across selected locations in May. The most common bean varieties included black beans (Njahi), green/yellow, and Wairimu beans. The Eldoret region recorded higher wholesale prices for most beans' varieties while Kisumu, Nyeri and Eldoret saw higher retail prices. Mombasa, Nakuru and Nairobi regions recorded lower beans prices compared to other regions. High demand and scarcity of beans in most regions is because they are the most important commodities consumed with maize availability considered synonymous with food security.

Figure 1: Average wholesale and retail prices of beans (KES/kg) in selected regions

Variety	Average wholesale price (KES/Kg)						Average retail price (KES/Kg) per kg					
	Eldoret	Kisumu	Mombasa	Nairobi	Nakuru	Nyeri	Eldoret	Kisumu	Mombasa	Nairobi	Nakuru	Nyeri
Army green	173		180		150	174	200		185		160	256
Black beans (Njahi)	206	148	160	169	183	164	235	231	170	190	185	222
Green/yellow	173	186	166	151	153	179	200	257	171	170	158	253
Mwitmania	219				150	138	255				158	183
Nyayo	200	148	162	138	149		220	221	167	169	152	
Pinto beans	170	163				135	200	230				165
Red kidney	200	150		144	110		210	232		170	160	
Rosecoco	161	159		151	160	154	182	230		170	161	216
Sainti			125						150			
Wairimu	145	141	133	114	148	141	157	217	138	130	149	186

Source: Daily Market Survey for the month of May 2023.

Nairobi, a non-producing area, and a major metropolis, saw mixed outcomes, with most commodities experiencing decreasing and constant retail prices. Most available dry beans and rice types witnessed constant wholesale pricing due to crop surpluses in producing regions across the country and neighboring countries. Dry maize, Irish potatoes, and dry wheat all saw increases in wholesale pricing due to scarcity, high demand, the availability of

middlemen, and increasing fuel expenses, resulting in high transportation costs.

A comparison of pricing in Nakuru between weeks 5 and 1 revealed inconsistent outcomes, with several goods seeing price increases, decreases, and stability. A comparison of wholesale prices from week 5 to week 1 revealed a 12% decrease in maize wholesale prices and steady prices for Irish potatoes, available rice types, and wheat. Retail prices for Irish potatoes and wheat rose by 10% and 3%, respectively. Prices for certain bean kinds increased by 7% to 13%.

When prices in Nyeri were compared between weeks 5 and 1, there was an increase and a decrease. A comparison of wholesale pricing from week 5 to week 1 revealed a decrease in the price of most bean types ranging from 1% to 8%, and wheat 0.4%. Wholesale and retail prices for maize climbed by 7% and 13%, respectively. Seasonality, market pressures, and the availability of intermediaries all contribute to variations in wholesale and pricing patterns in the region.

Comparison of National Average Prices between April and May

A comparison of overall prices (national averages for all commodities) for April and May 2023 (Table 2) reveals that wholesale and retail prices for most goods are steady or decreasing, with a few items showing a little increase. Most commodities had consistent retail and wholesale price increases (between 3% and -4%) and price decreases (between -4% and -8%). Mwitmania beans, Nyayo, and Wairimu were among the food items that witnessed a small increase in wholesale and retail prices of more over 3% but less than 6%. Wholesale prices for dry maize, Irish potatoes, and Ahero rice increased little, while retail and wholesale prices for wheat increased somewhat. The stable and declining wholesale and retail prices for most commodities between April and May are the result of a surplus of items from various producing areas, as well as imports from neighboring East African countries and beyond.

Table 2: Comparison of April and May prices

Product	Variety	Average Wholesale Price (Kes/Kg)		Percentage change	Average Retail Price (Kes/Kg)		Percentage change
		April	May		April	May	
Dry beans	Army green	170	171	1%	198	203	2%
	Black beans(njahi)	169	172	2%	201	205	2%
	Green/yellow	169	168	-1%	203	201	-1%
	Red kidney	164	160	-3%	188	194	3%
	Mwitmania	163	169	4%	191	199	4%
	Nyayo	154	159	3%	176	186	5%
	Rosecoco	160	157	-2%	188	192	2%
	Saitoti	125	125	0%	150	150	0%
	Wairimu	132	137	4%	156	163	4%
Dry maize	Maize	69	72	4%	97	90	-8%
Irish potatoes	Shangi	65	69	6%	90	91	1%
Rice	Ahero	114	120	5%	159	160	1%
	Basmati	136	136	0%	153	153	0%
	Biriani	101	101	0%	120	120	0%
	Mpunga	160	160	0%	170	170	0%
	Pishori grade 1	149	150	1%	186	186	0%
	Pishori grade 2	139	141	1%	183	185	1%
	Sindano	141	134	-5%	156	157	1%
Wheat	Tamtam	140	140	0%	150	150	0%
	Wheat	68	72	6%	82	86	5%

Key

<3 but >-4	Stable
>-4 but <-8	Decrease
>3 but <6	Slight increase

Source: Daily Market Survey for the month May 2023

FOCUS ON NYERI REGION

Nyeri is a town in Kenya's Central Highlands, in the formerly Central Province, about 153 kilometers north of Nairobi. Food and water are plentiful and reasonably priced in Kenya's verdant highlands. Maize, beans, wheat, bananas, Irish potatoes, sweet potatoes, and vegetables are the principal food crops farmed in the county, while coffee, tea, and horticulture are the major income crops. Horticulture is a significant industry in the county, providing vegetables, fruits, spices, nuts, and flowers for both the domestic and international markets. Tea is planted in the top zone, between Aberdares and the Mt. Kenya Forest, and coffee is grown in the lower zone. Cut flowers are mostly cultivated in the Kieni east and west regions, where holding land sizes are enormous.

Agribusiness is one of the county's key economic activities; hence, goods in the region are sourced directly from local farmers and nearby counties. Prices for target crops were gathered at the current Karatina open-air market, East Africa's second biggest regional trade hub for wholesale and retail. The open-air market is in Karatina Town and serves most the region's bordering sub-counties and counties. The wholesale market and retail area both sell a wide range of items, including all types of fruits and vegetables, cereals, and a variety of other market goods. The market is open seven days a week, from 5 a.m. to 8 p.m. The Karatina town council ensures that the market is up to par and well-organized.

When comparing week five to week one in May, most dry bean types witnessed retail price increases ranging from 1% to 12%. Similarly, retail prices for maize and dry wheat jumped by 11% and 2%, respectively. Retail pricing for available rice types remained steady. Price variation can be attributed to scarcity of commodities, high demand, and high cost of transportation.

Table 3: Average Retail and Wholesale Prices, Nyeri Region

Product	Variety	Average retail price (KES/kg)					Total average wholesale price (KES/kg)	Total average retail (KES/kg)
		Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5		
Dry beans	Army green	257	267	252	250	260	174	256
	Black beans (Njahi)	216	193	228	240	243	164	222
	Green/yellow	260	253	250	250	250	179	253
	Wairimu	168	180	197	190	180	136	183
	Pinto beans	160	165	170	173	173	135	165
	Rosecoco	207	225	219	210	225	154	216
	Wairimu	167	170	198	200	200	141	186
	Maize	88	87	94	94	98	71	92
Irish potatoes	Shangi	82	79	79	79	71	72	79
	Basmati	170	170	170	170	170	143	170
	Pishori grade 1	197	190	200	200	197	169	197
	Sindano	170	170	170	170	170	141	170
Wheat	Wheat	119	120	110	120	122	79	118

Source: Daily Market Survey for the month of May 2023.

Outlook for the Month of June

During the month of June, the following changes are expected:

- Despite the rains, it is anticipated that food prices would stay high owing to shortage until harvest;
- Prices of rice and wheat are expected to remain higher due to increased import cost and weakening of the Kenyan shilling against the US dollar;
- The cost of beans and Irish potatoes is expected to decline due to availability as farmers harvest crops for the short rain season;
- General prices of food commodities are expected to increase due to high fuel costs hence high cost of transportation.

ABOUT THIS SERIES

The Food Security Portal (FSP), facilitated by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), aims to improve food security for the world's poor and increase the resilience of global food systems against food and financial crisis. The project brings together international, regional, and country-level data, news, and research aimed at meeting countries' immediate food security needs and building long-term global food security. The FSP is designed to pool information in structured ways to ensure high-quality, timely, and relevant data and to provide the opportunity for collaboration among policymakers, development professionals, and researchers.

This report is part of the FSP's efforts to monitor country-level food prices in order to improve the governments' ability to respond to and prevent food crises. It presents monthly price trends and movements for key food commodities, including dry beans, dry maize, rice, wheat, and Irish potatoes, in selected major regions and markets in Kenya.

DATA COLLECTION AND METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in the Mombasa, Nairobi, Nakuru, Eldoret, Kisumu, and Nyeri regions of Kenya. These regions comprise the key markets in major urban centers. The five selected commodities comprise the major staple foods in Kenya¹.

Data assistants, some of whom were traders, collected average daily wholesale and retail prices from the main markets of the selected regions. Data was collected daily for six days (Mondays to Saturdays) from stockists/wholesalers and traders in the morning hours.

During the last week of the month, the following qualitative data were captured:

- General observations on food prices during the month, including price variations and the lowest, highest, and prevailing wholesale and retail prices
- The source of food commodities and their availability throughout the month
- The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as government restrictions including curfews and cessation of movement, on food prices and availability (both supply and demand)
- Traders' adaptation strategies to the COVID-19 pandemic, including sourcing and selling

Additional secondary data was obtained from the Ministry of Agriculture, Kenya Government Food Security War Room (FSWR), Ministry of Agriculture Livestock and Fisheries (MoALF), and Regional Agriculture Trade Intelligence Network (RATIN).

¹ NB: While the report covers wheat, consumption of that commodity in Kenya is comprised mainly of wheat products (flours, pastries, and highly processed foods) rather than raw wheat itself.

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