



[INAC](#) > [The North](#) > [Food & Nutrition](#) > [Food Cost](#)

Revised Northern Food Basket - Highlights of Price Survey Results for 2006, 2007 and 2008

In 2006, price surveys were conducted in 28 isolated northern communities (three in the Baffin Region of Nunavut, seven in the Kivalliq Region of Nunavut, four in the Kitikmeot Region of Nunavut, eight in the Northwest Territories, one in Yukon, four in Nunavik and one in Ontario) and in six supply centres, food entry points and southern points of reference (Ottawa, Thunder Bay, Edmonton, Yellowknife, Churchill and Inuvik).

In 2007, surveys were conducted in 21 isolated northern communities (six in Labrador, five in the Baffin Region of Nunavut, seven in the Kivalliq Region of Nunavut, two in Nunavik and one in Ontario), and in nine supply centres, food entry points and southern points of reference (St. John's, Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Montréal, Val-d'Or, Ottawa, Thunder Bay, Pickle Lake, Winnipeg and Churchill).

In 2008, price surveys were conducted in 28 isolated northern communities (two in Labrador, two in Nunavik, four in Ontario, five in the Kitikmeot Region of Nunavut, five in the Baffin Region of Nunavut, four in the Beaufort-Delta Region of the Northwest Territories, five in the Sahtu Region of the Northwest Territories and one in Yukon). As well, surveys were carried out in eleven supply centres, food entry points and southern points of reference (Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Montreal, Val-d'Or, Ottawa, Sudbury, Timmins, Moosonee, Edmonton, Yellowknife, Inuvik and Whitehorse).

The results of these surveys [are presented on a regional basis elsewhere on this Website](#). Some highlights of the results of these surveys are as follows:

- In most isolated communities, the Revised Northern Food Basket, which would provide a nutritious diet for a family of four for one week, cost between \$360 and \$450 except in Labrador where the cost was lower, and in Peawanuck (\$518 in 2008), Old Crow (\$496 in 2008), Colville Lake (\$492 in 2008), and Paulatuk (\$476 in 2008). The same basket cost between \$200 and \$250 in southern Canada, Yellowknife, Whitehorse and Happy Valley-Goose Bay. In other food entry points where surveys were conducted, the basket was most expensive in Churchill (\$299 in 2007) and Inuvik (\$348 in 2008).
- In all communities, perishables accounted for about two thirds (between 62 percent and 72 percent) of the total cost of the basket.
- Of all the communities surveyed since 2006, the highest cost for the perishable portion of the basket was in Peawanuck (\$356 in 2008) where at the time of the survey there were only two small, privately owned stores operating; and in Colville Lake (\$342 in 2008) where there is only a co-op store and in Paulatuk (\$341 in 2008) where there is only a Northern store.

Newfoundland and Labrador

- The Revised Northern Food Basket costs less in isolated communities in Labrador than in any other region, ranging from \$246 in Cartwright in March 2007 to \$297 in Rigolet in May 2008. This is to be expected, since frozen and non-perishable food brought in by marine service in late fall can be stocked for most of the winter. In addition, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador provides a subsidy to retailers to cover part of their cost of flying in perishable food by food mail, particularly during the winter when marine service is not available.

Nunavik

- Within Nunavik, the pilot project under way in Kangiqsujuaq accounts for the lower cost of perishables there compared to Kangirsuk and Tasiujaq in 2006 and Salluit in 2008. In Kangiqsujuaq, priority perishable foods (milk, cheese, yogurt, fruit, vegetables, frozen juice

concentrate and eggs) are flown in at a lower rate. However, prices of perishables were slightly lower in Kuujuaq in 2006, where there is more retail competition. Between 2006 and 2008, the cost of the perishable portion of the basket in Kangiqsujaq increased by 15 percent.

Ontario

- Only one isolated community in Ontario, Fort Severn, was surveyed in 2006 and 2007. In 2006, the perishable and non-perishable portions of the basket were less expensive there than in most Baffin Region communities, but more expensive than in Nunavik, even though Fort Severn also receives priority perishable food at a reduced rate because of the pilot project underway there. The cost of trucking food from Winnipeg to Pickle Lake, the food entry point, adds to the cost of perishable food in Fort Severn. Between April 2006 and December 2007, the cost of the basket in Fort Severn increased by 11 percent.
- Of the four isolated communities surveyed to date in 2008, Peawanuck had the highest cost for both the perishable and non-perishable portion of the basket. This is due, in part, to the fact that only one of the two stores (both privately owned) was using the Food Mail Program. Since this community has neither a winter road nor marine service in the summer, all non-perishable food must be flown in. Another contributing factor could be that all prices recorded were obtained verbally from the store clerk/owner and may, therefore, not be completely reliable. As well, several items in the basket were unavailable and prices for these items had to be imputed. In September 2008 a Northern store opened in Peawanuck. This store is using the Food Mail Program and, therefore, the next food price survey should show a significant decrease in the cost of the basket.

Nunavut

- Both perishable and non-perishable food generally costs more in the Baffin Region of Nunavut than in Nunavik. In the Baffin Region, the lowest cost for the perishable portion of the basket was in Grise Fiord (\$221 in 2007), the most remote community, which has only a co-op store.
- As expected, in 2006 perishables cost more in communities in the Kivalliq Region served from Churchill than communities in the Baffin Region served from Val-d'Or and communities in the Kitikmeot Region served from Yellowknife. The designation of Winnipeg as an entry point for service to the Kivalliq Region in May 2007 has reduced the gap between prices in most of these communities and Churchill, as was expected. While the cost of perishable food increased by 9 percent in Churchill between 2006 and 2007, the cost in Repulse Bay and Coral Harbour decreased by 5 to 7 percent. However, retailers in Whale Cove, where there is only one store, and in Chesterfield Inlet did not pass the savings on to their customers.
- Kugaaruk, which also benefits from a pilot project, had lower prices for perishables than other communities in the Kitikmeot Region in 2006. However, in 2008, the perishable portion of the basket in Kugaaruk was the same as that in Gjoa Haven and was higher than in Cambridge Bay. This is a serious issue that was brought to the attention of Arctic Cooperatives Limited in May 2008. Since that time, two additional surveys were conducted (in September and November 2008) that showed no decrease in the cost of the perishable portion of the basket. Further measures will be taken to resolve this issue.
- The cost of the perishable portion of the basket in Cambridge Bay decreased from \$278 (in 2005) to \$262 (in 2006), once the retailers began using the Food Mail Program. The cost of the perishable portion of the basket in Cambridge Bay remains lower in March 2008 (\$270) than in 2005.

Northwest Territories

- Perishable food cost slightly more in most of the Sahtu Region communities than in the communities of the Kitikmeot Region of Nunavut, although the food entry point for both regions is Yellowknife. Colville Lake had by far the highest cost in the Sahtu Region.
- Beaufort-Delta Region communities served from Inuvik benefit from a reduced rate for shipping perishables, to offset the higher cost of trucking food to this remote entry point. Consequently, the cost of the perishable portion of the basket in Tuktoyaktuk and Sachs Harbour was similar to

communities in the Sahtu Region served from Yellowknife. In Paulatuk, however, the cost was much higher, and had increased by 13 percent between 2006 and 2008.

Yukon

- The very high cost for non-perishables in Old Crow can be explained by the fact that this community has neither a winter road nor marine service. At present, the retailer in Old Crow does not use the Food Mail Program for non-perishables, since the rate charged (\$2.15 per kilogram plus \$0.75 per parcel) would not offer a significant saving compared to a regular air cargo rate.

Priority Perishable Foods

Pilot projects are under way in three communities (Kugaaruk, Nunavut; Kangiqsujuaq, Nunavik; and Fort Severn, Ontario) which receive foods designated as "priority perishable foods" at a rate of \$0.30 per kilogram plus \$0.75 per parcel, rather than the rate of \$0.80 per kilogram plus \$0.75 per parcel that applies to nutritious perishable food shipped to other communities. The "priority perishable foods" category includes most fresh dairy products, eggs, fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables (excluding French fries and similar potato products) and frozen juice concentrate. This special rate represents the amounts charged by Canada Post for food mail service from the food entry points (Yellowknife, Val-d'Or and Pickle Lake) to the airports in Kugaaruk, Kangiqsujuaq and Fort Severn respectively. Retailers also have to cover the cost of transportation from the wholesaler to the air cargo facility in the food entry points as well as local transportation from the airport to their store.

The priority perishable foods in the Revised Northern Food Basket for a family of four weigh approximately 28 kilograms, excluding packaging. With the addition of 15 percent to the weight to cover packaging and spoilage, it would cost approximately \$12 to ship these items to the pilot communities, compared to \$28 to ship them to other communities. Other things being equal, therefore, one would expect to see a difference of at least \$16 in the cost of these foods in the pilot communities, compared to other communities served from the same entry point.

The following tables show the cost of the priority perishable foods (i.e., for the quantities of fresh milk, mozzarella cheese, processed cheese slices, yogurt, eggs, fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables and frozen juices included in the Revised Northern Food Basket) in the pilot communities, in nearby communities that do not have a pilot project and in some southern reference points.

Cost of Priority Perishable Foods in the Revised Northern Food Basket in Kugaaruk (pilot community), other Kitikmeot communities and southern reference points

Community	Mar./06	Aug./06	Sept./06	Mar./08	Sept./08	Nov./08
Kugaaruk – pilot community	\$137	\$141		\$161	\$170	\$166
Taloyoak		\$165		\$178		
Gjoa Haven	\$163			\$169	\$181	
Cambridge Bay	\$169			\$162		
Yellowknife – food entry point	\$79		\$82	\$84	\$93	
Edmonton	\$73			\$83	\$83	

In March 2006, the difference between the cost of the priority perishable portion of the food basket in Kugaaruk and Gjoa Haven was \$26. However, in March 2008, the difference was only \$8, which is less than expected. In September 2008, the difference was \$11.

**Cost of Priority Perishable Foods in the Revised Northern Food Basket
in Kangiqsujaq (pilot community), other Nunavik communities and
southern reference points**

Community	Aug./06	July/07	Aug./07	June/08	Nov./08
Kangiqsujaq – pilot community	\$106			\$125	
Tasiujaq	\$133				
Kangirsuk	\$133				
Salluit				\$142	
Kuuujuaq	\$121				
Val-d'Or – food entry point		\$78			\$84
Montreal			\$78		\$91

In March 2006, the difference between the cost of the priority perishable portion of the food basket in Kangiqsujaq and Kangirsuk was \$27. In June 2008, the difference between the cost of the priority perishable portion of the food basket in Kangiqsujaq and Salluit was \$17.

**Cost of Priority Perishable Foods in the Revised Northern Food Basket
in Fort Severn (pilot community), other Ontario communities and
southern reference points**

Community	Apr./06	Sept./07	Dec./07	Mar./08
Fort Severn – pilot community	\$136		\$145	
Pickle Lake – food entry point			\$98	
Thunder Bay	\$70		\$74	
Winnipeg		\$78		
Fort Albany				\$161
Kashechewan				\$178
Attawapiskat				\$162
Peawanuck				\$235
Moosonee				\$117
Timmins – food entry point				\$76

The difference between the cost of the priority perishable portion of the food basket in Fort Severn in December 2007 and in three isolated James Bay communities with a Northern store in March 2008 ranged from \$16 to \$33. However, the Northern stores in Fort Albany, Kashechewan and Attawapiskat were not using the Food Mail Program.

December 19, 2008

Date Modified:2009-01-13

