



THE COST OF FOOD IN FOUR REGIONS OF ALASKA:

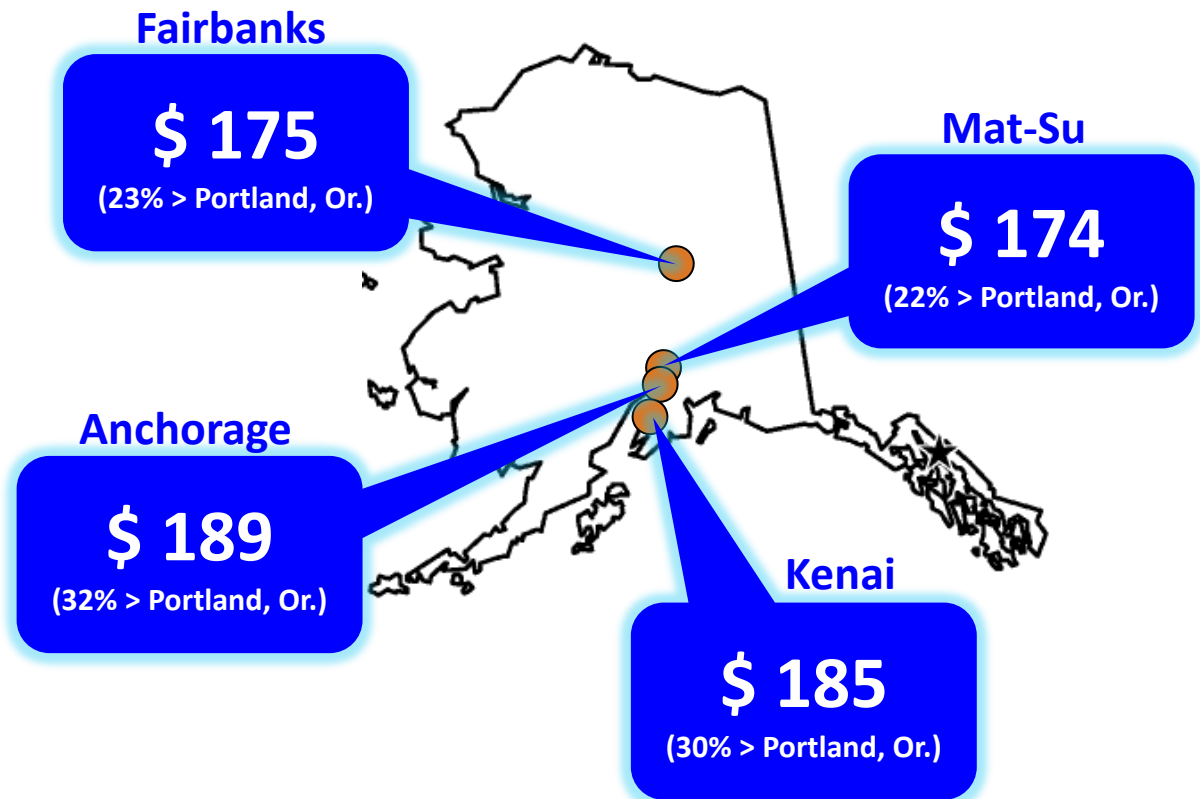
Findings from the Children's Healthy Living Program

Food cost fact sheet from the children's healthy living program (CHL)

Why assess food costs?

- A primary goal of CHL is to promote healthy food environments for children and increase the consumption of fruits and vegetables.
- High food costs contribute to food insecurity.^{1,2} High food cost affects households' ability to buy certain foods and may be a barrier to healthy eating³.

What does it cost to feed a family of 4 for one week?



How did CHL estimate food costs?

- CHL estimated the cost of feeding a family of four (2 adults and 2 children ages 6–8 and 9–11) on the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Thrifty Food Plan (TFP)⁴. The TFP is a suggested basket of foods designed to reflect purchasing habits of consumers that meet nutrition guidelines at a low cost and also determines benefits of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).
- The cost of eating on the TFP varies by region and is commonly estimated using the USDA Community Food Security Assessment Toolkit (CFSAT)⁵.
- Using the CFSAT, surveyors recorded the price of 87 food items in March, 2014, at X supermarkets in four regions of Alaska: Fairbanks, Mat-Su, Anchorage, and the Kenai Peninsula, and 3 supermarkets in Portland Oregon as a reference point in the 48 contiguous states.

What are the top 10 most expensive foods for a family of 4 using the tfp?

Fairbanks

Food	Cost per week (\$)	Percent of food costs
Lean ground beef	17.13	9.78
Orange juice concentrate	13.26	7.76
Fish	11.33	6.47
1% Milk	8.13	4.64
Potatoes	7.25	4.14
Oranges	6.52	3.72
Enriched plain bagels	6.43	3.67
Chicken thighs	5.40	3.08
Ground pork	5.26	3.00
Red or green grapes	5.09	2.91

Mat-Su

Food	Cost per week (\$)	Percent of food costs
Orange juice concentrate	14.45	8.31
Lean ground beef	13.21	7.60
Oranges	10.73	6.17
Fish	9.41	5.41
1% Milk	8.13	4.67
Enriched plain bagels	6.99	4.02
Potatoes	6.94	3.99
Chicken thighs	5.81	3.34
Red or green grapes	5.11	2.94
Powdered gelatin	4.96	2.85

Anchorage

Food	Cost per week (\$)	Percent of food costs
Fish	16.66	8.84
Orange juice concentrate	16.06	8.52
Lean ground beef	15.11	8.01
Potatoes	8.60	4.56
1% Milk	8.51	4.51
Enriched plain bagels	7.28	3.86
Oranges	6.89	3.65
Ground pork	6.50	3.45
Chicken thighs	4.86	2.58
Powdered gelatin	4.76	2.52

Kenai

Food	Cost per week (\$)	Percent of food costs
Lean ground beef	18.96	10.24
Fish	17.43	9.41
Orange juice concentrate	13.94	7.53
1% milk	8.13	4.39
Chicken thighs	6.76	3.65
Ground pork	6.47	3.49
Potatoes	6.32	3.41
Enriched plain bagels	5.55	3.00
Oranges	4.87	2.63
Red or green grapes	4.77	2.58

How much does a family of 4 spend on each of the 10 food groups found in the TFP?

	FAIRBANKS		MAT-SU		ANCHORAGE		KENAI	
	Cost per week (\$)	Percent of food costs	Cost per week (\$)	Percent of food costs	Cost per week (\$)	Percent of food costs	Cost per week (\$)	Percent of food costs
Food groups ranked from most costly to least costly*								
Meat	51.88	29.62	44.59	25.63	55.19	29.27	65.08	35.14
Fruit	33.43	19.09	39.71	22.83	37.97	20.14	31.67	17.10
Grains	27.51	15.71	27.63	15.88	28.50	15.12	27.05	14.61
Vegetables	22.60	12.90	23.01	13.23	25.25	13.39	20.97	11.32
Dairy	14.30	8.17	13.99	8.04	14.91	7.91	14.44	7.78
Spices	9.21	5.26	9.66	5.56	9.31	4.94	9.03	4.87
Sweets and beverages	5.59	3.19	6.14	3.53	6.56	3.48	6.70	3.62
Legumes	4.42	2.52	3.23	1.86	4.17	2.21	4.21	2.27
Eggs	3.29	1.88	3.18	1.83	3.81	2.02	3.52	1.90
Fats and oils	2.91	1.66	2.83	1.63	2.88	1.53	2.53	1.37

*Food groups had the same cost ranking in each of the 4 communities.

What are the weekly food costs for each member of a 4 person family?

Family member	FAIRBANKS	MAT-SU	ANCHORAGE	KENAI
	Cost per week (\$)	Cost per week (\$)	Cost per week (\$)	Cost per week (\$)
6 to 8 year old child	36.71	36.46	39.52	38.81
9 to 11 year old child	43.56	43.26	46.89	46.06
20-50 year old male	49.59	49.26	53.38	52.44
20-50 year old female	45.29	45.00	48.76	47.90
Total for a family of 4	175.14	173.97	188.55	185.20

Note that individual costs assume the individual is the member of a 4 person family. To calculate the total cost for different family structures sum the cost for individuals in a family and make the following adjustments: for 1 person households add 20%, for 2 people add 15%, for 3 people add 5%, for 4 people make no adjustment, for 5 people subtract 5%, for 6 people subtract 10 %, for 7 people add 15%, and for 8 people subtract 20%.

References:

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