

Cost of a Healthy Diet in Ghana

2025 Quarter 1 Bulletin

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Highlights

- The Cost of a Healthy Diet (CoHD) refers to the least-expensive combination of available foods that meet the daily nutritional requirements outlined in Ghana's food-based dietary guidelines. It serves as an indicator of both physical and economic access to healthy diets.
- The national average Cost of a Healthy Diet (CoHD) for the first quarter of 2025 was GH¢15.11, representing a 13.7% increase from the fourth quarter of 2024.
- The highest CoHD during the first quarter, 2025 reference period was recorded in the Western Region, at GH¢21.29.
- Vegetables and animal source foods take up the largest share of the total diet cost, accounting for 31% and 27% respectively.

Data Collection and Methodology

In Ghana, the Cost of a Healthy Diet (CoHD) represents the minimum cost of foods required to meet the daily nutritional goals outlined in the country's food-based dietary guidelines. These guidelines categorize food into six groups: starchy staples; legumes, nuts, and seeds; vegetables; fruits; oils and fats; and animal source foods.

The retail price data used in this analysis was collected by the Statistics, Research and Information Directorate (SRID) of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA). Data was gathered from 190 markets across 15 regions of Ghana on a weekly basis, and regional averages were computed at the end of each month. Central Region was excluded from this bulletin due to lack of data. In total, 76 food commodities were monitored by MoFA, as detailed in Table 1.

Table 1: Quantified food-based dietary guidelines for Ghana

Food Group	No. of Foods Recommended	Calories Needed (kcal/day)	Share of calories (%)	No. of Items in MoFA Food List
Starchy staples	2	1191	51	21
Oils and fats	1	50	2	3
Vegetables	3	109	5	16
Fruits	2	147	6	10
Legumes nuts and seeds	2	591	25	11
Animal source foods	2	243	10	15
Total	12	2,330	100	76

Cost of a Healthy Diet

The Cost of Healthy Diet (CoHD) is the cost of the least expensive combination of food that meets the healthy diet recommendation. The National Average CoHD for the first quarter per person per day for 2025 was Gh¢15.11, rising by 13.7% from Gh¢13.29 in the fourth quarter of 2024 (Figure 1).

Regional Average Cost of a Healthy Diet

In the first quarter of 2025, the regional average CoHD in Ghana reveals a general upward trend when compared with 2024. However, Ahafo and North East regions experienced a marginal downward trend of 1.3% and 5.2% respectively. Comparative analysis of the regional breakdown also revealed that Western region recorded the highest CoHD at Gh¢21.29 and Ahafo region recorded the lowest at Gh¢9.83 (Table 2). The most significant increases were recorded in the Volta (51.1%), Western North (30.1%), and Savannah (24.3%) regions. On the other hand, the Northern Region experienced the least increase (0.8%).

Figure 1: Average Cost of a Healthy Diet and quarter-on-quarter change by region

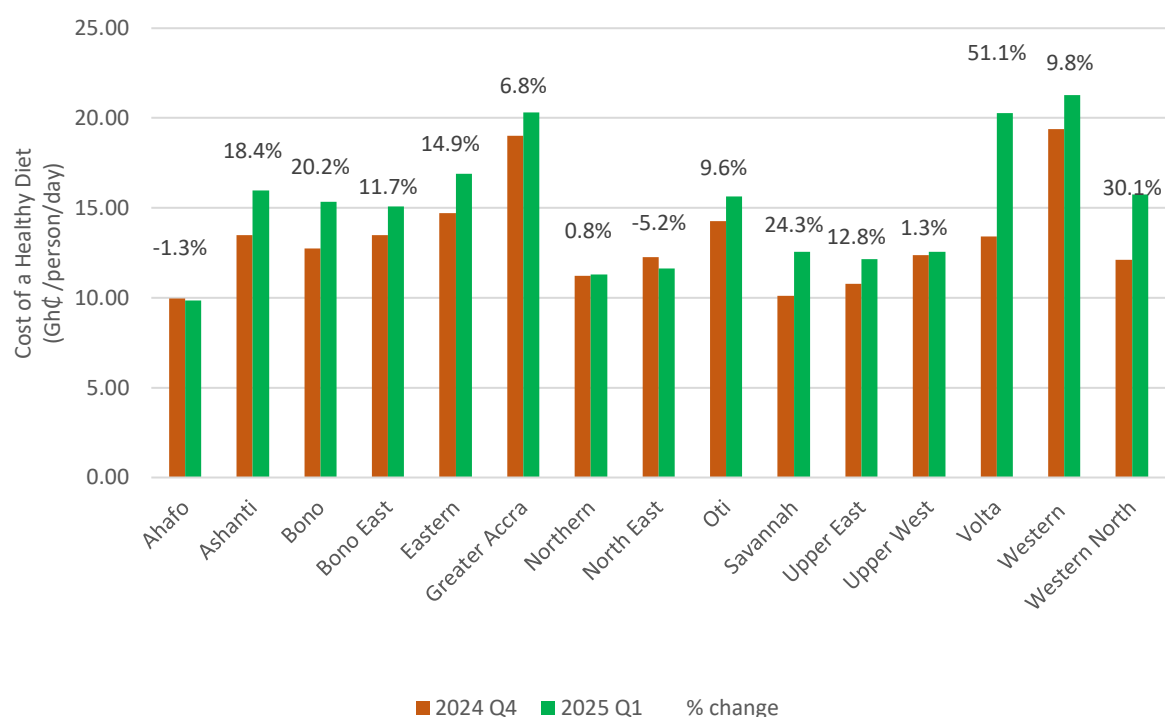


Table 2: Average Cost of a Healthy Diet by region

Regions	2024 Q4	2025 Q1	% change
Ahafo	9.96	9.83	↓ -1.3%
Ashanti	13.50	15.99	↑ 18.4%
Bono	12.76	15.33	↑ 20.2%
Bono East	13.50	15.09	↑ 11.7%
Eastern	14.70	16.89	↑ 14.9%
Greater Accra	19.01	20.31	↑ 6.8%
Northern	11.22	11.31	↑ 0.8%
North East	12.26	11.62	↓ -5.2%
Oti	14.28	15.65	↑ 9.6%
Savannah	10.11	12.56	↑ 24.3%
Upper East	10.78	12.16	↑ 12.8%
Upper West	12.39	12.55	↑ 1.3%
Volta	13.43	20.29	↑ 51.1%
Western	19.38	21.29	↑ 9.8%
Western North	12.10	15.74	↑ 30.1%
National average	13.29	15.11	↑ 13.7%

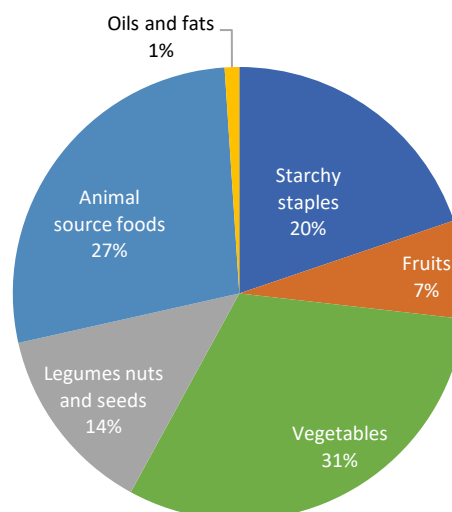
Cost Share by Food Group

The cost share by food group seeks to ascertain the average cost of each food group and to determine which food group cost the highest. The cost share per food group and the shared calories can vary depending on various factors such as geographical location, season and market conditions.

As seen in figure 2, vegetables are the food group with the highest daily cost, representing 31% of the total CoHD, despite making up only 5% of the recommended calorie share (see Table 1). Animal source foods were the second most expensive food group on average, accounting for 27% of the total diet cost and only 10% of the recommended calorie share.

Fruits registered only 7% of the daily cost, and starchy staples which has the highest share of recommended calories represents 20% of the cost. This trend was similar for all 15 regions.

Figure 2: National average food group cost shares

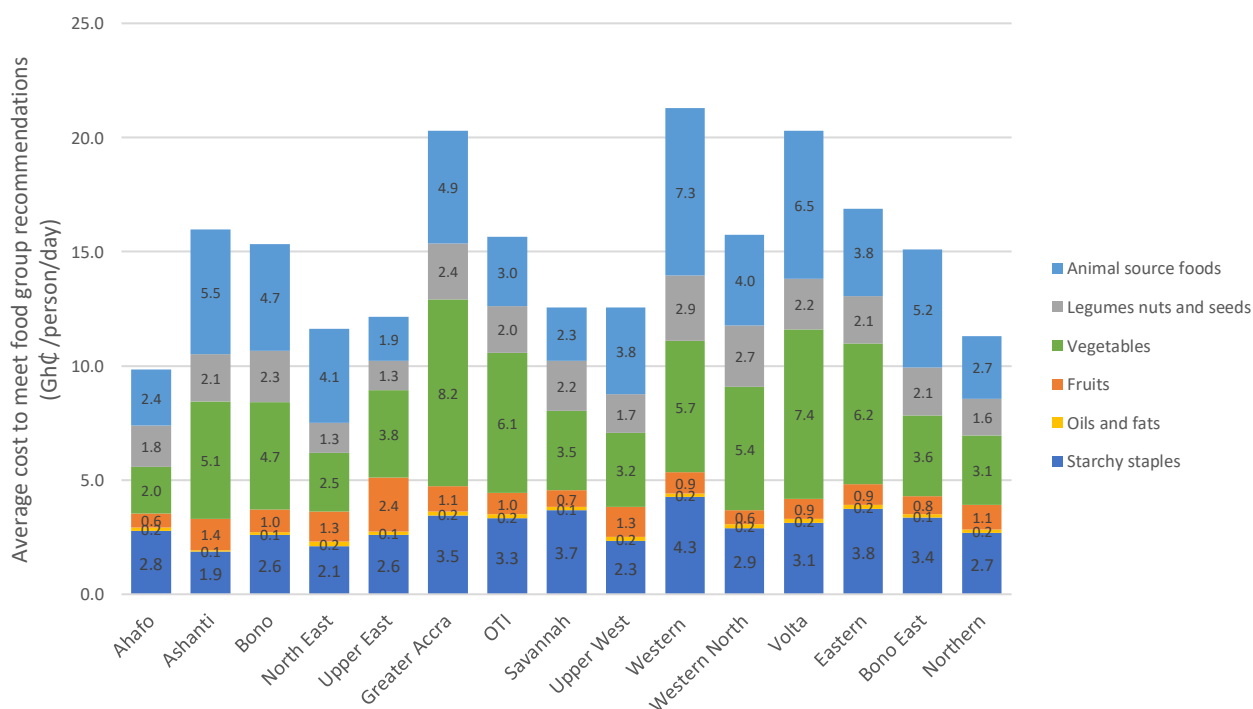


Regional Distribution of Cost Share by Food Group

On regional basis, Greater Accra reported the highest daily cost of vegetables at an average cost of Gh¢8.20, whilst Ahafo region recorded the least expensive daily cost of vegetables (Gh¢2.00).

For legumes, nuts and seeds, Western region had the highest daily cost of Gh¢2.90. Also, comparative analysis on fruits, revealed that Western North and Ahafo regions, recorded the least daily cost of Gh¢0.60 whilst Upper East recorded the highest daily cost of Gh¢2.40. For animal source foods, Western region recorded the highest daily cost of Gh¢7.30 with Upper East region recording the least daily cost of Gh¢1.90.

Figure 3: Food group cost, by region



Frequently Selected Commodities in each Food Group

The Cost of a Healthy Diet can be determined based on the price of each food item at each time and place, hence the least-cost items selected may vary across regions and months of the year. Within the vegetable food group, amaranthus leaves (alefu) recorded the highest percentage of least cost vegetable that was selected in the first quarter of 2025 at 29%, followed by carrot which was recorded as least-cost vegetable in 19% of the selections.

For starchy staples, white maize was frequently selected at 38%, followed by dried cassava chips at 32%. Palm oil was the most frequently selected type of oil (58%) while coconut oil was the least selected (18%). Among legumes, nuts and seeds, soybean was in 39% of least-cost diets. Bambara beans was ranked as least commonly selected at 2%.

Coconut was the most frequently selected in the fruit category at 42% and avocado was the second frequently selected at 26%. Under the animal source food, Kako and Salted Dried Tilapia (Koobi) was recorded as the most selected animal source at 23%. However, Pork was the least selected animal source (2%).

Table 3. Frequently selected least-cost items

Food group	Commodity	Number of times selected as least-cost	% of least-cost diets that include food as a least-cost item
Starchy staples	Maize (white)	34	38%
	Dried cassava chips (kokonte)	29	32%
	Maize (yellow)	9	10%
Oils and fats	Palm oil	26	58%
	Groundnut oil	11	24%
	Coconut oil	8	18%
Fruits	Coconut (fresh)	38	42%
	Avocado pear	23	26%
	Pawpaw	10	11%
Vegetables	Alefu (amaranthus)	39	29%
	Carrot	25	19%
	Nkontomire	24	18%
Legumes nuts and seeds	Soya bean	35	39%
	Groundnut (red)	27	30%
	Unshelled groundnut	17	19%
Animal source foods	Kako	21	23%
	Salted dried tilapia (koobi)	21	23%
	Mutton (sheep meat)	15	17%

Availability

Most of the food items were available in almost all regions during the first quarter, except for a few that were missing during some months. Fresh cow milk was only available in 44.4% (20 of 45) of region-month combinations, while snail and melon seed powder (neri) were only available in 46.6% (21 of 45) and 55.5% (25 of 45) respectively, of the region-month combination during the Q1 2025. These items are rarely selected as least cost so their unavailability is unlikely to affect access to healthy diets for the most vulnerable.

Factors that affect demand includes cultural preferences and tastes as well as the availability and unavailability of specific commodities in certain regions. For example, there is less motivation to distribute snails in certain regions where they are viewed as a taboo to consume it.

Relative Changes in the Consumer Price Indices and CoHD

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is a tool used to measure inflation, which is the average change over time in the prices of goods and services that are consumed by people for their daily needs. Figures 4 and 5 compare the national general CPI and the food CPI calculated by the Ghana Statistical Service, with the Cost of a Healthy Diet. Figure 4 compares the general CPI and the food CPI (indices with 2021 as the base year) with the nominal Gh¢ value of the Cost of a Healthy Diet, to understand whether the least-cost items needed for a healthy diet are rising in cost at a rate like that of the rest of the goods and services in Ghana. Food prices and the CoHD are both expected to rise over time; here we focus on the relative rate of that inflation.

The food CPI includes a larger number of items, and more packaged and value-added items than the CoHD, as least-cost items are often relatively unprocessed foods. Over time, all three indicators - the CoHD, general CPI, and food CPI have shown a steady increase. However, figure 5 shows the relative change over the past year. Although all three indicators continued to show a steady increase, the rate of increase of the CoHD was lower than that of the CPI.

Figure 4: Relative Changes in CPI and CoHD (Value)

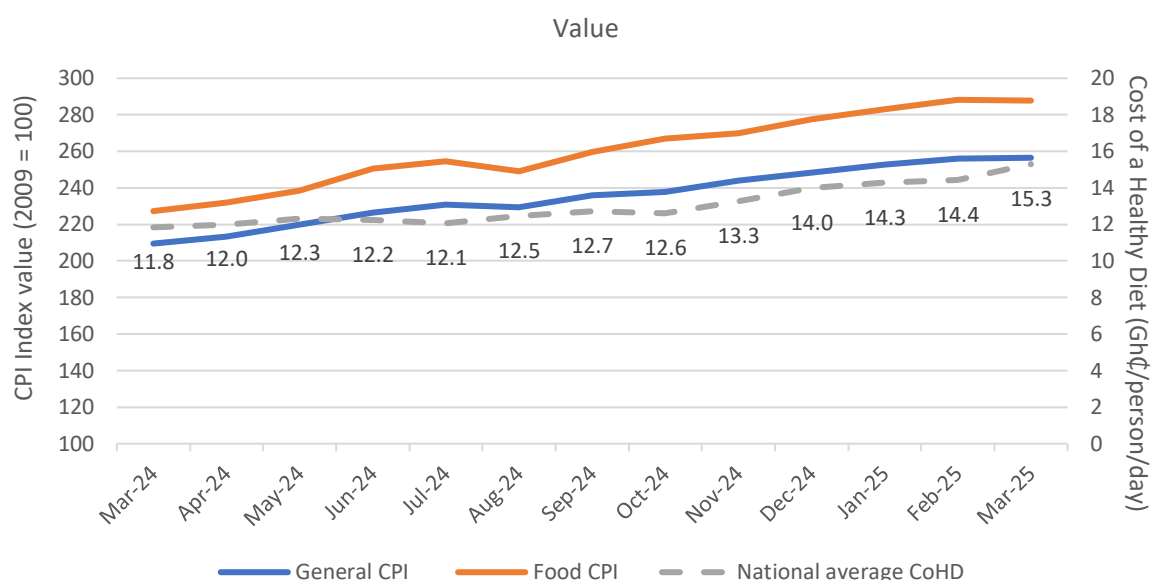
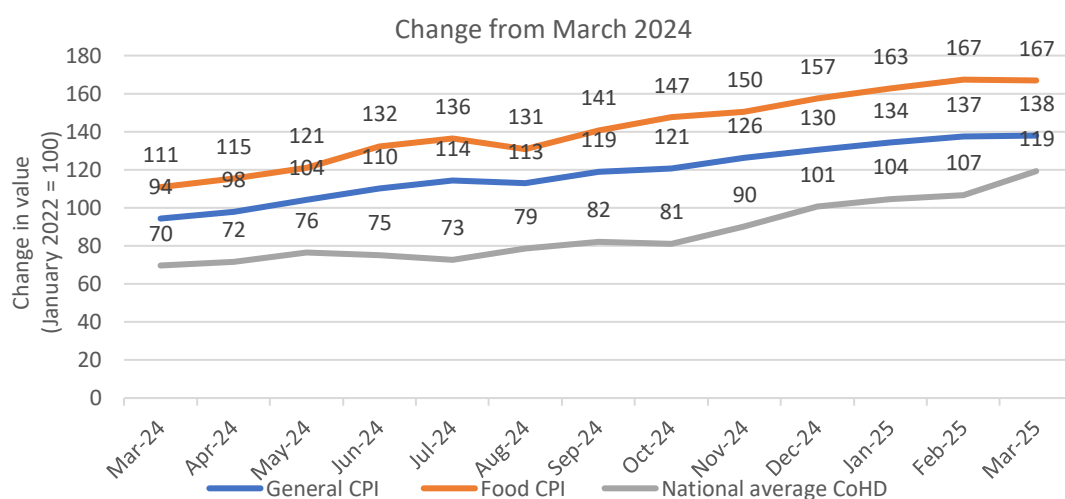


Figure 5: Relative Changes in CPI and CoHD (%)



Policy Implications

The Cost of a Healthy Diet (CoHD) affects an individual's ability to have access to quality food. Analysing the CoHD have positive implications for addressing food security challenges in Ghana. Here are some potential strategies based on policy.

The Ministry of Food and Agriculture's goals are targeted to mitigate the high cost of healthy diets and to ensure that quality diet is accessible to all. This cannot be effectively achieved without estimating the CoHD. Among the objectives of the National Medium-Term Development Policy Framework (NMTDPF) that are relevant to the ministry are:

- Improve public-private investments in the agricultural sector,
- Modernize and enhance agricultural production systems,
- Improve post-harvest losses and promote agriculture as a viable business among the youth,
- and promote livestock and poultry development.

Achieving the objectives of the NMTDPF can lead to more efficient and productive agricultural sector which can ultimately reduce the cost of healthy diet for consumers and translate to better public health outcomes by making healthy diets more accessible and affordable.

Again, one way to improve food systems is by allocating resources to commodities for agricultural production and implementing trade and other policy interventions. Strengthening programs like the Outgrower and Value Chain Fund (OVCF) is essential for providing medium to long-term financing to agricultural value chain players, including commercial farmers. Currently, OVCF focus has been on rubber, oil palm, rice, pineapple, maize-soya-sorghum, cassava-gari, cocoa, and poultry-maize schemes. Extending funding to vegetables such as tomato, onion and pepper will bring some relief as these vegetables are important ingredients in most diets in Ghana. This support can facilitate investment in productivity-enhancing measures and infrastructure, ultimately improving food availability.

It is essential to comprehend the minimum income required by households to afford a healthy diet. This knowledge is crucial for developing effective social protection and transfer programs such as Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) for vulnerable populations. Policymakers can utilize this pertinent data to establish appropriate income thresholds such as setting the minimum wage and target interventions where they are most needed.

Support for the bulletin

This bulletin is produced by SRID-MoFA, with technical support from Food Prices for Nutrition project at Tufts University. For questions or comments, please email james.ayithey@mofa.gov.gh or eunice.arhin@mofa.gov.gh.